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Theology Against Liberation: Conservative Catholic Theology and Right-Wing Politics in
Mid-Twentieth Century Latin America

By

Craig A. Johnson

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

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Committee in Charge:

Professor Margaret Chowning, Co-Chair

Professor Rebecca Herman, Co-Chair

Professor Dylan Riley

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Abstract

Theology Against Liberation: Conservative Catholic Theology and Right-Wing Politics in Late Twentieth Century Latin America

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Professors Margaret Chowning and Rebecca Herman, Co-Chairs

The period from the 1950s to the 1980s saw two major social and political transformations in Latin America's Southern Cone—principally Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Firstly, the Catholic Church underwent a massive doctrinal and practical shift as a result of the Second Vatican Council, held between 1962 and 1965 in Rome. Vatican II began as an attempt to breach the gap between Catholics and other Christians, but became a modernization project on a scale that the Church had not seen for centuries. At the same time, in the mid-twentieth century, these countries in Latin America saw the emergence of a new right-wing political perspective that would drive the emergence and power of the right-wing movements that propelled the military to power throughout the region. This dissertation seeks to explain the confluence and convergence of both these trends by examining the conservative theological consensus that developed during and in the wake of Vatican II in Latin America and other conservative parts of the Catholic world, namely Spain and Portugal. Following these conservative and right-wing arguments over liturgical changes, the worship of Mary, and the relationship between religion and politics helps explain the deeply Catholic yet nationalist projects that would dominate the region's politics for much of the remainder of the twentieth century. As such this dissertation rehabilitates theological arguments as more than academic exercises—instead, they were influential and inherent parts of political thought and practice for the right-wing.

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Introduction

My dissertation charts the development of a right-wing Catholic consensus in the Southern Cone of Latin America as it developed against the backdrop of the transformation of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council and the turmoil in the secular political world that characterized the region in the mid-twentieth century. All too often the story of this region is told as a part of a global Cold War understood as a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, with the actions of both the right and left-wings of politics ascribed to their respective superpowers. Religion and religious history have remained on the fringes of most narrations of this history, with particular religious practices or beliefs too often represented as justifications for engaging in secular political activity.

By contrast, this dissertation tries to understand mid-twentieth century Latin America not by merely featuring Catholicism and Catholic thinking, but by centering them. Doing so corrects an important deficiency in the literature on the political and social developments in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, the nations that are the particular focus of this thesis. More importantly, though, centering Catholicism reframes our understanding of conservative and right-wing political actions and motivations in this region. This allows me to tell the story of the supposedly secular political events of that region as so many of its contemporaries claimed to experience them: as fundamentally religious events, with their political behavior not only informed or justified by their faith but, as they understood it, determined by it. This is of course not to say that the right-wing in the Southern Cone was violent or anti-subversive or anti-democratic because it was Catholic — to do so would be to naively reproduce this conservative worldview rather than to analyze it, conceding that their Catholicism did indeed demand their right-wing politics. Instead, taking their earnest Catholicism seriously as a source of political as well as religious ideology allows me to de-center the geopolitical struggles of the Cold War, the intervention of the United States, and secular domestic politics and tell a religious history of modern right-wing Latin American politics.

By focusing on the central religious event in the Catholic world, the Second Vatican Council, I present the history of conservative Catholic and secular reactions to political events through the lens of religion and religiosity. Reading the works of the conservative Catholic world in Latin America shows an emerging, coherent worldview in opposition to the Second Vatican Council, one larger than any particular interaction between a country's hierarchy and its national government. These theological debates and discourses didn't remain on the pages of university journals or polemical magazines, but intersected with and shaped otherwise secular discourse and politics in ways that other histories have obscured rather than illuminated.

The five chapters of this dissertation follow this religious history and its intersections with secular politics from theology through to ground-level political action. The first two chapters focus on the world of theology and the Catholic press during and shortly after the Council's deliberations in the early 1960s, with a source base primarily consisting of theological academic journals and the magazines of conservative Catholic organizations. This starts with a first chapter on the engagement with and reactions to the central event in this history, the Second Vatican Council, as revealed in these journals and magazines. Chapter one shows how conservative Catholic anxieties about changes brought by the Council framed their concerns about the secular political world at the dawn of the 1960s. The Council's emphasis on ecumenicism and ecclesiology in an effort to "modernize" the Church connected with other anxieties about democracy and the influences of the global north, setting the stage for the

political and theological arguments of the 1960s and 1970s. Conservatives' fears of ecumenicism and ecclesiological reform were directly tied to their worries about Protestantism, changing social mores, and the erosion of tradition writ large.

Chapter two uses the same source base but refines the scope of this inquiry, focusing specifically on one particular theological question — the role of Mary in Catholic worship. Conservative Catholics in the Southern Cone were deeply concerned that the changes brought by Vatican II would also transform Marian devotion, which lay at the foundation not only of much Catholic practice in Latin America but was also an important means of discussing and justifying Catholic positions on divorce, motherhood, and gender roles. Through the apparition at Fatima in Portugal, Mary also played an important role in Latin American right-wing Catholic understandings of modern politics, particularly the struggle against communism.

The third chapter ties more directly into the secular, political world by shifting from directly theological questions like the nature of the Church or the role of Mary vis a vis Jesus Christ to the more nebulous concepts of “subversion” and dissent within the Church. Throughout the mid-twentieth century, the concept of subversion would come to play a major role in the justification of state and paramilitary violence throughout Latin America, from Argentina, Brazil, and Chile to Guatemala. Illuminating the connections drawn by right-wing commentators between subversion against the Church and subversion against the state recasts this category as something more than a rhetorical tool, but as a guiding principle for political repression and violence. Looking at the subversive activities of Catholics, and even priests, not just against the state but against the Church as well, shows the connections and origins of this secular political designation in religious discourse and condemnation.

