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**In the shadow of the cross: Protestantism confronts Catholicism in Vargas'
Brazil, 1930-1945**

**A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts**

in

Latin American Studies

by

Addison Curtis Blair

Committee in charge:

**Professor Ben Cowan, Chair
Professor Scott Desposato
Professor Jessica Graham**

2020

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University of California San Diego

2020

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

**In the shadow of the cross: Protestantism confronts Catholicism in Vargas' Brazil,
1930-1945**

by

Addison Curtis Blair

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Ben Cowan, Chair

This thesis examines the political posturing and rhetoric of two major Protestant denominations in Brazil—Presbyterians and Methodists—during the Vargas Era (1930-1945). During the Vargas years, the Catholic Church saw a renewed period of expansion, consolidation, political activism, and political cooperation with the government that worried the smaller Protestants groups. As a response to the approximation between the government and the Church, Protestants used their official denominational periodicals to encourage, direct, and organize Protestant political efforts during this period. To explore how this rhetoric was used, this thesis focuses on a number of specific political issues: religious freedom, the Constitution of 1934, education policy, the proclamation of the Estado Novo, Brazilian Integralism, European fascism and communism, and World War II. Almost without exception, and in an attempt to preserve what they saw as precariously protected rights to religious conscious, Protestants often opted to position themselves in direct political opposition to whichever stance the Catholic Church maintained on these issues. These Protestant periodicals demonstrate that they were politically attentive and conscious, and had a “bloc” mentality when it came to their positions on these issues. Anchored around the Constitution of 1934 and World War II, Protestantism in Brazil found new movements—on a national and international level—through which to engage their political opposition to hegemonic Catholicism on a level that hadn't been theretofore seen.

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The close cooperation between the Catholic Church and the Brazilian state wasn't an unfamiliar phenomenon when a new generation of charismatic and politically conscious Catholic clergy sought to build a close relationship with the revolutionary Vargas regime, much to the chagrin of Brazil's minority protestant population. Such cooperation had been had been standard operating procedure for most of Brazil's history, and protestants frequently felt they had no option but to begrudgingly take the concessions granted to them by the government without any fuss. These challenges notwithstanding, by the 1930s and 1940s Brazil's protestants had carved out a small and tight-knit community that, while dwarfed in size by the Catholic population, enjoyed a certain degree of religious freedom and autonomy. The State's official separation from the Church in 1889 had created a religious climate just suitable enough for Protestantism to establish itself and undergo sluggish but consistent growth.

It was therefore with great trepidation that Protestants observed this new generation of Catholic clergy court the recently established Vargas regime. Worried that their meager gains could be under attack, protestants used their official denominational periodicals to encourage, direct, and organize Protestant political efforts during this period. Anchored around the Constitutional Assembly of 1934 and World War II, protestants saw unique political opportunities to defend the ground they had gained and try to prevent a rollback of the

religious freedom they had benefited from up to that point. An examination of the official denominational periodicals of Brazil's Methodists and Presbyterians—the Methodist *Expositor Cristão* and Presbyterian *Puritano* and *Norte Evangelico*—reveal a unique set of political “battle-grounds” to which they devoted significant space to promote this political engagement: religious freedom, the Constitution of 1934, public education policy, the proclamation of the Estado Novo, Brazilian Integralism, European fascism and communism, and World War II. These Protestant periodicals demonstrate not only that they were politically attentive and conscious, but that they had identified what they saw as the “key issues” through which religious freedom might be protected during the Vargas Era. These key issues often put them in direct opposition to the Catholic Church, whose close relationship with the Vargas regime was necessary for their own goals of cultural and political dominance.

It is indeed this relationship between the Catholic Church and the Vargas regime that has received wide attention from the religious and historical scholarship on the period, and rightly so; as Scott Mainwaring has noted, the Brazilian Catholic Church has maintained an impressive amount of institutional cohesion and organization, giving them the power to influence and participate in wider social movements—from a radical turn towards regressive conservatism in the interwar years to becoming one of the most progressive churches in the

world in the 1970s.¹ More specifically, the literature gravitates towards examining the relationship between ambitious and charismatic Catholic clergy, in particular Dom Sebastião Leme, as well as the political organizing role of the Catholic Electoral league and the intellectual output of the Centro Dom Vital.² These arguments highlight Dom Leme's unique character as an enterprising leader, one whose ultimate goal was to forward "Catholic influence over the education system, Catholic morality, anti-Communism, and anti-Protestantism".³ Ultimately, it was hoped, these actions could prevent the Catholic Church's decay that had plagued it since the foundation of the First Republic in 1889.⁴

These scholars, by focusing on the Catholic-Vargas relationship, have tended to provide only a cursory mention—if they're mentioned at all—to the political role that Protestants played during the same period. On a broad scale, such an oversight seems warranted; Protestants numbered, at best, 700,000 by

¹ Scott Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*. Stanford University Press, Stanford: California, 1986, xii; Cowan, Benjamin A. "Only for the Cause of the Pátria: The Frustrations of Interwar Moralism." In *Securing Sex: Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil*, 21-49. University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469627519_cowan.6.

² The following list is non-comprehensive, but serves to demonstrate the centrality of Leme and his associates to the history of the period: Leonard Martin in *Church and Politics in Latin America*. Keogh, Dermot ed. Macmillan Press, 1990, 300; Margaret Todaro Williams. "Church and State in Vargas's Brazil: The Politics of Cooperation." *Journal of Church and State* 18, no. 3 (1976): 443-62. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23915133>; Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics*, 25-42; Kenneth P Serbin. "Church-State Reciprocity in Contemporary Brazil: The Convening of the International Eucharistic Congress of 1955 in Rio De Janeiro." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (1996): 721-51. doi:10.2307/2517950; Margaret Todaro Williams. "The Politicization of the Brazilian Catholic Church: The Catholic Electoral League." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 16, no. 3 (1974): 301-25. doi:10.2307/1748888; Williams, Margaret Todaro. "Integralism and the Brazilian Catholic Church." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 54, no. 3 (1974): 431-52. doi:10.2307/2512932.

³ Mainwaring, 27. The role of education and anti-Protestantism in particular will be examined in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

⁴ Williams, *Journal of Church and State*.

1930, roughly 2% of Brazil's population at the time.⁵ Certainly, no protestant pastors would be courting Vargas or his associates, and the insular nature of protestant communities prevented them from making a wider impact. Indeed, the insular nature of mainline protestant communities in Brazil during this period has carried over into the available literature on the topic; much of the historical writing and research on Brazilian mainline Protestantism has been done by the Protestants themselves. As a result, the literature tends to be institutional in tone and purpose, prioritizing faith-promoting narratives and evangelism. These narratives are inclined to frame Brazilian Protestantism and protestants as martyrs to their cause and victims to Catholicism's dominance.⁶ As such, they typically avoid discussing any type of political engagement (unless that engagement had an element of anti-Catholicism) and weren't generally concerned with world events outside of the protestant sphere unless they directly impacted the protestant movement.

This isn't to say that nothing has been written on Brazilian Protestantism and their political engagement by "secular" scholars or scholars writing from a non-evangelizing perspective. Historians like Carlos Mondragón and Antonio

⁵ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity: Volume VII: Advance through Storm: A.D. 1914 and after, with concluding generalizations* (1945) 7:181-182.

⁶ The following list is non-comprehensive, but serves as a sample to the type of institutional history produced by protestant denominations: Kennedy, James L. *Cincoenta annos de methodismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Imprensa Methodista, 1928; Matos, Alderi de Souza. *Erasmio Braga, o protestantismo e a sociedade brasileira: perspectivas sobre a missão da igreja*. Editora Cultura Cristã: São Paulo, 2008; Matos, *Os Pioneiros – Presbiterianos do Brasil (1859-1900)*. São Paulo: Editora Cultura Cristã, 2004; Pierson, Paul Everett. *A younger church in search of maturity: Presbyterianism in Brazil from 1910 to 1959*. Trinity University Press: San Antonio, 1974; Ribeiro, Boanerges. *Igreja Evangélica e República Brasileira (1889-1930)*. São Paulo: O Semeador, 1991.

Gouvêa Mendonça have attempted to provide a more critical look at Brazilian protestant history. As presented in the preface to Mendonça's introductory book on the subject, "It's true that [this work] isn't polemical in the style of the old debates...nor is it an apologetic work. The authors of this book have sought to give the reader a critical perspective...of Brazilian Protestantism."⁷ By stepping away from the institutional tone and evangelizing goals, this more critical outlook offers a more contextualized history and has helped to push research on Brazilian Protestantism into the hands of non-protestants and secular scholars. In addition, it's helped to place Protestantism into a wider social and cultural conversation within Brazil's varied religious traditions.

This thesis seeks to build upon the work done by these scholars by furthering the understanding of Protestant's political activities during the Vargas Era. By adopting the same "critical perspective" as Mendonça and others, this paper strives to illustrate the wider question of Protestant political activities vis-à-vis Catholicism, and by so doing demonstrate how the Vargas Era (in terms of political participation and interest by Protestants) was different than the eras that preceded and followed it.

This thesis also seeks to continue to bridge the gap between the primarily institutional protestant literature and the Catholic-centric academic literature. As noted by Kenneth Serbin in 1999, "the history of Catholic-Protestant conflict in

⁷ Antonio Gouvêa Mendonça, *Introdução ao Protestantismo no Brasil*, Edições Loyola, 1990, 9.

the twentieth century [in Brazil] has yet to be researched in depth.”⁸ While there are many facets to this conflict, this thesis will illustrate the central political messaging by the Presbyterian and Methodist churches as promulgated through their official periodicals. These periodicals form the backbone of the analysis done here, and helps to elucidate how protestant leadership viewed the political issues of the day and how they encouraged their fellow congregants to engage. Circulation of these periodicals was generally limited to adherents, which provides a helpful view into the political attitudes of these protestant sects.

It's also important to recognize the other limitations of these sources. Chief among these is the limitations of literacy: some estimates claim that in 1940, only 45% of the country was literate.⁹ While some scholarship asserts that Brazilian protestants had a proportionately higher literacy rate in comparison with the general population, it still represents the point of view of what could be considered an “elite” group.¹⁰ This limited point of view is also reflected in the writers behind these periodicals. Almost without exception—in the time period covered in this thesis—the writers and editors of the periodicals were men.

⁸ Kenneth P. Serbin in *Religious Freedom and Evangelization in Latin America: The Challenge of Religious Pluralism*. Sigmund, Paul E., ed. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009, endnote 11, 326.

⁹ Timothy D. Ireland. "Literacy in Brazil: From Rights to Reality." *International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue Internationale De L'Education* 54, no. 5/6 (2008): 713-32. www.jstor.org/stable/40608043.

¹⁰ J. E. Potter, Amaral, E. F., & Woodberry, R. D. (2014). The Growth of Protestantism in Brazil and Its Impact on Male Earnings, 1970-2000. *Social forces; a scientific medium of social study and interpretation*, 93(1), 125–153. doi:10.1093/sf/sou071

Geography also plays a limiting role in this research. The periodicals used were primarily circulated in three cities: Rio de Janeiro (*O Puritano*), Pernambuco (*Norte Evangélico*), and São Paulo (*Expositor Cristão*). While these could all be considered major metropolitan areas in their own right, it still represents a minority viewpoint. Finally, it's important to recognize the racial makeup of the writers and audiences of these periodicals. Mainline protestants in Brazil tended to be white both as a result of European protestant immigration and communities where missionary efforts were focused.¹¹

One last limitation that needs to be addressed is the variety of Christian sects represented. At the time research was conducted at the archive of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil in São Paulo, only periodicals published by Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches were available. Due to field research time constraints, the only sects receiving analysis in this thesis are the Presbyterians and the Methodists. Naturally, it follows that this thesis can only offer an incomplete picture of the protestant response to the Vargas regime, and that additional research should be conducted for a more complete understanding.

This is particularly salient given the voices that are missing. For instance, the predominately German Lutheran population had an undoubtedly different experience in Vargas' Brazil than their Presbyterian or Methodist contemporaries.

¹¹ Emilio Willems. "Protestantism as a Factor of Culture Change in Brazil." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 3, no. 4 (1955): 321-33. www.jstor.org/stable/1151960.

Unlike the Presbyterians or Methodists, German-speaking populations in Brazil were subjected to a variety of aggressive government integration policies, including compulsory Portuguese classes and the closing of community (German-speaking) schools.¹² Without perspectives like these, this thesis is limited in its scope, but the voices of Methodists and Presbyterians are still illustrative of the protestant experience in Brazil during this time. For simplicity's sake, all successive uses of "protestants" or any of its iterations refers specifically to Methodists and Presbyterians and the perspectives offered in their periodicals.