Chapters four and five continue chapter three's transition to the world of secular politics by each focusing on a particular right-wing Catholic political organization in the Southern Cone. Chapter four does this through an intellectual and social history of a fascist gang in Argentina called Tacuara, primarily active during the early 1960s. Though generally remembered as a loose collection of thugs who operated in the country's major urban areas, the group primarily consisted of educated, even over-educated male university students. Their peculiar status as a highly literate fascist paramilitary organization sets the stage for the focus of the chapter: a reading and analysis of a reading list produced by the organization and published in its newsletter. Examining these books, which range from Thomasian theology to revisionist Argentine history, gives a clear window into the worldview of a violently right-wing Argentine organization whose main period of activity coincided with Vatican II.

The final chapter again centers on a particular right-wing Catholic organization, the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP). An international organization founded in Brazil in 1960 and still active today, the TFP offers a fascinating perspective on an organization that specifically bridged religion and politics not just in its native Brazil but around the world. The chapter focuses on the journalistic output of the various TFP branches from Brazil to Argentina to Chile to Spain and the US, looking at how they understood themselves in the transforming world of religion and politics, with a particular focus on their understanding of their role as a lay Catholic organization that was nevertheless deeply politically active. That the TFP was an international organization with branches across Europe but founded and headquartered in Brazil also relates to one of the other goals of this thesis, de-centering the global north not just in the discussion of the Cold War as the battle for or against communism but in the Catholic history of reactions to the Second Vatican Council.

As noted above the principal primary source base for this thesis is a collection of magazines, journals, and newsletters published in Argentina, Chile, Spain, and Brazil between the late 1950s and the 1970s, though in the final chapter some stretch into the 1980s. Some were in publication for only a few years while others remain in print to this day; some were produced by major media organizations and others by small intellectual circles; some were well-edited and organized while others were hastily mimeographed and stapled. But they all share one commonality — they belonged to a network of conservative Catholic thought that bridged secular politics and theology. Reading these publications together illuminates a worldview which has been given insufficient attention in previous works of history but which is nevertheless vital to understanding the history of Latin America. Other archival material such as police and other intelligence reports supplement these sources where appropriate, adding context from the world of secular government or providing insight into the source's internal workings, such as what was said at meetings or in private correspondence. These reports generally focus on the more radical and violent of the political organizations considered in this thesis, but in doing so they reveal these radical actors' place in a field of right-wing activity that was at once normal for its participants and dangerously extreme in its content.

Historiography

This dissertation engages with several related historiographies, from those of the global Cold War, to histories of the right-wing internationally or in the Latin American context, to more strictly religious histories of the Catholic Church and its ecumenical councils. Rather than writing a thesis that would fit neatly in any of these categories, I chose to write one that lies at their intersection. My intention was to write something that will be useful to scholars in a variety of disciplines and subfields, as well as to accurately reflect the international, unbounded nature of my source material.

The time period covered by this thesis, the late 1950s through the beginning of the 1980s, is the heart of the period known as the Cold War. No longer a term used to refer to the geopolitical conflict between the US and the Soviet Union, the Cold War is now understood as a global, decentered conflict pitting the left against the right in domestic struggles in the global south.¹ Seeing Latin America through this lens, as more than a site of great-power conflict and instead as a place where domestic actors engaged in a broader conflict, has been the focus of numerous recent works in Latin American history.² However, many of these works continue to focus on the relationship between these domestic struggles and the United States, whereas this

¹ Heonik Kwon, *The Other Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

² Renata Keller, *Mexico's Cold War: Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution*, 2015; Stephen G Rabe, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Marcia Esparza, Henry R Huttenbach, and Daniel Feierstein, *State Violence and Genocide in Latin America: The Cold War Years* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010); Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Mark Atwood Lawrence, and Julio Moreno, *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War*, 2013; Greg Grandin and G. M Joseph, *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War* (Durham [NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War*, *The New Cold War History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

dissertation seeks to tell this story without assuming that the US is the main political or strategic referent for Latin Americans on the right-wing.³

In order to tell this story with Latin America as a center rather than a periphery I rely on excellent works by other historians and scholars of Latin America. Many of these works use a national frame — for example, those which focus on Argentina examine the tumultuous mid-twentieth century experienced in that country, beginning with the ouster of the Peron government in 1955 and following the series of alternating civilian and military governments which would rule the country until the (as of early 2022) final return of democracy in 1983.⁴ The bulk of this dissertation focuses on the 1960s, a decade in which Argentina changed national governments multiple times, culminating in the rule of a military government whose goal was the transformation of Argentine society along right-wing lines.⁵ This government would in some ways presage the extreme level of partisan violence that would culminate in the Dirty War, the campaign of repression and extermination perpetrated by the Argentine military and paramilitary from the 1970s through the end of the dictatorship.

Whereas Argentina's history was one of oscillation between military and civilian rule, Chile and Brazil experienced either an early or a later transition to a stable military government in the time period covered by this thesis — in Brazil's case in 1964 and in Chile's in 1973. Brazil's military government has come to be understood as relatively moderate compared to its neighbors, killing far fewer of its citizens proportionally.⁶ Chile under the military junta which would later solidify into the Pinochet dictatorship, conversely, has developed a deserved reputation for brutality and repression as well as economic experimentation that have transcended the academy and become international political touchstones.⁷ The intertwined histories of conservative Catholic thought in these countries, the focus of this thesis, provide an important addition to useful studies of their secular political interactions.⁸

While other countries, particularly Spain and Portugal, do appear in this dissertation, my focus is on events in these three, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. However, in contrast to the works cited in the previous paragraphs I have structured this thesis to tell an international story from the very beginning, citing sources from these countries together in chapters organized thematically rather than nationally. I have done so following the example of other excellent works on Latin American history, and particularly those which engage with the right-wing, such as Sandra McGee Deutsch's *Las Derechas* and Federico Finchelstein's *Transatlantic Fascism*, both of

³ TANYA HARMER, "Fractious Allies: Chile, the United States, and the Cold War, 1973–76," *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 1 (2013): 109–43; Stanley E. Hilton, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cold War, 1945–1960: End of the Special Relationship," *The Journal of American History* 68, no. 3 (1981): 599–624.

⁴ Tulio Halperín Donghi, *La República imposible* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 2004); David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History, and Its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁵ Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890–1939* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1999); Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolcart, eds., *The Argentine Right: Its History and Intellectual Origins, 1910 to the Present*, Latin American Silhouettes (Wilmington, Del: SR Books, 1993); Federico Finchelstein, *The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War: Fascism, Populism, and Dictatorship in Twentieth Century Argentina* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁶ Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964–85* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Ken Serbin, *Secret Dialogues: Church-State Relations, Torture, and Social Justice in Authoritarian Brazil*, Pitt Latin American Series (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).

⁷ Lessie Jo Frazier, *Salt in the Sand: Memory, Violence, and the Nation-State in Chile, 1890 to the Present*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile under Pinochet* (New York; London: Norton, 1991).

⁸ John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents* (New York : New York: New Press ; Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2004).

which engage with their subject from a transnational perspective from the outset.⁹ These works and others show the international nature of the story of right-wing political activity in the mid-twentieth century in Latin America, particularly in the Southern Cone. Scholars have shown how military governments in the region were in dialogue with each other, how they shared information and tactics, and collaborated with one another to defeat their shared enemies.

The secular comings and goings of these different regimes and the violence they perpetrated are well trod ground — my goal with this thesis is to present this history through the lens of Catholic thought. Religion and religious thinking are of course major features of many histories of Latin America, as well as histories of the right-wing. Religious histories of Latin America focused on the twentieth century disproportionately deal with the liberal side of the Catholic Church, that connected with the theological tradition known as Liberation Theology.¹⁰ These works were of course invaluable to me in writing this thesis, but my focus in this dissertation is not on the would-be liberators but on the right-wing which opposed it.

There are of course many excellent works dealing with right-wing Catholicism and its relationship to right-wing secular politics in Latin America. Some are helpful primers for the region as a whole, while others deal more closely in a national context.¹¹ Many works deal with the relationship between a particular national Church and that nation's military or right-wing government, providing insight into the complex relationship between these secular and religious authorities.¹² The work of Ben Cowan on the religious right in Brazil is a stand-out in this subfield, covering the right-wing's attitude toward changing gender norms as well as international trends connecting politics and religious change.¹³ Works on Argentina tend to emphasize the relationship between the military and that country's relatively conservative and

⁹ Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1999); Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919-1945* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Robert Sean Mackin, "In Word and Deed: Assessing the Strength of Progressive Catholicism in Latin America, 1960–1970s," *Sociology of Religion* 71, no. 2 (2010): 216–42. Manuel A Vásquez, Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens, and David Orique, *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Christianity*, 2015; Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology: Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America—and Beyond* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); PATRICK H. McNAMARA, "Conscience, Catholicism, and Social Change in Latin America," *Social Research* 46, no. 2 (1979): 329–49; VALERIE ANN MACNABB and MARTHA W. REES, "Liberation or Theology? Ecclesial Base Communities in Oaxaca, Mexico," *Journal of Church and State* 35, no. 4 (1993): 723–49; Robert Sean MacKin, "Becoming the Red Bishop of Cuernavaca: Rethinking Gill's Religious Competition Model," *Sociology of Religion* 64, no. 4 (2003): 499–514.

¹¹ Daniel H Levine, *Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986); Daniel H Levine, *Politics, Religion, and Society in Latin America* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012); Curt Cadorette, review of *Review of The Church, Dictatorships, and Democracy in Latin America*, by Jeffrey Klaiber, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 68, no. 2 (2000): 416–18.

¹² PATRICIA MARCHAK and WILLIAM MARCHAK, *God's Assassins: State Terrorism in Argentina in the 1970s* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999). STEPHAN RUDERER, "Between Religion and Politics: The Military Clergy during the Late Twentieth-Century Dictatorships in Argentina and Chile," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47, no. 3 (2015): 463–89; Luis Miguel Donatello, "Catolicismo y Elites En La Argentina Del Siglo XXI: Individualización y Heterogeneidad," *Estudios Sociológicos* 29, no. 87 (2011): 833–55. Brian H. Smith, *The Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

¹³ Benjamin A. Cowan, *Securing Sex: Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Benjamin A. Cowan, *Moral Majorities across the Americas: Brazil, the United States, and the Creation of the Religious Right* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

theologically conservative Catholic hierarchy, while attention to this issue is relatively lacking in Chilean historiography.¹⁴

These works, and others in the bibliography of this thesis, represent a growing attention to the relationship between religion and politics in Latin America and even specifically between right-wing politics and Catholicism. Still, there is something missing from this historiography: a deep attention to theology. Filling this gap in historical attention by connecting the histories cited above to theological debates is the central aim of this dissertation. As such, I will now turn to the background and historiography for the major thematic lens of this dissertation, the transformation of the Catholic Church during and after Vatican II.