From the offset, it's easy to see from the periodicals that anti-Catholic prejudice was alive and well as the Vargas Era began. They blamed Catholicism for Protestantism's slow growth in the country¹³, for influencing the government against them in the 19th century¹⁴, and pointed to Catholicism's recent rise in political activity as evidence that they were attempting to reinstitute the Church-State alliance of the colonial era.¹⁵ As said by the *Expositor Cristão*, "the abuses and illegalities continue, now, after the revolution, even more than before."¹⁶ Clearly, the history of the Church-state relationship in Brazil and the policies of those years weighed heavily on the minds of Protestants as the 20th

¹² Richard O. Dalbey. "The German Private Schools of Southern Brazil: German Nationalism vs. Brazilian Nationalization." *International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue Internationale De L'Education* 18, no. 3 (1972): 391-97. www.jstor.org/stable/3442919; Jeffrey Lesser. "Immigration and Shifting Concepts of National Identity in Brazil during the Vargas Era." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 31, no. 2 (1994): 23-44. www.jstor.org/stable/3514100.

¹³ *Expositor Cristão*, January 14, 1931.

¹⁴ *Expositor Cristão*, January 27, 1932.

¹⁵ *O Puritano*, April 20, 1932.

¹⁶ *Expositor Cristão*, May 6, 1931.

century continued, and they took political positions that reflected those concerns.

The shared history between Protestants and Catholics is an important precursor to understanding the oppositional posturing Protestants exhibited during the Vargas Era. Both the Presbyterians and the Methodists arrived in the country via North American missionaries during the mid 19th century and immediately set to work trying to find local converts.¹⁷ Tending to shy away from non-Christians as part of their missionary outreach, local Catholics soon became the target, and the primarily North American missionary force depended on them more and more as the century progressed.¹⁸ Despite the excited financial and missionary support from the North American mother churches, growth during the 19th century was sluggish and limited to the larger metropolitan areas of São Paulo and Minas Gerais.¹⁹

In addition to relatively limited growth, the 19th century was defined—at least in the eyes of the Protestants—by constant harassment and persecution at the hands of the Catholic majority. By their own reckoning, Presbyterian pastors in Paraíba and Bahia were driven out of town by angry crowds. In Minas Gerais

¹⁷ Alderi Matos, *Os Pioneiros – Presbiterianos do Brasil (1859-1900)*. São Paulo: Editora Cultura Cristã, 2004, 23-25, 29-30, 32,34; José Gonçalves Salvador, *História do Metodismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Imprensa Metodista. 1982, 24-27.

¹⁸ For an illustrative example of how this process took place, see the history of Manuel de Conceição, a Catholic-turned-protestant who was one of the most important Presbyterian missionaries in the 19th century: Boanerges Ribeiro, *O Padre Protestante*, São Paulo, Casa Editora Presbiteriana; Ribeiro, *José Manoel da Conceição e a reforma evangélica* São Paulo: O Semeador, 1995.

¹⁹ Duncan Alexander Reily, “Os metodistas no Brasil (1889-1930)”. *Estudos Teológicos*, 20(2).

and Rio de Janeiro, pastors were reportedly physically assaulted. In Espírito Santo, the building where the Church was holding its meetings was burned down by arsonists.²⁰ Methodists also recorded their own experiences with decentralized persecution from locals opposed to their arrival. In Minas Gerais, local Catholics wrote columns calling the Methodists “Satanists” whose mission was to “preach against the State Religion.”²¹ In a smaller *mineira* town, two Methodist preachers were kept in prison on charges of “disturbing the peace”.²² These events are consistent with Catholic attitudes the continent over, who—while generally opposed to Protestants on an ideological level—felt even more threatened by the institutionalization of these new Churches on what they considered pure, Catholic soil.²³

These persecutions are important not necessarily because of how much physical damage was done, but because of how it molded the political dynamic between Catholics and Protestants that would bloom more fully during the Vargas Era, when Church and State once again became close partners. In part, it helped produce a general sense of mistrust towards Catholics and Catholicism, which in some cases metastasized into vibrant anti-Catholicism.²⁴ In addition, it prompted Protestants to unite around political issues that they felt

²⁰ Ribeiro, *Igreja Evangélica e República Brasileira*, 26-46.

²¹ Ribeiro, 26-46.

²² Ribeiro, 26-46.

²³ Carlos Mondragón, *Like leaven in the dough: Protestant social thought in Latin America, 1920–1950*, Lexington Books, 2010, 48-49.

²⁴ Caleb Soares, *150 anos de paixão missionária, o presbiterianismo no Brasil*. Instituto de pedagogia crista: São Paulo, 2009, 71-77.

were directly tied to religious freedom, issues that would dominate most of their political discourse during the Vargas years. Given their shared histories and the perceived enemy they shared in the Catholic Church, Protestants—with some unique exceptions, such as the danger of Communism—took a political position in direct opposition of where the Catholic Church stood.

These positions, frequently couched in terms of religious freedom, are the “key issues” that the sects devoted so much space to in their official periodicals, and they’re the key issues that this thesis will discuss to help understand protestant political posturing during the Vargas Era. In the early Vargas years, from the Revolution of 1930 to the start of the first Vargas presidential term in 1934, discussion was centered not only on religious freedom in the abstract, but how it was applied in Brazilian society; specifically, within the educational sphere. The Protestant preoccupation with religious freedom led them to direct opposition with Catholics over the role of religion in schools, and to what degree Churches should influence public school curriculum. These worries culminated in the Constitutional Convention in 1934, where despite the valiant efforts of a few, Catholic hegemony was established within the school system.

Increased political activism on the part of Protestants wasn't limited to questions of domestic importance. The political forces that engulfed the world in the years leading up to and including World War II gave Protestants an international lens with which to view their conflict with the Catholics. Brazilian Integralism and European fascism, for example, were closely associated with the

Catholic Church, and the war against Italy and Germany was seen by many Protestants in Brazil as one more way to fight Catholicism's hegemonic influence worldwide. The fight against the influence of Communism was also interpreted as an opportunity for solidarity for Protestants worldwide that were within communism's reach. The periodicals therefore demonstrate a vision that expanded over time, beginning with issues of domestic concern during the Constituent Assembly and growing to encompass international issues as Brazil became more involved during World War II.

CHAPTER 1: Domestic Questions

Most all of the protestant political positions expressed during the Vargas era are in some way connected to the question of religious freedom. Religious freedom—or freedom of conscience, as it has often been referred—has been a perennial question in Brazil, and a constant source of consternation for the country's protestant minority. Since their arrival in the country, protestants have tried to oppose the role of the Catholic Church in official state business, always couching the criticism in terms of religious freedom. During the Vargas Era, when the Catholic Church-State alliance was becoming renewed after a period of social and political decline, protestants once again found themselves resorting to religious freedom rhetoric to fight it. Though there were many versions of what “religious freedom” might look like in real life, protestants often chose to focus on the role of the Catholic Church in the country's education system. They found what they saw as a golden opportunity to change that dynamic in 1934 when Vargas, fresh from taking power in the 1930 Revolution, announced that a new constitutional convention would be called. The protestant goal was relatively simple; send their own delegates to the convention in order to prevent the Church-State alliance from cementing even further by inhibiting the Church's role in the education system. By using the 1934 Constitution as a vehicle, Brazilian protestants sought to advance their own beliefs of religious

freedom, especially as it related to the education system.²⁵ As will be demonstrated in this chapter, these efforts were ultimately fruitless on a national level; Catholics (and those sympathetic to their cause) dominated the Constitutional Assembly and were able to insert language into the new constitution that mandated Catholic religious education in public schools. These changes prompted small-scale protests on the part of Protestants that saw some limited success, though the Protestant effort to prevent a rollback of “religious freedom” in the education sphere never materialized on the national level.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND OFFICAL RELIGION

The protestants' shift from being a relatively obscure minority to a relatively obscure minority participating in the Constitutional convention didn't happen overnight, of course. Religious freedom and more open civic participation came piecemeal. As was the case with many colonial powers during the 18th-19th centuries, state-mandated religions existed in the colonial territories. For the Iberian-controlled continent Catholicism reigned supreme, and “religious freedom” in terms of freedom to openly practice religions aside from Catholicism did not yet exist.²⁶ Protestantism existed alongside Catholicism,

²⁵ For the Catholic context of the offensive on the education system see: Otaíza de Oliveira Romanelli, *História da educação no Brasil*. Petrópolis: vozes, 1978, 144; Helio Carnassale, Religious Education in Brazilian Public Schools - an analysis of applicability. *BYU International Center for Law and Religious Studies*, <https://classic.iclrs.org/content/events/123/3395.pdf>. For an explanation of Protestant fears about Catholic influence in the education system, see Paul Everett Pierson. *A younger church in search of maturity: Presbyterianism in Brazil from 1910 to 1959*. Trinity University Press: San Antonio, 1974, 148-149.

²⁶ Joel Morales Cruz, "Brazil." In *The Histories of the Latin American Church: A Handbook*, 153-90. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2014. doi:10.2307/j.ctt9m0t2k.14.

as it had since the reformation, but in the Brazilian colonial period their influence was meager and their numbers even more so. As with many other colonial holdings in the region, in Brazil citizen and community ties to the Church were strong. These ties were far from absolute, however; Catholic power in Portuguese colonies was “less fanatical and more private” than their Spanish colonial counterparts.²⁷ This isn't to say that Catholicism didn't exhibit a significant amount of social and cultural control, but rather that its hold on the country wasn't absolute; both Freemasonry and Positivism were influential movements not only with the Brazilian population but also exhibited some popularity within the Catholic hierarchy.²⁸ The integration of these outside influences into Catholicism's daily practice indicates that the Church as an institution didn't have the same degree of cohesive ideological discipline that was present in the Spanish-speaking colonies, which gave protestants a small but available opening to spread their influence in Brazil.

The slow march towards religious freedom—as both a recognized political right and a widely accepted practice— came in stages. The 1824 constitution, the first written after Brazilian independence from Portugal, formally granted freedom of religion though Catholicism retained its state-sponsored status as the official religion. Protestants were permitted to worship in unmarked churches, and the Church's' relatively weak infrastructure during the 1800s prevented any

²⁷ Serbin, 204.

²⁸ W. Stanley Rycroft, "The Protestant Churches and Religious Freedom in Latin America." *Journal of Church and State* 8, no. 2 (1966): 264-73. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23913323>.

centralized protest or large-scale political organizing.²⁹ In addition, even in the late 1800s protestants only numbered a few thousand, so centrally organized opposition by Catholics against Protestants seemed unnecessary.³⁰ The Church and State drifted even further apart in 1891, when the new constitution formally severed the connection between the two. On the backs of military officers inspired by French Positivism, the 1891 Constitution ended state subsidies to Catholic activities, formally secularized the education system, and generally diminished the Church's status on general society.³¹ Heartened by Brazil's republican turn and seeing a new opening now that the Catholic Church was formally separated from the state, Protestant groups like the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists saw increased growth during this period as foreign missionaries continued to pour into the country and local ecclesiastical infrastructure strengthened.³² Their numbers were still small, especially when compared against the Catholic Church, but the rate of Protestant growth between 1891-1930 greatly exceeded that of the growth during the mid 19th century.³³

As these religious freedom rights—or, more accurately, the decline of Catholic influence—were expanded during this period, Protestant political engagement remained relegated to small demonstrations of political activism

²⁹ Mondragón, 48-49.

³⁰ Salvador, *História do Metodismo no Brasil*, 116.

³¹ Serbin, 206.

³² Frank L. Arnold, "From Sending Church to Partner Church: The Brazil Experience." *The Journal of Presbyterian History* (1997-)81, no. 3 (2003): 178-92. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23337618>.

³³ Salvador, *História do Metodismo no Brasil*, Chapter 11.

and signature gathering.³⁴ Having a voice in the government was virtually unthinkable, and even after the 1891 Constitution was ratified Catholicism's cultural dominance still reigned supreme. In short, while the 19th century was characterized by the smaller protestant groups seeking to make fragile inroads to a largely Catholic population, the 20th century saw the increased institutionalization and political participation of Protestant groups. More membership translated to the need for more sophisticated forms of communication and organization, so Protestant writers turned to the major denominational periodicals to rally the call around the question of religious freedom. With the fall of the Old Republic in 1930 and the rise of Vargas and his newly blossoming relationship with the Catholic Church, Protestants knew that they would need to organize to prevent possible rollbacks to the relative religious freedom that they experienced during the First Republic; the possibility of these reversals, or "The Grave Question" as the *Expositor Cristão* referred to it, would require an increased level of political engagement to prevent them from happening.³⁵

Protestants had good reason to fear a reversal and revival of Catholic political and cultural power. Of the many figures in the Church's hierarchy

³⁴ For examples of this type of political activity, see: Excerto da Carta de Boys, Rio de Janeiro, December 17, 1819 and; A carta d Igreja de Santa Bárbara, January 11, 1873 in Duncan Alexander Reily. *História documental do protestantismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Associação de Seminários Teológicos Evangélicos, 1983, 55; 146-147.

³⁵ *Expositor Cristão*, April, 1931. Note: in most cases prior to 1932, the *Expositor Cristão*'s title was written as "Christão". In this thesis, the more commonly used "Cristão" post-1932 is used in citations.

during this period, none exemplified the desire for Catholic dominance more than Dom Sebastião Leme. Ordained a bishop in 1911 and eventually raised to the office of cardinal in 1928, Leme inarguably held a position of immense political, social, and religious power during the tumultuous days leading up to the 1930 Revolution and the volatile days of power-scrambling that proceeded it. At the time the only cardinal in Brazil, he used his position and the socio-political context of the revolution to attempt to instigate a new era of Catholic cultural dominance in Brazil. In the aftermath of the 1930 Revolution, the Catholic Church represented one of the strongest and most cohesive institutions in the country, and Leme saw a chance for the Church to regain its prior status within the Brazilian cultural and political hierarchy, resulting in a close working relationship between the Catholic hierarchy and the Vargas regime. This relationship would prove to be critically important as Catholics sought to impose a series of sweeping social and political reforms that would return Catholicism to a place of supremacy in Brazilian society.³⁶

The effort to enact these changes required an increased degree of politicization on the part of the Catholic Church. This politicization ran the gamut from the establishment of an intellectual “think tank—the Centro Dom Vital—and the founding of labor, civil, and youth organization centered around

³⁶ Margaret Todaro Williams, "Church and State in Vargas's Brazil: The Politics of Cooperation." *Journal of Church and State* 18, no. 3 (1976): 443-62. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23915133>.

Catholic identity and political participation.³⁷ Through these organizations, Catholics hoped to mobilize on the political, intellectual, and community levels to bring about reforms that would grant Catholicism, at the very least, the *de facto* status of official state religion, if unable to bring about official recognition on the part of the government. A well-established hierarchy and uniquely ambitious leaders like Dom Leme contributed to a Catholic Church that was stronger from a social standpoint than it had been decades previous. The Protestant periodicals took note of this and, in the years running up to the 1934 Constitutional Assembly, spent a significant amount of space writing about the specter of a renewed Church-State alliance and the dangers that Protestants would face should the regime return to the religious status quo of the early 19th century.

Part of this response entailed open letters or opinion pieces address directly to the new government. In addition to the requisite schmoozing that accompanies regime change (“The evangelical churches support the authorities now constituted and declare that they have maintained an intercessory attitude in favor of the new regime...”), the protestants churches also asked for a rededication to the principles of religious freedom: “there is,

³⁷ Williams, *Church and State*. See also: Scott Mainwaring. *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*. Stanford University Press, Stanford: California, 1986, 33; Howard Wiarda. *The Brazilian Catholic Labor Movement*. Amherst, Mass., 1969; and Margaret Todaro Williams. “Pastors, Priests, and Politicians: A Study of the Brazilian Catholic Church, 1916-1945.” Ph.D. dissertation, Colombia University, 1971.

however, one thing Mr. President...that all Brazilians in general are in agreement with...the separation of Church and State, the absolute freedom of conscience, and complete equality of religions before the law."³⁸ As with all protestant calls for religious freedom, the subtext of criticism at Catholic hegemony and social influence was always just beneath the surface in the instances that it wasn't stated outright. Such subtext would be understood by the Protestant audience even if the Catholic Church was never mentioned.³⁹

One illustrative example of this phenomenon is a 4-part, 2-month long series published in the *Methodist Expositor Cristão*. While generally choosing to avoid naming the Catholic Church directly, the same pattern of implied criticism is visible in the opening article:

However, there isn't a lack of religion, in the popular sense of the word. Religion, in this sense, our people have...even too much. [The governments of the past] never lacked in religious festivals. Never denied to the clergy the substantial financial support for chapels...Baptisms, marriages, christenings...solemn funerals, and many other religious manifestations show that our people have religion...We don't lack religion. The religion that we [protestants] have can raise the moral bar of our people.⁴⁰

This serves as an introduction to the series, which is addressed specifically to the Methodist population. By juxtaposing Protestantism's future potential with Catholicism's dominant past, the *Expositor Cristão* tried to demonstrate what was at stake in the upcoming polemics over religious freedom: that the failure to

³⁸ *O Puritano*, December 12, 1930.

³⁹ Paul Everett Pierson, *A younger church in search of maturity: Presbyterianism in Brazil from 1910 to 1959*. Trinity University Press: San Antonio, 1974, 147.

⁴⁰ *Expositor Cristão*, December 10, 1930.

act would almost certainly result in the deliberate reversal of any gains to religious freedom by the Church-State alliance. As the article points out, such an arrangement was the status quo for much of Brazil's history.

The next article in the series is much more forward in its evaluation of Catholicism's role in contemporary Brazil: "It's fair that the high authorities of the country, recognizing that their problems stem from a lack of religious conviction, would search for a solution to the religious problem as a medicine for the spiritual formation of the people."⁴¹ Such an evaluation wasn't off-base; the Vargas government already had and would continue working closely with the Catholic Church, though their goals weren't exactly aligned. Where the Church was interested in the relationship in the name of social retrogression and religious dominance, the Vargas regime was interested in the name of increasing productivity and industrialization.⁴² In both cases religion was seen as a possible solution to the social and cultural maladies afflicting the Brazilian people.

As could be expected, however, the *Expositor Cristão* firmly believed that a return to Catholic dominance wouldn't be in the best interest of the people: "For many people, this question is answered...the Catholic Church... if that was the case, there shouldn't have been any religious problems in Brazil, since it's been 430 years that the Catholic Church dominates...unfortunately, however,

⁴¹ *Expositor Cristão*, December 17, 1930

⁴² Cowan, Benjamin A. "Only for the Cause of the Pátria: The Frustrations of Interwar Moralism." In *Securing Sex: Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil*, 21-49. University of North Carolina Press, 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469627519_cowan.6, 32.

the problem does exist...We ask all sincere Brazilian Catholics...has the Catholic Church ever cooperated with any activist and idealist movement in our country?"⁴³ Once again, the major Protestant denominations sought to paint the Catholic Church as regressive and conservative, ultimately at odds with the country's progression. Though it's couched in a direct appeal to the (immensely small if not non-existent) Catholic readership, the same warning is clear: a return to Catholic dominance means the inevitable stalling or reversal of religious freedom protections.

In addition, these tactics—questioning the patriotism of religious “others”—was a frequent insult that both Protestants and Catholics habitually hurled at each other. Instilling a religious-infused patriotism was already a feature in the Catholic public-school curriculum, and Protestants eventually responded in kind through their periodicals, highlighting not only the perceived doctrinal failings of the Catholic Church but also pointing out how their religious beliefs precluded true patriotism.⁴⁴

The periodical's concluding article in the series implored Brazil to look to the international religious community for how to proceed. Drawing a distinction from some other majority Catholic countries, the paper wrote, "...we see evangelical nations like England, the United States, Switzerland, Holland,

⁴³ *Expositor Cristão*, December 17, 1930

⁴⁴ Cunha, Luiz Antônio. "Sintonia oscilante: religião, moral e civismo no Brasil-1931/1997." *Cadernos de Pesquisa* 37, no. 131 (2007): 285-302; *Expositor Cristão*, December 31, 1930; *Expositor Cristão*, January 14, 1931.

Finland...and others walk towards peace and prosperity."⁴⁵ Such an argument, familiar to a modern-day audience as Max Weber's "protestant work ethic", wouldn't have been as well-known in Brazil in 1931; Weber's influential volume wasn't translated into English until 1930 and wasn't widely released in Brazil until 1967.⁴⁶ The central idea, however, of Protestant exceptionalism through theological purity bringing down the blessings of heaven is seen reaffirmed in this particular passage. It's also one more demonstration of the Protestant attempts to equate Catholicism with stagnation and regression. This is emphasized by the article's end which calls for Brazil to look towards "evangelicals" as their guiding light; Protestantism would bring Brazil forward, where Catholicism would move Brazil backwards, a reversal of the gains that had been made.⁴⁷

These worries moved from the abstract to the concrete with the arrival of the Constitutional Assembly of 1934. With substantial knowledge of the Catholic Church's political organizing and aware of the need to counter their influence at the Assembly, the periodicals chose to refocus their political commentary of the issues surrounding the Assembly and the implications of the new constitution.

CONSTITUTION OF 1934

⁴⁵ *Expositor Cristão*, January 14 1931

⁴⁶ See Weber's book for an elaboration on the idea: Weber, M., Kalberg, S. (Ed.), Kalberg, S. (2001). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Routledge, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315063645>. Note here the first Portuguese translation: Weber, Max (1967). *A ética protestante e o espírito do capitalismo*. São Paulo: Pioneiro

⁴⁷ *Expositor Cristão*, January 14 1931. These arguments about looking to international evangelicalism as a guiding light will be revisited in Chapter 2 in the context of World War 2.

These concerns over religious freedom eventually led Protestants to consider the political avenues available to them to enact change. The clearest opportunity presented itself with Vargas' announcement of the Constitutional Assembly in 1934. When Vargas took control as provisional president following the 1930 revolution, it came with the tentative promises of national reconstruction and economic, political, and civil reforms.⁴⁸ While it took significant in-fighting within Vargas' revolutionary coalition (and an armed revolt in São Paulo) before Vargas finally capitulated and called for elections, the fact of a new convention was welcome news for Protestants worried about the future of the Church-state relationship.⁴⁹ The new convention was seen as an opportunity by many to inject favorable language on any number of relevant issues, though the Protestant goal was slightly different: prevent Catholics from dominating the Assembly. To that end Protestants elected Guaraci Silveira, the high-profile editor of the *Expositor Cristão*. While unique in his direct participation, Silveira offers the clearest illustration of Protestant political desires through the platforms he espoused and the rhetoric he used.

⁴⁸ Getúlio Vargas, DISCURSO PRONUNCIADO PELO DR. GETULIO VARGAS POR OCASIÃO DE SUA POSSE COMO CHEFE DO GOVERNO PROVISÓRIO DA REPUBLICA, November 6, 1830, Biblioteca da Presidencia da República, <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/getulio-vargas/discursos/1930/03.pdf/view>.

⁴⁹Bradford E. Burns. "The Challenge of Change." In *A History of Brazil*, 313-80. Columbia University Press, 1993. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/burn07954.13>; Hilton, Stanley. *A Guerra Civil Brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro. Nova Fronteira, 1982.; Thomas Skidmore. *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1945: An Experiment in Democracy*. Oxford University Press, Oxford: 1967, 14-15. See also: John W. F. Dulles. *Vargas of Brazil: a political biography*. University of Texas Press: Austin, 1967, 83-106.

Like many such assemblies, the Constituent Assembly in 1934 was made up of elected delegates who would hash out the details of the constitution. For Brazil's resurgent Catholic movement, there was a concerted effort to elect delegates who would write in favorable language to the new constitution. Part of the Church's success in lobbying the government for changes was Dom Leme's systematic approach to politics, perhaps exemplified best through the creation of the Catholic Electoral League (*Liga Eleitoral Católica*). Nominally nonpartisan (Leme resisted the creation of an expressly Catholic political party), the LEC still maintained a direct link with the Catholic hierarchy.⁵⁰ This provided a "buffer" between Catholic elites and the state, helping construct both a sense of legitimacy and "apartness" to their political activism. Protestants, for their part, firmly believed that the LEC was nothing but a "Catholic party in disguise" and advised their followers to fight against any initiatives supported by the LEC at any level of government.⁵¹

The LEC's immediate goal in the early 1930s was to sway public opinion and galvanize Catholic voters prior to the Constituent Assembly in 1934. In their eyes, the Constitution of 1934 would be the best opportunity to capitalize on the Church-state relationship and solidify the Church's place in Brazil's new civil order. From its inception in 1932, the LEC had worked tirelessly among state-level

⁵⁰ Margaret Todaro Williams. "The Politicization of the Brazilian Catholic Church: The Catholic Electoral League." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 16, no. 3 (1974): 301-25. doi:10.2307/174888.

⁵¹ *Expositor Cristão*, December 28, 1932

political parties and candidates in order to influence the delegates that would be selected to attend the Constituent Assembly.⁵² Their efforts were successful; after the May 1933 elections, LEC-backed candidates were victorious in numbers that surprised even the most optimistic Catholic observers.

Catholic organization and eventual voter turnout were impressive and far-reaching, a fact that was clear to Protestant denominations in the months running up to the Assembly. Concerned about the possibilities if Catholics effectively wrote the new constitution, Protestants launched their own efforts to influence the religious makeup of the convention in a bid to counter Catholic political organization. The major denominational periodicals dedicated a significant amount of space to not only discussing the ramifications of a Catholic-driven Constitution on the Protestant Church, but also to promoting Protestant candidates for election to the Assembly. The Presbyterians through the *Puritano* called for delegates to be “bearers of liberal inclination” who would advocate for the clear separation of church and state.⁵³ Similar sentiments were echoed by the Methodist publication the *Expositor Cristão*.⁵⁴

The most prolific of these candidates was Guaraci Silveira. Himself a convert from Catholicism, Silveira graduated from the Granbery Theological Institute in 1915 and quickly rose through the ranks of the Methodist hierarchy. He was named official ambassador of the Brazilian branch of the Methodist

⁵² Williams, *World Affairs*.