The Second Vatican Council is only the most recent of the 21 ecumenical councils recognized by the Catholic Church. Ecumenical councils are meetings of priests and theologians, held periodically by Christian authorities since the early 300s. This first council, the Council of Nicaea, was convoked by the recently converted Roman Emperor Constantine and dealt with the codification of Christianity as the new official faith of the Roman Empire.¹⁵ Over the next few hundred years a series of other Councils were held, largely in order to repudiate what would, through their decisions, come to be the Christological heresies - Unitarianism, Arianism, and Nestorianism.¹⁶ After this came a series of Councils which dealt with more ecclesiological and doctrinal questions surrounding the emerging separation between the Eastern and Western Churches dealing with the authority of the Bishop of Rome - the Catholic Pope - and his relationship to the other Bishops and Patriarchs of the Church. Since the middle ages the councils focused on attempts to reform the Church and opposition to such reforms. The last three ecumenical Councils — the Council of Trent in 1543, the First Vatican Council of 1869, and the Second Vatican Council of 1961 — followed in this vein.

The Council of Trent was held in large part in response to the claims and complaints of the growing Protestant movements in Germany.¹⁷ Trent saw the Catholic Church essentially double down on the theological issues that divided them from Luther and others, theological questions that in many ways still define what makes Catholicism different from Protestantism — the ontological divide between the laity and the clergy, salvation through works rather than through faith alone, a claim to doctrinal and hierarchical universality descending directly from Jesus Christ, the divine mystery of transubstantiation, etc. Trent is also, arguably, the single most important dating point in the separation between Protestantism and Catholicism.¹⁸ The followers of Luther were invited to the Council, whose location (in what is now northern Italy) was chosen partly because it was between Rome and Germany. This mid-point held symbolic importance,

¹⁴ STEPHAN RUDERER, “Between Religion and Politics: The Military Clergy during the Late Twentieth-Century Dictatorships in Argentina and Chile,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47, no. 3 (2015): 463–89; Gustavo Morello, *The Catholic Church and Argentina’s Dirty War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015); Loris Zanatta, *Del Estado Liberal a La Nación Católica: Iglesia y Ejército En Los Orígenes Del Peronismo, 1930-1943*, Política, Economía y Sociedad (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1996).

¹⁵ Norman P Tanner, *The Church in Council: Conciliar Movements, Religious Practice and the Papacy from Nicaea to Vatican II* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

¹⁶ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

¹⁷ John W O’Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); John W O’Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013). Erwin Iserloh et al., *Reformation and Counter Reformation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980); Marvin R O’Connell, *The Counter Reformation: 1559-1610*, 1974.

¹⁸ John C Olin, *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola; Reform in the Church 1495-1540* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

and it also materially enabled the Germans to attend. However, the Catholic delegates had already decided upon the main contentions between themselves and the Lutherans by the time the latter had arrived, so their attendance was moot, thus finalizing the separation between the emerging Protestant movement and the Catholic Church as such. Trent embodies and finalizes that separation.

Trent codified the catechism, the training of priests, and established the Church as a quintessentially conservative institution, defined by the effort to maintain the status quo against the Reformation.¹⁹ Rather than seeing itself as reacting to the Protestant or Reformist threat, the self-image of the Church projected by Trent is one of an institution closing in upon but also coming into itself. Trent also coincided with several important modernizing initiatives in the Church, such as the emergence of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits.²⁰ Trent marked the emergence of the Catholic Church as a universal and universalizing institution that combined rigid rules about certain behaviors and norms with substantial local wiggle room.

The next council was held 400 years later in 1868 at the Vatican, amid the backdrop of a changing, modernizing world. Vatican I is best known for the establishment of the doctrine of Papal infallibility, emphasizing the importance of Rome and the influence of the hierarchy.²¹ The council was also a response to republicanism, rationalism, democracy, socialism, liberalism, etc, responding to a staunchly conservative position that emphasized the power and importance of tradition, monarchy, and Church.²² Interrupted by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, Vatican I produced Church documents that represented an effort at maintaining the status quo against modernity and against a sizable minority of cardinals who pushed for a greater appreciation for the role of the laity.²³ This defensive posture against change would come to define what the conservative and right-wing sources in this thesis understood as Catholicism.

A mere 90 years after Vatican I, in 1959, Pope John XXIII called another ecumenical council, again to be held at the Vatican (hence the “Second” Vatican Council). The initial promise of Vatican II differed vastly from its final result in aim, but not in scope. When first proposed by Pope John XXIII, Vatican II was to be an attempt to restore what Catholics understood to be the “ecumenical unity” of the Church — that is to say, the unity of Christendom under a single church, presumably the Roman Catholic Church. In this context the word “ecumenical” bears its original meaning of “universal,” or “all-encompassing,” whereas since the Great Schism between the Church in the east and west (now generally simplified as the “Orthodox” and “Catholic” Churches) the “Ecumenical Councils” held by the Catholic Church were specifically exclusive of Christians of other denominations. John XXIII’s intention was to begin the work of reuniting Christianity, in part by inviting Protestant and Orthodox theologians and priests to attend the Council as observers, but this was not all.²⁴ The purpose of the Council was to pursue questions of the nature of the Church in an effort to find common ground for the

¹⁹ A. D. Wright, *The Early Modern Papacy: From the Council of Trent to the French Revolution, 1564-1789*, Longman History of the Papacy (Harlow, England ; New York: Longman, 2000).

²⁰ John C Olin, *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola; Reform in the Church 1495-1540* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

²¹ Fergus Kerr, “Vatican I and the Papacy 6: The Question of Infallibility,” *New Blackfriars* 60, no. 713 (1979): 404–16.

²² Massimo Faggioli, *A Council for the Global Church: Receiving Vatican II in History* (Baltimore, Maryland: Project Muse, 2015).

²³ Costigan, Richard F. *The Consensus of the Church and Papal Infallibility : a Study in the Background of Vatican I*. Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2005.

²⁴ John W O’Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era*.

reconciliation of theological and doctrinal differences that had separated the Churches first 1,000 years and then again 500 years prior.

From its earliest meetings, however, Vatican II had clearly taken on a more transformative agenda.²⁵ Rather than looking back to a time before modernity as had Vatican I, Vatican II can be understood as an acknowledgement of the changed world. Where Vatican I was limited and conservative, Vatican II was prolific and wide reaching, resulting in massive changes to the Church, both outwardly and inwardly.²⁶ The clothing and regalia of priests and nuns was simplified. Mass was to be given while facing the congregation, rather than the crucifix. Services were for the first time to be performed in the vernacular rather than Latin. After Vatican II most Catholics' experience of Mass and interacting with the clergy was utterly changed, and the general bent of these changes was to make the mass and the Church more comprehensible, approachable, and relatable. Vatican II challenged the traditional, hierarchical edifice of the Church, reorienting the heart of the Church away from the pyramidal hierarchy, and ultimately Rome, to the laity and the people who actually filled the pews and Catholic religious organizations. From the visible changes in the way the mass was conducted that have already been mentioned, to theological ones such as the redefinition of the Church as, essentially, the laity rather than the hierarchy, Vatican II brought revolutionary transformation to Catholic thought and Catholic life.

As understood by the conservative and right-wing sources in this dissertation, this reformist, liberalizing direction would have far reaching consequences for Catholic practice and politics, up to and including the loss of the sacred and the end of Catholicism as such. The sources and organizations which are the subjects of this dissertation reacted negatively to these changes, ranging from criticism to denial and even, in some cases, direct confrontation and schism, defending what they understood as tradition and orthodoxy from reform.²⁷ Some of them made this defense in a curious way, using decidedly modern tools and rhetoric, organizing constituents and shaping their opinion in a way that recognized, even harnessed the changes brought by the Council in the name of opposing them. Others held on to medieval, even literally

²⁵ Melissa J. Wilde, *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change*, Edition Unstated edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

²⁶ Carmel Pilcher, David Orr, and Elizabeth Harrington, *Vatican Council II: Reforming Liturgy* (Havertown: ATF Press, 2013); Joaquim Gomis et al., "Qué Queda Del Vaticano II," *El Ciervo* 61, no. 737 (2012): 10–18; Jared Wicks, "Vatican II in 1964:: Doctrinal Advances Paired with Tensions over Facing the Modern World," in *Investigating Vatican II, Its Theologians, Ecumenical Turn, and Biblical Commitment* (Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 187–210; Jared Wicks, "Vatican II in 1963:: Renewing Ecclesiology and Turning to Ecumenical Engagement," in *Investigating Vatican II, Its Theologians, Ecumenical Turn, and Biblical Commitment* (Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 166–86; John W O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008); Massimo Faggioli, *A Council for the Global Church: Receiving Vatican II in History* (Baltimore, Maryland: Project Muse, 2015); Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (New York: Paulist Press, 2012); Massimo Faggioli, *The Legacy of Vatican II*, 2015; James H. Kroeger, ed., *The Documents of Vatican Council II* (Pasay City, Philippines: Paulines Publishing House, 2011).

²⁷ Patrick Madrid, *More Catholic than the Pope: An inside Look at Extreme Traditionalism* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc, 2004); Brian Sudlow, "The Frenchness of Marcel Lefebvre and the Society of St Pius X: A New Reading," *French Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1 (2017): 79–94; Marcel Lefebvre, *J'accuse le Concile!*, 1. éd. (Paris: Éditions Saint-Gabriel, 1976); Joaquim Gomis, Josep M. Margenat, and Jordi Llisterri, "El Final de La Excomunió Lefebvriana," *El Ciervo* 58, no. 696 (2009): 6–6; Elizabeth Isichei, "Visions and Visionaries: The Search for Alternative Forms of Authority among Catholic Conservatives," *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 36, no. 75 (1991): 113–25.

ancient theologies against the new, modern standards.²⁸ In either case, these conservative and right-wing actors spent the 1960s through the 1980s developing a cohesive worldview based in Catholic thinking and theology. Examining and exposing this thinking, and bringing it into historians' understandings of Latin America's twentieth century, is the goal of this dissertation.

²⁸ Willemien Otten, "MEDIEVAL SCHOLASTICISM: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE," *Nederlands Archief Voor Kerkgeschiedenis / Dutch Review of Church History* 81, no. 3 (2001): 275–89; Felix Hope, "Scholasticism," *Philosophy* 11, no. 44 (1936): 445–65; Frederick C Copleston, *Thomas Aquinas* (London; New York: Search Press ; Barnes and Noble, 1976); Marcia L Colish, *Studies in Scholasticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2006).