⁵³ *O Puritano*, January 20, 1933

⁵⁴ *Expositor Cristão*, January 4, 1933

Church to the American council, and later became a critical player in the Brazilian Methodist's declaration of autonomy from the American mother-church. By the time of the Assembly in 1934 Silveira was the editor of the *Expositor Cristão*, a position that he leveraged to spread the word of his own candidacy and to give a detailed accounting of his campaign platform as a delegate for São Paulo.⁵⁵ Given the dearth of coverage in other São Paulo newspapers, it seems that Silveira depended on the reach of the *Expositor* to publicize himself and his candidacy, especially given that his primary voting demographic would be São Paulo's protestants.⁵⁶ Silveira's unique place as a high-status protestant with access to a large publication platform makes him a unique case in many regards, though the ideology he espoused and platform he pursued is illustrative of wider Protestant political attitudes and perspectives.

In early May of 1933 Silveira officially announced his candidacy, choosing to run as a part of the Brazilian Socialist Party because of the party's, "elements of profound idealism and promising youth, taking part in the spreading of the principles of pure Christianity, applied as a solution to our societal problems."⁵⁷ Despite Protestantism's general distaste for leftist politics during this period, he

⁵⁵ Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, "Guaraci Silveira," accessed January 2019, <http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/silveira-guaraci>.

⁵⁶ A search of the Biblioteca Nacional's digital newspaper archive reveals that coverage of Silveira was almost always in the context of Assembly-wide vote tallies, with limited reporting on his individual campaign or platform. There are brief remarks of his ejection from the Socialist Party, as well as reporting on a particularly impassioned speech he gave about divorce. Other than that, Silveira's press reach in São Paulo was extremely low.

⁵⁷ *Expositor Cristão*, May 10, 1933; *Expositor Cristão*, June 28, 1933.

later justified his decision to join the Socialist Party in an interview published by the *Correio de São Paulo*, where he indicated that his agenda and message is what brought him his election, not necessarily his party affiliation.⁵⁸ While his message was powerful enough to get him elected, it wasn't powerful enough to win over the fellow members of the socialist party.⁵⁹ Six months after his election, Silveira was evicted as a member of the Socialist Party for essentially not being socialist enough—some even accused him of being a political spy for conservatives.⁶⁰ The ejection caused him to lose his membership in the party, though Silveira retained his seat in the Constitutional Assembly.

These party-line difficulties notwithstanding, Silveira principally saw his election as an opportunity to represent all Protestants at the Assembly and himself as a one who would lead the way for the “great things the Lord is preparing for the Church.”⁶¹ Silveira's only major campaign promise was perhaps the most common demand from Protestants at the time: more meaningful protections for religious freedom.⁶² Part of this entailed calls for the complete separation of church and state and the elimination of religious education in schools, both proposals that Protestants hoped to prevent. Since most protestants participated in Brazil's public education system, education policy hit close to home for many. Other “planks” in the Protestant platform as

⁵⁸ *Correio de São Paulo*, January 11, 1934, <http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/720216/3275>.

⁵⁹ *Expositor Cristão*, July 12, 1933.

⁶⁰ *Correio de São Paulo*, January 18, 1934, <http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/720216/3316>.

⁶¹ *Expositor Cristão*, July 19, 1933; *Expositor Cristão*, November 8, 1933.

⁶² *Expositor Cristão*, August 9, 1933.

described by Silveira included wider permission for divorce (in opposition to the Catholic prohibitory preference) and the advocacy several other social-democratic policies that were at odds with the more conservative Catholic agenda.⁶³

After the Assembly had ended, Silveira gave a detailed record of his point of view as a delegate, though his perspective on the issue of religious freedom is the most instructive. As the lone protestant member of the Assembly, Silveira's sense of being one especially chosen for the calling is apparent in his own recollections of the meeting. Depicting himself as something of a political novelty (he mentions delegate after delegate coming to him to meet the "protestant Father" or "protestant priest")⁶⁴, Silveira nonetheless bemoans the seemingly immovable assembly and their views of religious freedom. "It isn't just a few that confessed to me that they would vote against the religious amendments" he writes, "if it only wasn't for their other commitments."⁶⁵ While it's difficult to judge whether or not his fellow delegates were sincere in these comments, Silveira nonetheless clearly felt that he was at the cusp of a breakthrough with his colleagues.

Silveira doesn't specify which specific amendments weren't being voted against, nor the content or the nature of the debates that ensued. However, the

⁶³ Serbin, 208.

⁶⁴ Paul Freston's PhD. dissertation on a related subject also confirms that Silveira was likely the only known Protestant at the Assembly during this time period. See Paul Freston, "Protestantism e política no Brasil: da constituinte ao impeachment" (PhD. Diss), Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1993, 160-166.

⁶⁵ *Expositor Cristão*, December 27, 1933.

eventual outcome of the Assembly and the proposals that were accepted can provide some idea of the dominant Catholic influence present at the Assembly. The Assembly was widely considered a victory for the Catholics and the social legislation they had been pushing for since the Revolution of 1930. Three of the Catholic Electoral League's demands were met with hardly any argument: divorce prohibition, religious education in public schools, and designated Catholic chaplaincies to the armed forces.⁶⁶ These policies would later be built upon by Vargas, who instituted increased state subsidies to the Church for projects such as construction and social infrastructure.⁶⁷

Though Silveira's role as delegate may have seemed ultimately fruitless since he couldn't prevent the cooperation between the Catholic Church and the Vargas regime, some historians have argued that his outspokenness kept the state from establishing even tighter ties with the Catholic Church.⁶⁸ Silveira himself would claim that many results "were entirely favorable" to the evangelical cause.⁶⁹ As an individual, Silveira is something of an outlier as far as direct protestant political participation is concerned; he would later run as a delegate to the 1945 Constitutional Convention on an almost identical platform and remained a prolific political commentator for the protestant community.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Williams, *World Affairs*.

⁶⁷ Serbin, 208.

⁶⁸ Serbin, 208; Freston, 154-157.

⁶⁹ *Expositor Cristão*, December 27, 1933.

⁷⁰ *Expositor Cristão*, November 22, 1945

In the wake of the Assembly, Presbyterian clergy—many of whom were already formulating the creation of a Protestant Confederation for ecumenical political cooperation—released a “memorial” advocating for increased political involvement. While closer to an “anti-Catholic Electoral League” memo than a political manifesto, the memorial still elaborated on what protestants saw as important civic engagement. In addition to the standard petitions for more protections on religious freedom, the memorial called for a return to parliamentarianism as a check on the executive, a secret ballot system, and a law preventing election days from falling on a Sunday (seemingly out of a desire to maintain Sunday's separate status as the “Lord's Day”).⁷¹

Aside from periodic calls to action such as these in periodicals and impassioned speeches on the part of some pastors, Protestant political activism in the 1930-1934 period was still relatively muted, especially when compared to Leme's seemingly unstoppable political machine. Silveira's delegacy was a bright and very public moment in an otherwise unassuming movement, and while he gained enough votes for a seat at the Assembly Protestant political activism on a wider scale never truly came to fruition during this period, with the possible exception of public education policy. The fight over Brazil's education system and the religious influence contained therein would be one of the defining protestant debates of the Vargas Era.

⁷¹ Freston, 154.

EDUCATION

Of the many fronts that Protestants sought to fight off the influence of Catholicism, the role of the Church in the state education apparatus merited particular concern. As with other protestant concerns during the period, the issue at stake was possibility of returning to the 19th century status quo where Catholics dominated the education system, i.e., had the power to direct aspects of the curriculum and mandate Catholic religious observance in school. Protestants feared a reversal of Brazil's "secularized" public education system, one where the smaller protestant minority would be forced to participate in Catholic religious practices and curriculum. During the debates surrounding the 1934 Constitution and the regime's later proclamation of the Estado Novo in 1937, education remained a key issue for protestants nationwide. Vargas' ministry of education, headed by the capable Gustavo Capanema, was courted by influential Catholics who hoped to use the new centralized Vargas state to promulgate Catholic ideology through the education system. Protestant opposition was most salient during the days of the 1934 Constitutional Assembly and continued (albeit at a smaller scale) throughout the rest of the 1930s and early 1940s, at which point the periodicals shifted their focus from domestic questions of policy and began to look more intently at the rising international concerns brought on by World War II.

During the Vargas Era—and especially after the pronouncement of the Estado Novo in 1937—the central government played an essential role in

consolidated a new Brazilian canon of artistic, architectural, musical, and literary relics that still “endure in global imaginaries of Brazil and Brazilianness.”⁷² A brief review of just a few of these cultural artifacts are enough to see the staying power of Vargas’ cultural policies: samba as a national music form, *mestiçagem* as a key component of national identity, *feijoada* as a national dish, and the coopting of Brazil’s intellectual and artistic elites within the modernist movement, such as Manuel Bandeira, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Oscar Niemeyer and Heitor Villa-Lobos.⁷³ The goal of these sweeping policies was theoretically simple: rally the people around a new national identity and its patron: Vargas and his regime. A bold new infrastructure emerged to propagate this message; radio and film productions were given generous subsidies by the government to produce a gamut of content, from state-friendly puff-pieces to more blatant propaganda.⁷⁴ This new infrastructure was buttressed by an equally impressive bureaucracy, where new ministries and ministers from film to literature oversaw the nascent “cultural production” industry.

While music, film, and literature filled out the aesthetics of new “Brazilianness”, education was arguably the work-horse of Vargas’ cultural management project. Under the leadership of Gustavo Capanema from 1934-

⁷² Daryle Williams. 2016 "The Politics of Cultural Production during the Vargas Era, 1930–1945." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*. 18 Jan. 2019. <http://oxfordre.com/latinamericanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.001.0001/acrefore-9780199366439-e-290>.

⁷³ Robert M. Levine. *The Vargas regime: the critical years, 1934-1938*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970, 136-137.

⁷⁴ Daryle Williams. 2001. *Culture Wars In Brazil: the First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press.

1945, the Ministry of Health and Education would transform into one of Vargas' most effective and dependable organs.⁷⁵ The Catholic Church, recognizing the potential of the ministry to spread their own influence through the education system, moved to develop a relationship with Capanema that could pay dividends for their potential reach.⁷⁶ The Church's principal agent within Capanema's administration was Alceu Amoroso Lima, a zealous convert to Catholicism who became one of the era's most ardent anti-liberal/anti-communist voices.⁷⁷ Capanema and Alceu (as he was frequently called) had an important collaborative relationship; Capanema would say that Alceu was his, "principal advisor, who would indicate names, veto others, propose laws, and try to give content to the principal initiatives of the minister."⁷⁸ Alceu's influence was critical during the early years of Vargas' elected term and Capanema's time as education minister, where he pushed a pedagogical framework that would establish Catholic religious teaching as the foundation for a new national morality.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Capanema himself was something of an administrative and political wunderkind, becoming a city councilman at age 27 and becoming actively involved in 1929 with Vargas' pre-revolution opposition movement—the Liberal Alliance (*Aliança liberal*)—at age 29. In 1934, days after Vargas was elected president, he was appointed the Minister of Health and Education.

⁷⁶ Simon Schwartzman, "Gustavo Capanema e a educação brasileira: uma interpretação." *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*, 66 (153), 165-72, maio/ago 1985.

⁷⁷ Arduini, Guilherme Ramalho. "Em busca da idade nova: Alceu Amoroso Lima e os projetos católicos de organização social (1928-1945)." PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP). Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, 2015. While Alceu would drift away from his intense conservatism during the military dictatorship from 1964-1985, he was still an important conservative voice during the Vargas years.

⁷⁸ Schwartzman, Bomeny, and Costa, *Tempos de Capanema*, pp. 44-50, 173-75.

⁷⁹ Romanelli, Otaíza de Oliveira. *História da educação no Brasil*. Petrópolis: vozes, 1978, 144.

For their part most Protestants were generally hostile to the idea of Catholic influence in schools, though (predictably) they supported their own church-sponsored educational endeavors. Protestant groups have often united community and financial resources over education efforts, and early protestant groups in Brazil were no different. Both the Presbyterian Church of Brazil and the Methodist Church of Brazil sponsored major educational institutions; the Presbyterians through Mackenzie University (among others) and the Methodists through the Methodist University of São Paulo. Mackenzie University, founded as The American School 1870 by missionaries George and Mary Chamberlain, has always maintained a relationship with the Presbyterian Church. Originally founded as a mission school, it quickly expanded to include a large selection of classes for students of both sexes—co-ed classes were unheard of in private Catholic institutions at this time.⁸⁰ Mackenzie was also a pioneer of co-ed collegiate sports, where gymnastics and soccer were part of a required physical education curriculum.⁸¹ Perhaps most importantly Mackenzie didn't require any religious test for admission, and while it retains until today its affiliation with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, the current Board of Trustees isn't exclusively Presbyterian.⁸²

⁸⁰ Thompson, Oscar, Horace M. Lane and Carlos Reis. *Education in the State of São Paulo Brazil*. São Paulo: Typographia Brazil de Carlos Gerke, 1903.

⁸¹ Claudia Guedes (2011) 'Changing the cultural landscape': English engineers, American missionaries, and the YMCA bring sports to Brazil – the 1870s to the 1930s, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 28:17, 2594-2608, DOI: 10.1080/09523367.2011.627200

⁸² "Conselho Deliberativo", Instituto Presbiteriano Mackenzie, accessed February 7, 2019, <https://www.mackenzie.br/instituto/conselho-deliberativo/>; Thompson, et. al.; At the primary and secondary level, both the Presbyterian Church and the Independent Presbyterian Church

The Methodists were also involved in educational intuitions, though at a somewhat smaller scale given their reduced membership. The Methodist Church sponsored a chain of parochial schools that served the education needs of Methodist children whose parents wanted to avoid the Catholic-dominated system.⁸³ The Methodist University of São Paulo—founded as the Church Theology College in 1938—wouldn't gain its university status until 1997 and has since remained a relatively small institution in São Paulo's neighboring municipality of São Bernardo do Campo.⁸⁴ While still heavily associated with and important to the Methodist Church, it hasn't attained the "secular prestige" that Mackenzie has.

Even though Protestants had carved out their own educational enclaves, they quickly took issue with the public joining of church and state on the educational level. Open opposition to Vargas' Church-state partnership began in earnest in 1931, when the government declared the integration of religious education in public schools.⁸⁵ The partnership was seen as a great victory for the Catholic Church and their government interlocutors, who hoped to use the ground gained through this success to leverage other policy changes within the

have sponsored a wide network of schools in the country, and all these institutions—from the elementary to the university level—are open to students of all religious backgrounds.

⁸³ Boaventura, Silvana. "Escolas Paroquiais Metodistas." *Revista de EDUCAÇÃO do Cogeime* 5, no. 9 (1996): 83-98.

⁸⁴ <http://portal.metodista.br/sobre/historia>

⁸⁵ Getúlio Vargas, Chefe do Governo Provisório da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil. Decreto n. 19.941 - de 30 de abril de 1931, <http://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/decret/1930-1939/decreto-19941-30-abril-1931-518529-publicacaooriginal-1-pe.html>.

Vargas regime.⁸⁶ Protestants felt that this was just the first of many possible encroachments on their religious freedom.

Protestants have a long tradition of criticizing “papists” or “romanists”, and Brazil in the 1930s was no exception to the long-established trend.⁸⁷ Much of the criticism surrounding Church-state education initiatives focused on the possible exposure to “superstitions”, “paganism”, and “heresy”, with particular emphasis being placed on the Pope as the “true God of the Roman Church.”⁸⁸ This sentiment was contrasted with the “sincere [civility] of evangelicals, who aren’t corruptors of the faith.”⁸⁹ While it’s clear that institutional publications would elevate their own creeds, the language of purity and morality in the face of corruption was a common theme.⁹⁰

Protestant periodicals were somewhat silent on the issue as 1931 drew to a close, and religious education in public schools wouldn’t surface again as a major concern until the Constituent Assembly and the resulting Constitution of 1934. Protestant fears of education in public schools were realized after the Constitution passed; Chapter 2, Article 153 stated that “Religious education shall be of optional frequency and administered in accordance with the principles of

⁸⁶ Williams, Margaret Todaro. “Church and State in Vargas’s Brazil: The Politics of Cooperation.” *Journal of Church and State* 18, no. 3 (1976): 443-62.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23915133>.

⁸⁷ Calvani, Carlos Eduardo B. “A educação no projeto missionário do protestantismo no Brasil.” *Revista Pistis Praxis* 1, no. 1 (2009): 53-69.

⁸⁸ *Expositor Cristão*, February 4, 1931; *Expositor Cristão*, February 11, 1931. This was a common attack from Protestants towards Catholics.

⁸⁹ *O Puritano*, May 16, 1931

⁹⁰ *Expositor Cristão*, August 19, 1931; *Expositor Cristão*, October 14 1931.

the religious belief of the student expressed by the parents or guardians and shall constitute time in the primary, secondary, professional and normal public schools."⁹¹

Immediate reactions to the implications of this article were typically negative among Protestants, though not universal. "In any case, the new law is there..." wrote the Presbyterian *O Puritano*, "It's absurd. It's impractical."⁹² A host of hand-wringing questions were posed by the paper: "Will the public-school teachers do the teaching? Or will specialists be contracted...? Will Catholicism, Protestantism, and Spiritualism all be taught...?"⁹³ While the minutiae of the law weren't seen immediately, knee-jerk reactions like these represented only a part of the wider Protestant response. For example, the Presbyterian Church's *Norte Evangélico*—a periodical based in Recife, Pernambuco in Brazil's northwest—was slightly more dismissive of the news: "Will Brazil really receive an influx of life, an influx of new morality, as a result of these religious classes...? We doubt it."⁹⁴

One of the unexpected consequences of the law was a renewed vigor towards the development of a new social and political ethic among Protestants, which was primarily used as a defensive strategy to fight against the Catholic applications of these laws. This new ethic was marked by preliminary

⁹¹ Brazilian Constitution of 1934, chapter 2, article 153, <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Brazil/brazil34.html>.

⁹² *O Puritano*, June 10, 1934.

⁹³ *O Puritano*, June 10, 1934.

⁹⁴ *Norte Evangélico*, July 15, 1934.

forays into greater cooperation among the various protestant groups—basically early forms of Brazilian ecumenism, which up until that point had been largely imported from the United States and England. A “common enemy” in the form of the constitutional changes helped the somewhat fragmented protestant population rally around a singular cause.⁹⁵

This new cooperative effort can be observed as early as 1934. In the same article where the “absurd, impractical” law was decried, Presbyterians called for collective protestant action in order to bend the law to their own ends. “It’s necessary that all Protestants, from the north to the south, demand the enforcement of the law, asking for regular classes to be taught to their kids...be they few or many, be they in primary school or secondary school...we should also make an effort for all non-Catholics to do the same thing.”⁹⁶

Unfortunately for the ecumenical movement, the forces of politics would once again take center stage and divert Protestant attention back towards the government. Under the 1934 Constitution Vargas’ 4-year term was set to expire in 1938, and provisions within the Constitution prevented him from running for a second term. To maintain his status as president, Vargas and his advisors manufactured a false crisis in order to initiate a self-coup, re-cementing him as Brazil’s only executive authority.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Pierson, 148.

⁹⁶ *O Puritano*, June 10, 1934.

⁹⁷ Levine, Robert M. “Perspectives on the Mid-Vargas Years 1934-1937.” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 22, no. 1 (1980): 57-80. doi:10.2307/165612. The protestant response to the Estado Novo as a new political reality will be more thoroughly examined in the next chapter.

The Estado Novo, as the next phase of the Vargas Era came to be called, also had its own constitution. The Constitution of 1937, while generally more authoritarian in scope, maintained a similar educational provision with slightly different language: "Religious education may be considered as a subject of the ordinary course of primary, normal and secondary schools. However, it may not be the object of obligation of the teachers or of compulsory attendance by the students."⁹⁸ While this language might be considered more flexible than the 1934 language, Protestants still demonstrated a significant degree of consternation over how the article was applied in public schools.

Part of the problem was that the radical political shift didn't fundamentally change the religious dynamics of the country; Catholicism still maintained a relatively privileged position within the state apparatus and Protestants again felt marginalized.⁹⁹ While ever convinced that they only needed a chance to "show the sympathy of our programs" (and doctrines) to convince the Catholic and irreligious alike to the righteousness of their cause, religious education in public schools didn't undergo a major shift in the Protestant direction during these years, and Protestants were never quite able to establish their own curriculum on a wider scale.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Brazilian Constitution of 1937, article 133,
<http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Brazil/brazil37.html#mozToclid746400>

⁹⁹ *O Puritano*, March 15, 1941

¹⁰⁰ *Expositor Cristão*, September 15-22, 1942.

This isn't to say that Protestants experienced no success in their fights over education; rather that they were limited in scope and impact. For example, one particular thorn in the side for Protestants was the proliferation of crucifixes in primary schools.¹⁰¹ In Rio Grande do Sul, members of the Methodist Church rallied around the removal of crucifixes placed in local primary school and successfully petitioned the Ministry of Health and Education follow through.¹⁰² This episode is, additionally, indicative of the other Protestant educational activities during this period; relatively small victories in the education space and no meaningful inroads on curriculum on a national scale. Aside from their own educational enclaves Protestants never exercised meaningful control, nor were they successful in pushing aside the Catholic influence on the education system.

However, such experiences were the exception rather than the rule. For most of the Estado Novo period weighty ideological fights over the curriculum and pedagogy entered a "state of hibernation", in part because the language of the 1937 Constitution remained somewhat vague on the role of the state in education, though this didn't prevent the Catholic Church from continuing to exert its influence.¹⁰³ In fact, it was by-and-large accepted within the Estado Novo period that Catholic education in schools would remain intact; according to a government official writing in 1940, "The priest will then exercise the function

¹⁰¹ *O Puritano*, March 15, 1941, *O Puritano*, January 25, 1944.

¹⁰² *Expositor Cristão*, January 3, 1939.

¹⁰³ Romanelli, Otaíza de Oliveira. *História da educação no Brasil*. Petrópolis: vozes 268 (1978), 153.

of professor of religious truths, so that he can be equal to the other teachers that that minister the education."¹⁰⁴

The major Protestant periodicals also seemed to reach a similar conclusion in the 1940s, indicated by the slow drop-off of education policy coverage during those years. For many, Catholic dominance in the field of education was accepted as the reality, especially given the institutional cooperation between the Church and State.¹⁰⁵ Despite their efforts, Protestant attempts to reform the system either through national political participation or local action weren't as effective as they had hoped. In addition, a new set of concerns would come to dominate the pages of Protestant periodicals as Brazil stepped closer towards war.

Chapter Conclusion

The role of the Constitutional Assembly of 1934 in galvanizing Brazilian protestants to political action can't be understated. Ever since their arrival in the country, protestants have demonstrated an eminent concern for religious freedom, though finding an avenue through which those concerns could be publicly aired was incredibly difficult to come by. The dismantling of the Old Republic through the Revolution of 1930, and the call for the Constitutional Assembly in 1934 gave protestants the clearest opportunity to political

¹⁰⁴ M, J. N. - Polícia Civil do Distrito Federal, outubro de 1940. Arquivo Lourenço Filho, FGVICPDOC, p. 12, cited in Schwartzman, Bomeny, and Costa, *Tempos de Capanema*, pp. 44-50, 177.

¹⁰⁵ Schwartzman, Bomeny, and Costa, *Tempos de Capanema*, pp. 44-50, 181.

engagement that they had seen in decades, and one of the only chances that they had to try to prevent a wider rollback of the gains to religious freedom they had enjoyed. Latching on to national education as their issue of choice protestants did their best to galvanize their followers to action, though they found little lasting success; other than the election of Gauraci Silveira (who as the lone protestant couldn't prevent constitutional articles that benefited the Catholic Church) and other localized acts of protestation, Protestant efforts to prevent a reversal to the status quo weren't effective.

The next chapter will examine a new context within the Vargas regime that protestants again used to forward their political aims: World War II and its associated political climate. Communism, fascism and integralism were all increasingly more important on the world stage in the years leading up to the War, and Protestants saw in this new climate additional ways through which they could mobilize and voice their political opinions and be part of what they saw as a global movement. While this period didn't result in the same kind of direct action that Silveira's election to the Assembly did, the idea of being part of a global movement prompted protestants commentary on the War and its associated issues.

CHAPTER 2: Beginning to look internationally

Brazil occupies a unique place in Latin America as the only country to send troops to fight in Europe during World War II. This involvement pushed to the forefront many of its related political debates, such as the ideological forces of communism and fascism and the possible moral justifications for involvement in the conflict. As these debates became a larger part of the national dialogue, they also became a larger part of Protestant political discourse as written in their major periodicals. To that end, the period from 1937-1945 represented a shift in Protestantism's focus from primarily domestic issues to international ones, riding on the back of World War II and its related ideological battles. These debates were predicated by conflicts over Protestantism's place vis-à-vis Integralism and how they should respond to the establishment of the Estado Novo. As the possibility of war became more and more likely after Vargas' proclamation of the Estado Novo, protestants discussed the international implications of Communism and Fascism and how they would affect the wider Christian movement. Their evaluation that both of these ideologies would be detrimental to the international protestant cause drove Brazil's protestants to support the country's war effort, hoping that it would help bring to pass a new Protestant golden age by defeating atheistic Communism and (in their minds) Catholic-allied fascism.