Chapter One

Ecumenical Dreams, Progressive Nightmares

In the 1960s and 70s a specter haunted Catholicism—the specter of Progressive Christianity. Or so, at least, thought the conservative Catholic theologians and ideologues who are the subject of this chapter, which follows the contested conversations over the Council from its beginning. Theological arguments over the outcome of the Second Vatican Council would set the stage for arguments over gender, national belonging, and the potential legitimacy of political violence, giving the subjects of this chapter a significance outside of their own intellectual traditions. Priests and laity arguing about ecumenicism and ecclesiology were more than academics quibbling over definitions and categorization. Their discourse was itself politically and socially active, engaging in a struggle over the nature of their society and what they considered to be its most important institution, laying the groundwork for flesh-and-blood struggles that would come.

The polarization and the resulting vilification of liberal or progressive Catholics was not itself new to the Church. The nineteenth century had seen its own fear mongering around Social Catholicism, a theological and practical effort to address the “social questions” of the day, from the role of women in society to workers’ rights and the development of the modern nation state.¹ Social Catholics, like their mid-twentieth century counterparts, sought to use the power and influence of the Church to raise up the downtrodden. Practically, Social Catholics in Latin America tried to hitch their social programs and public activity to the hierarchy, organizing Catholic Action groups under the leadership of the local clergy.² In Córdoba, Argentina, for example, priests spent decades working with and through worker’s councils and neighborhoods to push Catholic teaching through socially uplifting programs, a combination of left-leaning attention to the needs of the poor and right-leaning insistence on the value of service, obedience, and tradition.³ Similar connections drew fears and opposition in Chile.⁴ Conservative Catholic ideologues opposed these efforts, which they understood to be undermining the Church’s aloofness and separation from the secular world.

But things were different by the 1960s. The Second Vatican Council’s changes to Catholic practice and its invitation for the transformation or renewal of the Church meant that the very tradition and separation which the conservatives considered themselves to be protecting were under serious threat. These changes, particularly those dealing with ecumenicism, ecclesiological changes in the Church, and rapprochement with Protestantism, meant that when conservative Catholics in Latin America looked at their countries and churches in the 1960s they saw the dissolution they had warned of decades ago—and this time these changes arguably had the official backing of not just various national priests but Rome itself.

¹ Michael Walsh. “The Myth of *Rerum Novarum*.” *New Blackfriars* 93, no. 1044 (2012): 155–62. Mackin, Robert Sean. “In Word and Deed: Assessing the Strength of Progressive Catholicism in Latin America, 1960–1970s.” *Sociology of Religion* 71, no. 2 (2010): 216–42.

² Paul Misner. “The Predecessors of ‘*Rerum Novarum*’ Within Catholicism.” *Review of Social Economy* 49, no. 4 (1991): 444–64.

³ Arthur Liebsher. “Toward a Pious Republic: Argentine Social Catholicism in Córdoba, 1895–1930,” *Journal of Church and State* 30, no. 3 (1988): 549–67.

⁴ Brian H. Smith. *The Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

This chapter tracks the reactions of conservative and right-wing Latin American Catholics in Argentina and Chile to some of the thorniest theological questions raised by the Council, with a focus on the relation between ecclesiology and ecumenicism and political issues like national belonging and stability. As noted in the introduction, Vatican II's original goal was moving closer to Christian unity in the face of the aftermath of WWII and the Holocaust. As its decisions and their effects became more sweeping and radical, right-wing reactions to them became screeds against the dissolution of the Church in the face of reform and what they considered to be leftist, even communist infiltration.

In the eyes of these conservative Catholics there emerged from the ecumenical dreams of the 60s a progressive nightmare by the 70s, one that reflected and intersected with the secular right-wing narrative of the infiltration of the nation-state and nationalism by the left via modest reforms. Here the Catholic right's fears of the transformation of the Church played the same structural role as, and were indeed directly connected to, secular fears of communism. The internal forces these Catholics warned of had a name: progressives. By pursuing the threads of their polemics against the progressive forces of the Church, this chapter shows how these theological arguments set the stage for the more violent rhetoric and actions which would come from both state and non-state actors, and which are the focus of Chapters Four and Five.

"Progressive Christianity" was both a relatively neutral descriptor of a certain tendency in modern Catholic theology and a derogatory catch-all term conservative Catholics used to describe their enemies. Simply put, progressive Catholics were interested in opening the Church to the modern world, in modernization, and in paying special attention to the plight of the downtrodden. Understanding the function of this label in the minds and writings of conservative Catholics, however, requires attention to the politics that emerged from Vatican II.

Melissa Wilde's *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change* provides an excellent overview of the political factions that developed in the context of the Council.⁵ Wilde defines progressives by their theological opposition to a series of views—those of the Curia, or of the conservative members of the Church, or those in Spain and Italy—but she does not investigate the views and preferences of these Council attendees and observers. Vitally, what can be said to unite the progressives is that the conservatives vilified them and blamed them for the descent of the Church into chaos, disorder, and according to some critics, Protestantism. This chapter extends Wilde's analysis of the conflict between progressives and conservatives beyond the halls of St. Peter's Cathedral to the more everyday discourse of the Catholic press and political magazines, and from the international center of Rome to the peripheries of Latin America.

For the conservative Latin American Catholics that are the focus of this chapter the progressives functioned as an enemy to be fought and feared. This was the lens through which progressives were discussed by conservatives and the right—as internal enemies subverting the Church from within, be they well meaning reformers who go too far or actual insurgents who intentionally join the Church in order to destroy it from the inside. Among the sins of the progressives were their support for ecumenical reform, the modernization of Catholic practice, and their supposed advances toward Protestantism. These conservative allegations were evidence of enormous anxiety about the transformation of Catholic practice both at home and abroad.