Integralism and the Estado Novo

In the years leading up to the declaration of the Estado Novo in 1937, a new Brazilian political movement calling itself Integralism arrived on the scene. Integralism in Brazil began with the founding of the *Ação Integralista Brasileira* (AIB, or Brazilian Integralist Action) in 1932 by Plínio Salgado. Salgado, himself a writer and journalist, successfully built upon the Vargas regime's focus on cultural nationalism and Brazilian's fears of communism to create a popular right-wing movement. Though Integralism would be squashed by Vargas under the Estado Novo, the movement acted as an important precursor for many of the debates that would dominate Protestant political discourse for the duration of Vargas' rule. Initially viewing Integralism warily before shifting to outright opposition, many of the justifications given against Integralism would later be repeated in Protestant posturing against fascism (and to some degree Communism) as well as rationalizing Brazilian participation in World War II.

According to Salgado, Integralism extolled a robust military establishment, increased government involvement in certain sectors of the economy, and a general subservience by the states to the central government. They were fiercely anti-communist and anti-liberal, fighting with these groups over the middle-class vote and support.¹⁰⁶ The AIB also adopted many of the

¹⁰⁶ For an in-depth look at Integralism's ideology, see: Salgado, Plínio. *O integralismo perante a nação*. Livraria Clássica Brasileira, 1955. Documents 1 and 2 in particular lay out Integralism's place within Brazilian society.

aesthetic trimmings of European fascism; green shirt uniforms, goose-stepping marches, and stiff-arm salutes were all markers of the AIB.¹⁰⁷

The Catholic involvement with the AIB came out of distaste for mutual enemies, communism in particular. In integralism, the Church found an activist ally ready to rally others to their cause. In addition, the AIB provided a doctrinal/philosophical springboard that could be integrated into the growing catholic dominance movement. With Leme's continued resistance to the creation of an expressly Catholic political party, the AIB became a proxy-party; many priests (such as Helder Câmara) and laypersons joined the movement, and the intellectual output from the Centro Dom Vital was closely aligned with the AIB's own political proclamations.¹⁰⁸ Integralism and the Catholic Church formed a mutually beneficial political relationship that would last until the declaration of the Estado Novo in 1937.

Where the Catholic Church was happy to integrate integralism into their political strategies, Protestants came to realize that Integralism was ultimately a threat and that uniting themselves with it would be detrimental to their goals to preserve their rights to religious conscious. When Integralism was still a relatively new part of the political discourse, Protestants approached with caution: "We've received many questions about whether our [members] should affiliate

¹⁰⁷ Hilton, Stanley E. "Ação Integralista Brasileira: Fascism in Brazil, 1932-1938." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 9, no. 2 (1972): 3-29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3512745>.

¹⁰⁸ Williams, Margaret Todaro. "Integralism and the Brazilian Catholic Church." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 54, no. 3 (1974): 431-52. doi:10.2307/2512932.

themselves with Integralism” wrote the *Puritano* in 1935, “[but] we think that believers, at least right now, should not take part in Integralism or affiliate themselves with it” [emphasis in original].¹⁰⁹ Initially, much of the opposition to the movement was based primarily in perceived incompatibilities with the Bible; the *Expositor Cristão*, for example, laid out an 8-point refutation of Integralism. The critiques, based primarily out of the New Testament, reject the aggression, leadership style, and financial obligations associated with membership.¹¹⁰ These rejections are consistent with wider Protestant reactions of elevating theology and belief over pure politics.¹¹¹

These critiques also indicate the level that Integralism had entered the Brazilian Protestant world, and in the months leading up to the declaration of the Estado Novo Protestant reactions became harsher and more direct. Some congregations found the threat of integralism so great that they began formally expelling members from the Church if they were found to be associated with the movement.¹¹² Guaraci Silveira, the Methodist preacher who acted as a delegate in the 1934 convention, gave an impassioned speech on the floor of congress against the movement and its inherent opposition to the Christian church.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ *O Puritano*, May 10, 1935.

¹¹⁰ *Expositor Cristão*, April 14, 1936

¹¹¹ Mondragon, 31-33.

¹¹² João Marcos Leitão Santos. "O protestantismo brasileiro e o integralismo." *Fato & Versões-Revista de História* 6, no. 11 (2015).

¹¹³ Santos, *Revista de História*.

The tone of the articles in the Protestant periodicals also reflect the eventual shift from cautious ambiguity to outright denunciation. Just weeks before Vargas proclaimed the *Estado Novo*, the *Puritano* revised its previous view of Integralism, saying that “[can the believer] be faithful to the Gospel and to Integralism? No, they cannot. Be a believer or be an Integralist.”¹¹⁴ Outside of the periodicals, similar declarations were often made as part of a wider inter-Protestant effort, a union against the perceived dangers that Integralists brought against the Protestant movement as a whole. In addition to being unified against the Integralists, protestants also saw a necessity to unite against Integralist collaborators—namely, the Catholic Church.¹¹⁵

The perceived connection between Catholicism and Integralism was made apparent in the protestant periodicals. One such denunciations of Integralism printed in the protestant periodicals called out the “undercover link between Church and State” that was sure to wreck the future of both.¹¹⁶ An article from 1938 specifically cited the alleged comments of various Catholic clergy in regards to Integralism:

D. Antonio...declared that Integralism deserved the blessings of the Lord and of Brazil. D. Henrique...affirmed that Integralism was 'healthy and constructive nationalism, robust and Christian...D. Francisco...wrote that Integralism was a living force in defense of the fundamental morals of the Brazilian State.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ *O Puritano*, September 10, 1937.

¹¹⁵ Santos, *Revista da Historia*.

¹¹⁶ *O Puritano*, January 25, 1937.

¹¹⁷ *O Puritano*, June 25, 1938.

The article concludes with a call to reject these views and embrace the true Christian way. Such pronouncements reflect the general distrust that Protestant leaders held of Integralism, and their fear that Catholic collaborators were increasing their influence. As missionary letters from the period indicate, it was thought that an alliance between fascism and Catholicism would pose the greatest threat to Protestantism's health in Brazil.¹¹⁸

Vargas would end the Integralist movement, however, and Integralism's unique blend of fascist aesthetics and Brazilian nationalism wouldn't arise again under his rule (though Vargas' regime itself exhibited its own set of fascist tendencies). With the Integralist movement dismantled, Leme and the Catholic hierarchy were forced to return to a simpler *quid pro quo* method of government influence. As Historian Margaret Williams has described, "When Leme needed a political favor for the church, he worked personally with the president through frequent informal conversations, of which no records were kept. On particularly sensitive issues, he sent his emissaries to break the ground for negotiations."¹¹⁹ Such methods would define the Church-State relationship for the remainder of the Vargas years.

Part of this change was brought on by the shifting political climate. Vargas' 4-year term as elected president was set to expire in 1938 and under the regime of the 1934 Constitution, Vargas would be prohibited from running

¹¹⁸ Pierson, 140.

¹¹⁹ Williams, *Church and State*.

again considering his already 8-yearlong leadership as both provisional president and elected president. In a bid to hold on to power, Vargas and his military allies resolved to fabricate a crisis—called the *Plano Cohen* (Cohen Plan)—that would allow Vargas to remain in control for an indefinite period of time. First introduced by General Goés Monteiro in a nationwide radio address and later echoed by Vargas himself, the *Plano Cohen* purported to be a set of instructions outlining a secret Jewish, communist plot to overthrow the government.¹²⁰ The fraudulent plan stoked the already present fear of communism in Brazil—leftists in Brazil's military had already staged an attempted uprising in 1935—and attempted to manipulate public fear against another coup attempt.¹²¹

The government moved quickly, and on November 10, 1937, Vargas formally announced the dissolution of the previous constitution and the emergence of the new regime. He dissolved the legislature, abandoned the 1934 Constitution and adopted a considerably more authoritarian one in its place.¹²² Vargas' new government from 1937-1945 would be christened the *Estado Novo*—the New State. Taking his cues from Antonio Salazar in Portugal (who was also at the head of his own authoritarian government in Portugal, also

¹²⁰ Lira Neto, *Getúlio (1930-1945): do governo provisório à ditadura do Estado Novo*. Editora Companhia das Letras, 2013, 304-306; Richard Bourne, *Getulio Vargas of Brazil, 1883-1954: sphinx of the pampas*. Charles Knight Limited, 1974, 162-163. Needless to say, the plan also centered around anti-Semitic sentiment in Brazil at the time.

¹²¹ See: Levine, Robert M. *The Vargas regime: the critical years, 1934-1938*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970, 144-146; Prestes, Anita Leocadia. 70 anos da aliança nacional libertadora (ANL). *Estudos Ibero-Americanos*, Porto Alegre, p. v. 31, n. 1, p. 101-120, jun. 2005; Dulles, 150-155.

¹²² Skidmore, 33; Levine, 138-139.

called the Estado Novo) and Mussolini in Italy, Vargas created something of a unique political concoction; it was “anti-Communist, anti-liberal, and anti-democratic”¹²³, while remaining focused on industrialization, worker’s rights, and nationalism, all without losing the branding of a democracy.¹²⁴ Ultimately it placed Vargas at the head of an ideologically powerful state, and increasingly powerful executive, with a unique supporting coalition.

The governing mechanisms for the Estado Novo granted Vargas and the now virtually unchecked executive branch significant policymaking powers. For politically engaged Catholics, the new regime meant significant changes from the “working relationship” of the provisional years. The Catholic Electoral League—the primary apparatus of Catholic political mobilization—had been slowly waning in its influence over the previous couple of years. Vargas’ regime itself was becoming increasingly wary of Catholic influence in the government, and after the proclamation of the 1937 Constitution the LEC effectively died.¹²⁵

Immediate Protestant reactions were somewhat more muted, but nonetheless positive. News of the new 1937 Constitution didn’t make the front page of the *Expositor Cristão*, and even then, the paper only dedicated half a page to commentary, mostly on the religious implications of Article 122. This article outlined religious freedom under the new regime, affirming that “all

¹²³ Michael Reid, *Brazil: The troubled rise of a global power*. Yale University Press, 2014, 83.

¹²⁴ Schemes, Claudia. *Festas civicas e esportivas: Um estudo comparativo dos governos Vargas (1937-1945) e Peron (1946-1955)*. Feevale: Novo Hamburgo, 2005. This has led some commentators to refer to Vargas as a proto-Peronist. See here: Paul H. Lewis, “The Durability of Personalist Followings: The Vargas & Peronist Cases.” *Polity*5, no. 3 (1973): 401-414.

¹²⁵ Williams, *World Affairs*.

individuals and religious beliefs may freely and publicly exercised."¹²⁶ The only additional commentary that the editors of the *Expositor* added was general encourage to uphold the new Constitution in the upcoming plebiscite.¹²⁷

Later analyses done by the *Expositor* indicate wide acceptance of the new Constitution, citing wider protections of religious freedom than those granted in the 1934 document. According to the paper, "If the Constitution remains as it is, without amendments or adjustments at the last minute that could harm our religious liberties, it is very good for us."¹²⁸ Similar commentary was made by the PCB's *Puritano*: "In reference to the new Constitution—without getting in to our appreciation for its civil and political structure...it is magnificent in its touch in regards to religious topics."¹²⁹ Once again reaffirming their commitment to the issues of religious freedom, the paper encouraged its readership to pray that Brazil would live by the tenets written in the new Constitution.

However, in the years leading up to and including World War Two, a new pair of enemies arose in the Brazilian consciousness: European fascism and communism. The interplay between the Catholic and Protestant reaction is particularly interesting because while Catholics and protestants differed strongly on the question of Integralism's role within Brazil—and arguably the role of

¹²⁶ Brazilian Constitution of 1937, Article 122 Clause 4, <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Brazil/brazil37.html>.

¹²⁷ *Expositor Cristão*, November 16, 1937.

¹²⁸ *Expositor Cristão*, December, 1937.

¹²⁹ *O Puritano*, November 25, 1937.

fascism abroad, particularly in Europe—both were united in the perceived rise of international communism.

Communism and Fascism

The Vargas regime's relationship with international powers was fluid and in many regards subject to the influence of the United States, especially leading up to and during the war years. Vargas had a somewhat difficult political task in Brazil during the 1930s; fascist governments in Portugal, Italy, and Spain had risen, and the emergence of the Soviet Union in the late 1910s were challenging the "brand" of liberal democracy, and many liberal western powers were looking to win countries to their cause.¹³⁰ Brazil's Protestants were keenly aware of these larger political forces and offered direction to their followers through their periodicals. In one of the few exceptions to their near completely consistent pattern, Protestants demonstrated a limited degree of solidarity with their Catholic counterparts insofar as they were both united in opposition to communism. Such posturing wasn't the norm, however; protestants saw Catholicism as a key ally to European fascism, and perceived cooperation of the two demonstrated that fascism needed to be destroyed.

Vargas was also keenly aware of the political winds of the period, and he quickly moved to stamp out communist influence under his rule. A set of real communist activities—the famous *Coluna Prestes* and the failed 1935 ANL

¹³⁰ Riordan Roett, "The Making of Modern Brazil, 1930–64." In *The New Brazil*, 37-54. Brookings Institution Press, 2010. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt6wpc9v.7>.

uprising—predicated the use of the fictitious *Plano Cohen* to facilitate Vargas' rise and "preserve the integrity" of the country.¹³¹ Domestically and internationally, Vargas found cause to unite himself against the communists. He wasn't the only one; Vargas also found a willing ally in the fight against the influence of communism with the Catholic Church. When the Vargas government used the *Plano Cohen* as cover for the self-coup, the Church took advantage of the political moment to come out in force against the spread of communism in Brazil. A pastoral letter from Brazil's bishops condemned Marxism as a threat to Christian morals, and later documents decried the concept of the class struggle which generally meant harsh attitudes towards labor strikes or other types of popular unrest.¹³²

Catholic opposition to communism was largely a moral question, and the realities of communist influence were perceived to be everywhere by the Church. Loosened sexual mores and changing gender roles (emasculatation and the public role of women), crises brought on by modernity, and new media were all seen as vehicles for the creeping communist takeover.¹³³ Though their opposition was fueled by somewhat different motives, the common cause of anticommunism helped maintain the Church-state relationship throughout the Estado Novo years, especially after the dissolution of the AIB.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Dulles, 148-153.

¹³² Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics*, 33.

¹³³ Cowan, 26.

¹³⁴ Ralph Della Cava, "Catholicism and Society in Twentieth-Century Brazil." *Latin American Research Review* 11, no. 2 (1976): 7-50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2502548>.

In one major exception to the oppositional stance Protestants generally took vis-à-vis the Catholic Church, both groups demonstrated a strident belief that Communism was a dangerous social ill that needed to be fought, though they differed somewhat in their justifications as to why. Protestants concerns over the perceived rising tide of communism in Brazil included its tendency to divide otherwise happily coexisting groups, its offering of an alternative paradigm and ideology to Christianity, and its focus on materialism were among some of the more common critiques. Notably absent in the Protestant periodicals are indications that communism would usher in the moral crises than many Catholics foresaw. Indeed, the different emphasis weren't uncommon in Latin America among Protestants during this period. As historian Carlos Mondragon points out, "for [Latin American protestants], no economic-political system of human origin should be confused with the messianic kingdom that was spoken of in the Bible and toward which they aspired."¹³⁵

In fact, from a Brazilian Protestant stand point, communism was seen as absolutely incompatible with Christianity. The line between the two was clearly drawn. In 1932, the *Expositor Cristão* wrote, "On one side, the figure of Christ, humbly presenting the white flag of love...on the other side, the figure of Lenin, with his red flag of hate."¹³⁶ The *Puritano* echoed these concerns, citing the new Soviet state's antagonism towards religion as a disqualifying factor for any

¹³⁵ Mondragon, 96.

¹³⁶ *Expositor Cristão*, November 23, 1932

evangelical support, going as far as to call communism's rise the "largest [potential] cataclysm of this century."¹³⁷ Since Brazilian protestants saw threats in all corners of society, the forceful language used in these articles is both interesting and instructive in understanding why Communism was seen as a higher-order threat. Communism's universalizing theory of human interaction and society was seen as particularly threatening, and the Soviet application—characterized by its state atheism—even more so.¹³⁸

This impending threat was interpreted in part as the destruction of established societal norms and values, ones that Protestants saw an integral to their own identity and to the survival of the societies that they existed in.

According to the *Puritano*:

Communism is the formal and explicit rejection of evangelical faith, which bases itself in love, liberty, and tolerance, in the balance of the classes, in the harmony of capital and the worker, in religion, in the right to property, in the honor of the indissoluble monogamous family, in the democratic liberal regime, in the social order, in peace, and in equal rights, duties and privileges.¹³⁹

This extensive list of concepts that protestants were worried were at risk sought to destroy also indicates the level of danger that they saw in the new "universalizing" theory of human interaction; in fact, they were worried that it had the potential to subvert and replace Christianity. As the *Norte Evangelico* wrote, "Communism...intends to substitute the universalism of Christianity and

¹³⁷ *O Puritano*, September 25, 1934; *O Puritano*, December 10, 1934.

¹³⁸ See John Anderson, *Religion, state and politics in the Soviet Union and successor states*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

¹³⁹ *O Puritano*, November 10, 1937.

replace it with their own pagan universalism.”¹⁴⁰ For a religious group that is ever seeking to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, settling for “pagan” alternatives was naturally unthinkable.

In addition to the rejection of communism of religious grounds, protestants claimed that the materialistic outlook provided by Marxist analysis was also problematic.¹⁴¹ Seeing the world in purely material terms was apparently an issue, but these concerns were also frequently juxtaposed with staunch defenses of capitalism, which protestants saw not as materialistic, but God-ordained.¹⁴² “The [biblical] patriarchs were almost always rich men” explained the *Puritano*, providing a biblical defense for the capitalist system while rejecting the inevitable poverty that would follow the adoption of communism.¹⁴³ In their minds, these were reasons enough to resist any communist impulses that found their way to Brazil’s shores, and to stand as defenders of capitalism.

While Protestant critiques of communism are definitive and numerous, their periodicals make some interesting observations on the relative dangers of Communism versus fascism. In some cases, side by side analysis were printed in an attempt to demonstrate just how degenerate both worldviews were.¹⁴⁴

Always presenting communism as a creeping threat that needed to be dealt

¹⁴⁰ *O Norte Evangelico*, March 1, 1943. Many of the periodicals vacillated between labeling communism as pagan and labeling it as atheist. Note: In the printed editions of the *Norte Evangelico*, “Evangelico”, when written as part of the title, was almost always written without the accent mark.

¹⁴¹ *O Puritano*, January 25, 1937.

¹⁴² *O Puritano*, January 25, 1937.

¹⁴³ *O Puritano*, September 25, 1934.

¹⁴⁴ *O Puritano*, January 25, 1937.

with, when presented vis-à-vis fascism the right-wing was seen as at least as insidious an enemy. The *Expositor Cristão* noted that “Atheist Communism is not more dangerous to Christianity than fascism. Fascism is the enemy, in its methods and objectives, to everything that the Christian Church holds dear.”¹⁴⁵ While the new universalizing view of humanity was critiqued in both cases, it was the types of relationships that fascists formed that brought them to be considered as the larger threat; particularly, its perceived relationship with the Catholic Church.

Critiques along these lines were common amongst major Protestant thinkers and theologians of the day. A significant part of Protestantism's greater denunciation of fascism than communism stems from the way European fascist government co-opted the church in support of their regimes. In other words, where communism openly declared itself an enemy of the church, fascism would align itself with Christians (in the European case, often Catholics) despite its authoritarian tendencies. Fascism was seen as more duplicitous in its motives and therefore a larger danger to the health of the church as a whole.¹⁴⁶

As was the case with Integralism, protestants believed that Catholics were co-conspirators in the fascist infiltration of the wider Christian movement. Typically, protestants derided the connection between fascism and Catholicism by using Italy as a case study.¹⁴⁷ In the early to mid 1930s, Pope Pius XI's relationship with Mussolini's regime was somewhat cooperative; as was seen in

¹⁴⁵ *Expositor Cristão*, August 25, 1936.

¹⁴⁶ Mondragon, 84-85.

¹⁴⁷ *Expositor Cristão*, March 12, 1940.

Brazil, the Pope successfully lobbied for mandatory Catholic education in public schools. In addition, Pope Pius XI pushed for prohibitions on the ability for protestants to gather in public.¹⁴⁸ Such cooperation, however, was ultimately short lived. After 1938, when Mussolini began to integrate the more radical ideas emanating from Hitler's Germany, Pope Pius XI postured himself against the regime and took a more critical posture against it.¹⁴⁹

For Brazil's protestants, however, the damage had already been done. The fascist-infused Catholic influence in Europe was a plague that needed to be wiped out. According to the *Expositor Cristão*, "We see on one side godless and Christ-less Nazism, imposing a 'New Order in Europe', and yoking their cart to Italy, headquarters of the Vatican, home of the Popes, and exercising decisive influence in Catholic Spain and subjugating France and Poland, among others."¹⁵⁰ Citing a Portuguese-language evangelical paper from Massachusetts, the *Puritano* criticized this perceived cooperation, saying that "the ideas of the Pope [Pius XI] and the ideas of Mussolini are in perfect harmony."¹⁵¹ This type of equivocating language wasn't uncommon; in an article arguing for support of the war effort (an aspect of Protestant political discourse that will be explained further in the next section), the *Expositor Cristão*

¹⁴⁸ David I. Kertzer, *The Pope and Mussolini: The Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe*, Random House, 2014.

¹⁴⁹ Anthony Richard Ewart, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators: 1922-1945*. Holt McDougal, 1973.

¹⁵⁰ *Expositor Cristão*, June 30, 1942.

¹⁵¹ *O Puritano*, September 10, 1944. Note how even in 1944, after Pope Pius XI's death and the imminent collapse of Mussolini's government, Brazilian (and American) protestants are still critical of the Vatican and their role in Europe.

wrote that, "Italian Romanism has been, in Brazil, religious fascism."¹⁵² Such critiques of fascism weren't limited to Italy; the major periodicals also had plenty to say in regards to Hitler's Germany.

Fascism was ultimately seen as the as more prescient threat to Protestants because of its association with Hitler's Third Reich. While the horrors of the Holocaust and other acts of Hitler's government weren't well-known in the West until the early 1940s, many protestants called out the fascism of Germany as an enemy to the Christian cause well before Brazil became involved in the war. In 1936 the *Expositor Cristão* wrote that Hitler's Germany was an existential threat to Protestantism's survival on the European continent.¹⁵³ It wasn't just Hitler's government in and of itself that was the problem, however; the root of the issue was the perceived relationship between Germany and the Catholic Church. Protestants expressed concern about the apparent "de-Christianization" of the German people and the imprisonment of protestant pastors as possible harbingers of what was to come for the church in Europe.¹⁵⁴ The *Expositor Cristão* called what was taking place in Germany an open "war against religion", though this should be interpreted as a "war against Protestantism" since these same periodicals believe Catholicism held a privileged place in the fascist regimes of Europe.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² *Expositor Cristão*, November 10, 1942.

¹⁵³ *Expositor Cristão*, September 29, 1936.

¹⁵⁴ *Expositor Cristão*, November 16, 1937; September 13, 1938.

¹⁵⁵ *Expositor Cristão*, February 27, 1940. It's important to note that this perception of Catholic subservience to Hitler's regime was misguided; the Catholic Church's response to Hitler changed as his regime progressed and vacillated amongst and between leadership. A lively scholarly

In stark contrast, the “war against religion”—at least in the pages of the periodicals—didn't appear to include Jews. Despite the columns dedicated to solidarity with the Protestant cause, there's a dearth of commentary of the horrors committed against Jewish people. Some exceptions exist; one strongly-worded article from the *Norte Evangelico* said that, “Nazi anti-Semitism is the nucleus of the current ordeal the world is passing through...The Nazi hate against the Jews is an abyss of inhumane madness”,¹⁵⁶ though it stands out alone among all the major periodicals operated by the Presbyterians and the Methodists. Such exemptions help demonstrate just how much Brazilian protestants were concerned about the war's potential to weaken the protestant cause worldwide. In fact, Brazilian protestants saw the war as an opportunity to fight against what they saw as the unholy alliance of fascism and Catholicism happening in Europe.

Communism and fascism were both seen as threats to the protestant cause, and Brazil's protestant periodicals took it upon themselves to warn their followers against their influence in Brazil. More than that, however, they also used the more widespread western opposition to fascism and communism to “piggy-back” onto a global movement and try to associate their Brazilian

debate still exists as to the extent of Pope Pius XII's support for the Third Reich. For a more thorough treatment of this relationship, see Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965*. Indiana University Press, 2000; Rhodes, Anthony Richard Ewart, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators: 1922-1945*. Holt McDougal, 1973; Cornwell, John. *Hitler's pope: the secret history of Pius XII*. Penguin, 2000; Dalin, David G. *The myth of Hitler's Pope: Pope Pius XII and his secret war against Nazi Germany*. Simon and Schuster, 2012.

¹⁵⁶ *Norte Evangelico*, March 1, 1943.

context with the wider issues at play in Europe. Perhaps if they could become part of a global movement they could exert more influence at home. The protestant reaction to Brazil's entry and role in the war itself also helps demonstrate this point to a greater degree, illustrating the protestant belief that Brazil's war effort could be part of a wider goal to protect and expand protestant thought.

World War II

Brazil's protestants passed through an evolution in their perspectives on involvement in the War, an evolution that largely follows the general Brazilian population's. While initially opposed to war on mainly moral and theological grounds, the realities of German aggression eventually turned Protestants into war supporters. As they became supports for the War, Protestants changed their rhetoric from one that explained the necessity of countering German encroachment to one that advocated for the destruction of the (so they believed) Catholic-allied powers of Germany and Italy. In the eyes of Brazil's protestants, that destruction would then bring about new world order headed by luminary protestant leaders, thus securing their place as the guiding light of the world.