⁵ Melissa J. Wilde, "How Culture Mattered at Vatican II: Collegiality Trumps Authority in the Council's Social Movement Organizations," *American Sociological Review* 69, no. 4 (2004): 576–602; Melissa J. Wilde, *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change*, Edition Unstated edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Conservative and right-wing commentaries on the Council also belied the political and social upheaval of their time. In Chile, this period coincided with the Presidency of Eduardo Frei, a Christian Democratic politician who moved the country in the direction of social reform, particularly land reform, as well as with the final period of growth for the Popular Unity coalition that would eventually bring the socialist Salvador Allende to power. In neighboring Argentina, the 1960s were a devastating decade of political upheaval, with anti-Peronist civilian governments giving way to the “Revolución Argentina” in 1966. Both countries dealt with major internal crises of political stability and belonging, casting a new light on the apparently intellectual and rarified theological debates over ecclesiology which are the focus of this chapter as part of the story of their struggle to define their nation and Church.

This chapter will focus on theological journals from major metropolitan areas in Argentina and Chile, such as the *Revista Católica* of Santiago and the *Boletín Eclesiástico* of Buenos Aires. These journals and others like them were written and edited by clergy and lay staff, directly controlled by the hierarchy and representing the voice of the Church both locally and globally. Additional sources are academic theology journals from both countries, which, together with these Church sources represent what might be called an orthodox position of conservative Catholic leaders. Other sources, principally Catholic political magazines, add the perspective of politically active laity observing and worrying over developments in the Church. Together these sources argue either explicitly or implicitly that tampering with ecclesiology and ecumenical advances to Protestants constitute an existential threat to the Church. Not just the Church but the society it inhabited was at stake, with their struggles against progressives in Latin America just one theater of a conflict within all of Christendom.

Understanding how these arguments came about, and how they occupied the minds of theologians and lay Catholics across several continents and inspired them to spill so much ink, requires paying close attention to theological questions that might at first sound rarified and disconnected from everyday life—ecumenicism and ecclesiology. Ecumenicism is both a millennia long conflict and a question about how the Church should operate in pluralistic societies or ones experiencing waves of Protestant missionaries. Ecclesiology is nothing more or less than the question of what the Church is to be and who is to be in it, something that has real political consequences in regions or countries where the Church counts a supermajority of the population among its ranks. For the establishment and right-wing Catholics studied here, these theological issues didn’t just connect to or inform social relations or politics: they *were* social and political issues, and for these Latin American commentators that meant emphasizing and even exaggerating the divide within the Church between progressives and conservatives.

This collection of intellectual and Church leaders labored across decades, borders, and dozens of publications to link theological issues to their present-day social concerns. In the minds of these authors and editors these questions were not separate but united, and touched on social questions both directly and indirectly. Accounting for the vitriol of these debates means leaving behind the ivory towers and press rooms in which they were written and looking at them in their social contexts. Despite their jargon and Latin phrases, these debates were not the stereotypes of Christian theological discourse—determining how many angels could dance on the head of a pin, or how many camels could fit through the eye of a needle. Ultimately, they were all questions about what the Church is, how it works, and who it is for, all of which have both intellectual and very concrete consequences. Such issues were particularly salient in Latin America and in Argentina and Chile in particular, where the theological debates of the 1960s directly coincided with political and social upheavals that would set the stage for the violence of the 1970s.

Ecumenical Dreams

Ecclesiological and ecumenical questions—what the Church was to be and who was to be in it—were the original motivations behind the call to hold the Second Vatican Council in 1959. Depending on one's perspective, the result of the Council was either a massive expansion and deviation from its initial premise of modernization or the only way for its major goals to be accomplished. By the mid and late 1960s conservatives' initial curiosity about the Council had given way to a significantly more negative perspective, one obsessed with what they considered to be the devolution of the Church into modernism, progressivism, and even Protestant-like practices.

Immediately upon the conclusion of the Council's meetings the polemical Argentine journal *Verbo* published several pages quoting various popes, from Gregory XVI to Pius XII, on the dangers of freedom of religion. Pope Gregory XVI noted that while humans enjoy a "freedom of conscience" there is "no worse death for the soul than the freedom to err"—clearly the errors lay in pursuing those freedoms away from Catholicism. Pius IX called it the "freedom of ruin."⁶ While also careful to quote Pius XII noting that no human entity has the "authority" to "mandate" religious teaching or adherence, the journal draws a particular line followed by many conservative Catholics at the time regarding religious freedom—just shying from calling for theocracy per se, they advocated for established Churches of the kind that many Latin American countries, as well as both Spain and Portugal, had at the time. In this they hewed to Catholic orthodoxy while avoiding taking a more extreme position, which as will be discussed later some of their more right-wing contemporaries did.

Ecumenicism was also the central topic of the 1964 edition of *Teología y Vida*, the journal of the Theology Faculty of the Universidad Pontificia Católica de Chile. Three separate articles on ecumenicism, either in the Church in general, in Latin America in particular, or from the Protestant perspective were published that year. One of the articles, "Ecumenicism in the Catholic Church" by Juan Ochagavía, noted that the proponents of ecumenicism acknowledged that while the reunification of all Christians is a long-term goal, in the "immediate" term all that is desired is that they "come together to talk."⁷ Thus it fit into the "renewal" spirit of Vatican II, alongside previous ecumenical movements and tendencies in the Church from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Similarly, the actual presence of Orthodox and Protestant priests and theologians at the Council was presented as something normal and nonthreatening, allowed by canon law.