Brazil's involvement in the war came piece by piece. In the early to mid 1930s, Vargas attempted to balance almost all of the interests of the major world powers even as conflict between them appeared more and more inevitable. During this period Brazil even simultaneously signed two different

favorable trade agreements, one with the United States and one with Germany, in a bid to keep the economy growing and industrializing.¹⁵⁷ As Hitler's aggression in Europe grew, however, relationships with Germany became more difficult to sustain and Brazil turned to the United States to fill the gap. New economic and military agreements (including a military base in Brazil's northeast) pushed Brazil closer to the allied side, though they remained nominally neutral and didn't yet enter in a military capacity.¹⁵⁸

Such activity did not go unnoticed by Brazil's protestant population. While the Vargas regime was mulling over the possibility of its involvement, in the months leading up to Brazil's formal entry in 1942 protestants were by and large against Brazil's participation. The *Expositor Cristão* released a multipage declaration calling for the United States and other theretofore neutral nations to immediately mediate a peaceful resolution to the European conflict.¹⁵⁹ This wasn't a unique subgenre of article during the period; detailed columns outlined how Christians "could not, in any form, justify war"¹⁶⁰ and how war was, "against our principles."¹⁶¹ In general, widespread calls for a peaceful resolution

¹⁵⁷ Frank D. McCann, "Brazil and the United States: Two Centuries of Relations." In *Brazil - United States Relations: XX and XXI Centuries*, edited by Munhoz Sidnei J. and Silva Francisco Carlos Teixeira Da, 23-52. Maringá: SciELO – EDUEM, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7476/9788576286592.4>.

¹⁵⁸ Frank D. McCann, *The Brazilian-American Alliance, 1937-1945*. Princeton University Press, 1973, 212-216. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt13x0s0p>.

¹⁵⁹ *Expositor Cristão*, October 14, 1941. Note that this article was released prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, which would lead to the United States' entry into the war.

¹⁶⁰ *Expositor Cristão*, October 14, 1939.

¹⁶¹ *Expositor Cristão*, September 3, 1940.

prior to Brazilian involvement citing Christian pacifist principals were frequent from 1939-1941.¹⁶²

Eventually, however, war would find its way to Brazil. In the one hand, the geographical proximity to the United States was an influential factor in the government's choice to enter the war. Alignment with the United States against the Axis powers was seen as smart national policy given how extensive the new trade agreements and infrastructure projects were. When the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the conflict, Vargas' regime knew that their greater involvement was likely inevitable, saying that "it would be better...for [Brazil] to wait until a formal declaration of war from the United States" before acting further in regards to the war.¹⁶³ While the United States entrance into the war in 1941 played a part in Brazil's eventual participation, Brazil's decision to declare war was ultimately a result of their being the recipients of Axis aggression. During 1942, several Brazilian merchant ships were sunk by German submarines resulting in a substantial loss of civilian life. As it did in the United States, becoming the victim of Axis attacks influenced public opinion and galvanized the government to act.¹⁶⁴

Protestant reaction to German aggression was, in the major periodicals, negative. Pointing to Brazil's state tendency of avoiding formal declarations of

¹⁶² *Expositor Cristão*, December 17, 1938; *O Puritano*, August 25, 1940; *Norte Evangelico*, September 1, 1942; *Norte Evangelico* December 1, 1942.

¹⁶³ Vasco Leitão da Cunha to Justiça Fransico Campos, March 25, 1941, CPDOC/VLC s 1941.03.05.

¹⁶⁴ Frank D. McCann, "Brazil and World War II - The Forgotten Ally: What did you do in the war, Zé Carioca?" *Estudios interdisciplinarios de America Latina y el Caribe* 6, no. 2 (2015).

war or getting mixed up in international conflicts, the *Norte Evangelico* wrote, “however, there comes an hour when it is no longer possible to continue in peace without the absolute rupture of our national dignity; five unarmed Brazilian merchant ships, some of them transporting women and children, were torpedoed...this was a direct attack on Brazil, a provocation, an insult.”¹⁶⁵ The *Expositor Cristão*, which earlier in the year was firmly against military action, now said that “[Brazil], like all democratic countries, now has the difficult responsibility to combat totalitarianism...the attitude of the church should be complete solidarity with the government to energetically combat this evil that intends to consume the world.”¹⁶⁶ With Brazil's sovereignty under attack, even pacifist protestants found reason to back the war.

Vargas' meeting with President Roosevelt in 1943 helped define Brazilian involvement on a military level, as well as providing an outline for what Brazilian participation would look like. On Brazil's Atlantic coast, the Navy would be involved with coastal patrols to find and sink German and Italian submarines and ships. Starting in 1944 in the European theater, a total of over 25,000 personnel were sent to northwestern Italy to fight under American command, where their contributions were essential to Allied success in that region. A small air force squadron consisting of 48 pilots and other support staff also flew missions over Italy during this period. The Brazilian Expeditionary Force—who

¹⁶⁵ *Norte Evangelico*, September 1, 1942.

¹⁶⁶ *Expositor Cristão*, November 17, 1942.

earned the nickname the “Smoking Snakes” or “Smoking Cobras” (*cobras fumantes*)—participated in Allied-led efforts in the Italian peninsula.¹⁶⁷

Between the period of submarine attacks in 1942 and the Italian Campaign in 1944, protestants demonstrated a relatively united message about what the war’s goals should be, or at least what Brazil and the other Allied forces should hope to accomplish during the fighting. One of the most comprehensive declarations was printed in the *Puritano*, the result of an ecumenical conference among protestants in the United States and translated into Portuguese for divulgation to the Brazilian churches. Among other initiatives, it called for faith leaders to help construct the post-war world, for the Allied nations to take on post-war reconstruction of destroyed areas, to give generous terms of surrender to the Axis powers, and for the protection of smaller nations caught up in the fighting that could be negatively affected by any post-war agreements.¹⁶⁸

This article demonstrates the most thorough explanation of the protestant position during the war, and it’s reflective of most other commentary the protestant periodicals published. Most other commentaries were variations on these themes; that the allied/victorious nations must include all other countries in the post-war regime¹⁶⁹, that faith leaders needed to contribute to the post-war

¹⁶⁷ Frank D. McCann, “The Brazilian Expeditionary Force: The Smoking Cobras.” In *Brazil and the United States during World War II and Its Aftermath*, pp. 183-224. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

¹⁶⁸ *O Puritano*, May 25, 1943.

¹⁶⁹ *Expositor Cristão*, June 22, 1943.

discussion¹⁷⁰, and that countries “large or small” still needed protection and rights, particularly the freedom of religion.¹⁷¹ These calls to action largely lacked any direct reference to the happenings of the war, instead constantly forwarding the idea of peace as soon as it was possible.

While these messages could definitely be construed as generally positive, there was also some direct criticism of the Catholic Church in the overall commentary on the war. While Brazilian Catholics and Protestants didn't differ significantly in what they viewed as Brazil's role in the conflict, Protestants believed that the war demonstrated a new age of protestant supremacy. Citing what they believed to be the declining national relevance of the Catholic Church, the *Puritano* wrote, “During this painful war, the sound and resolute leadership of the people is with Protestantism. Roosevelt, Churchill, Chiang-Kai-Shek—these are the giants of the world.”¹⁷² The *Puritano* was particularly critical of Catholicism during the war; it claimed that the material interests of the Catholic Church were burdening the Brazilian economy during wartime¹⁷³ and that the Italian Church was “reaping what they've sown” when Rome was being bombarded.¹⁷⁴ The *Norte Evangelico* wrote that the Catholic countries were exhausted from the fight, while Protestant countries were, “giving their all

¹⁷⁰ *Norte Evangelico*, August 25, 1943

¹⁷¹ *Expositor Cristão*, July 6, 1943.

¹⁷² *O Puritano*, July 25, 1943

¹⁷³ *O Puritano*, January 10, 1944.

¹⁷⁴ *O Puritano*, March 25, 1944

so that tomorrow's world won't be a field of petty competitions, but an abundant barn where all can live in peace."¹⁷⁵

The protestant perception of their religion's centrality to the war effort carried over into the post-war reconstruction mentality. As the war drew to a close, Protestants again turned their focus to the role of the Church in building the post-war world. "What is the role of the evangelical churches in the post-war?" asked the *Norte Evangelico*.¹⁷⁶ Responses varied; some, like the article mentioned here, proposed "intercessory prayer" on behalf of the victims of the violence and for those who would run the peace negotiations. Others, like the *Puritano*, felt that the hour was right for a renewed sense of religious (read: Protestant) vigor to be injected into the world conscious as a sort of balm for the wounds caused by the war.¹⁷⁷ And in all cases, Brazilian protestants demanded that all post-war regimes maintain strong protections for religious freedom in the countries affected by the war.¹⁷⁸

The protestant reaction to the war indicates that they saw the war not only as a fight against the evils of fascism, but as a way to spread and protect protestants the world over. To them, a new world was on the horizon where Catholicism was no longer dominant and the new order would be overseen by protestant political leadership in the West. Latching on to this new movement

¹⁷⁵ *Norte Evangelico*, April 1, 1944.

¹⁷⁶ *Norte Evangelico*, July 15, 1944.

¹⁷⁷ *O Puritano*, April 25, 1944.

¹⁷⁸ *O Puritano*, May 25, 1944; *Expositor Cristão*, August 3, 1944, November 9, 1944.

was seen as an important step to their temporary survival and eventual growth, and the Allied victory and dissolution of the fascist (and, to protestants, Catholic) states only further demonstrated in their eyes how inevitable their victory was.

Chapter Conclusion

Similar to the Constitution of 1934 before it, the war and its attached issues gave protestant leadership (through their periodicals) yet another avenue through which to mobilize and spread their political vision for the future. While their participation wasn't as direct as it had been with the Assembly, it does represent the expansion of the protestant political sphere and their vision for their political future. Fascism and communism were both global movements with global implications, exceeding the domestic outlook of the Constitution of 1934 and forcing protestants to grapple with the new political reality. In addition, while Protestantism has always been an outward-looking evangelizing movement the war brought to the protestant mind new ideas for what was possible in terms of political participation. The thought of uniting themselves with a resurgent protestant movement (in this case exemplified by the protestant Allied leadership) to "take back" what had been lost to Catholicism in Europe was certainly an exciting prospect that couldn't be ignored. Communism, fascism, and the war helped create a different breed of protestant political commentary, one marked by a new hope for their faith's worldwide political impact.

Conclusion

What, then, made the Vargas years unique or different from the period and preceded and followed it? Protestant opposition to Catholicism on a political level in some form was ubiquitous for most of the former's history, and state patronage of Catholicism in Latin America had essentially been the standard since the colonial period. The two groups disagreed on doctrines and practice, and cross-denominational ecumenical work wouldn't become a major movement until the latter half of the 20th century. The uniqueness of the Vargas Era for protestant political participation in opposition to Catholicism instead rests on new ways that the protestant minority reacted to the changing circumstances around them. Through the Constitutional Assembly of 1934, protestants explored new avenues of participation and a "banner issue" for which to lobby for. Through the political climate surrounding World War II, protestants grappled on to global movements and issues in order to stake their claim for relevancy.

The Constitution of 1934 and the debates that surrounded it, namely questions over religious freedom, official state religion, and the role of the Church in education prompted a level of protestant political participation—through the election of Guaraci Silveira and other widespread calls for increased involvement—in national government that hadn't been observed up until that point. Protestants marshaled their membership and their printing operations in order to rally the faithful in support of their causes and candidates,

and individuals like Guaraci Silveira attained a surprising degree of political “celebrity” on account of his religious background alone. While the hope that Protestants put into the Constitution of 1934 may ultimately have been misplaced, it still provided a venue through which they could openly voice their opposition in a political context.

World War II and its own unique Brazilian context—pre-war integralism, fascism, and communism—also gave Protestants a global event to latch onto in order to oppose Catholicism. The Catholic Church’s tacit support of integralism domestically opened the door for more vibrant criticism of Catholicism’s supposed relationship with fascism abroad. The coincidence of major allied figures being protestants served to more deeply convince Brazilian protestants that their time of living in Catholicism’s shadow was coming to an end. Communism, while a shared enemy between the two groups, was interpreted as a constant external threat that Protestants took advantage of to sustain their political discourse and justification for the war’s efforts.

These events ultimately gave Protestants the opportunity to engage publicly with Brazilian political life in a way that hadn’t previously been possible. While their actual impact was minor, and even though they “lost” many of the battles that they were involved in, their participation speaks to the wider political conscience of this minority religious group and how it developed and coalesced into real action. The cooperation between the resurgent Catholic Church and the Vargas government is one of the defining characteristics of the

period, though understanding the limited but vocal role of protestants during that time elucidates even further the complicated questions of democracy, religious freedom, and political organization.

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