But in the discussions of the Council, which occupied the bulk of the article, things became more complicated. Ultimately the question of ecumenicism was about the "Catholicity" of the Church, that is, its claim to universality, and whether that differs from or is harmed by attempts to enforce "uniformity." The author directly mused on what the consequences might be to accepting a "diverse plurality" of "rituals, languages, and spiritual devotions," and noted that this question was especially relevant with regard to Catholic relations to Protestants and Orthodox believers. Knowing what was coming for the Church—that the Church would be tasked with accepting *internal* diversity in rituals, languages, and devotions—this was a revelatory passage that directly connects Catholic relations with non-Catholics with their coming relations *with other Catholics*, as will be seen in more detail below.

⁶ Pope Gregory XVI and Pope Pius IX, quoted in "Libertad de cultos," *Verbo* 28 (1965): 11-16.

⁷ P. Juan Ochagavía, "Ecumenismo en la iglesia católica," *Teología y Vida* (1964): 99-107.

The *Revista Católica* of Santiago, reprinting two stories that first appeared in the Roman journal *L'Osservatore Romano*, noted the importance of approaching the Council's potential for reform from a position of humility on the part of every position in the Church, from every part of the hierarchy and lay communities. As with other sources, this article explicitly acknowledged the historical background of calls for Church reform. Still, Catholics would need to heed the wishes and positions of "priests, teachers, and pastors" of the Church.⁸ The Council itself was a manifestation of the "authority" of the Church, the hierarchy assembled nearly in full, more so even than during Papal Conclaves (which, as a rule, include only Cardinals).

Knowing some of the results that would come from the Council, and the fears it would bring up of changes to the nature of the hierarchy, such passages in the *Revista Católica* must be read with an almost literary narrative irony. While the author of this piece acknowledged that "unity isn't uniformity," Catholic unity did mean an unwavering attention and loyalty to the precepts of the Church hierarchy, rooted in the venerable "past" of the Church. The authors of these pieces and their reprinters in Chile hoped that the Council would inspire neither "radical reformism" nor "mental resistance," both of which would be "inadequate" responses to the demands of the present wave of reform and renewal in the Church with the Council demanded.

This moderate reception changed in the next few years, as the potential for more radical and transformative interpretations of the Council emerged after its conclusion in 1965. It soon became increasingly vital to argue over the Council's legacy, not the least regarding ecumenicism and ecclesiology. A 1966 article in Santiago's *Revista Católica* asserted defensively that "the Council has not changed the traditional doctrine of obedience," quoting *L'Osservatore Romano*.⁹ Specifically quoting Pope Paul VI, who, noting that the Council "has spoken of the rights of personhood, of conscience, and of liberty," intended to set the record straight regarding the structure of the Church, the article argued that these changes did not mean that the Church was transitioning into the "modern thinking" which some feared. These concerns were valid, in that there were some "who had hoped to discover in [Lumen Gentium]¹⁰ a radical change in the relation between authority and obedience."¹¹ In other words, there were some Catholics and other observers who were hoping that the Council would transform the Church in this way, and that the relation between the priest and the lay would be forever altered.

Yet this interpretation, in Paul IV's words, was a false one. Instead the Council sought to renew the relation between the lay and the clergy, not to eliminate it. The fact that this defense would even need to be made—that the pope would need to affirm to some of his more conservative readers that the Church would not be setting aside the notions of priestly authority and lay obedience—speaks to both the reality and the perceived danger of transformation present in the Church immediately after the Council. The previous article in the *Revista* confirms this, again quoting the pope saying that "the object of the Council was not to change with the times," one of its most common criticisms, but to "awaken, renovate, purify, modernize, intensify, and expand the life of the Church."¹²

⁸ Pope John VI, "El Concilio ha cambiado la doctrina tradicional de la obediencia," *Revista Católica* 1006 (1966) 5065-5066.

⁹ Pope John VI, "El Concilio ha cambiado la doctrina tradicional de la obediencia" 5066.

¹⁰ Lakeland, Paul. "Lumen Gentium: The Unfinished Business." *New Blackfriars* 90, no. 1026 (2009): 146–62. Kobler, John F. "Were Theologians the Engineers of Vatican II?" *Gregorianum* 70, no. 2 (1989): 233–50. Lumen Gentium was among the most important documents produced by the Council.

¹¹ Pope John VI, "El Concilio ha cambiado la doctrina tradicional de la obediencia" 5066.

¹² Pope John VI, "El Concilio ha cambiado la doctrina tradicional de la obediencia" 5066.

Later in the 1960s the association of ecumenical reforms with the left and subversion was often less subtle than the previous examples. One issue of *Roma* from 1969 republished an article titled “Ecumenicism and Communism” written by Orthodox priests living behind the Iron Curtain, which warns, in the words of *Roma*’s editors, of “the conversion of Christianity into an atheist church at the service of the communist state.”¹³ Quoting the Orthodox priests’ letter, *Roma* argued that “It is in those countries where there is more militant communism, where the ‘ecumenical faith’ is the more florid and it is this which raises our suspicions of its Christian character.” Here ecumenicism isn’t just a tool which communists might use but is inherently communistic. This is because ecumenicism, like most of the efforts of the left, follows a slippery slope—*Roma* wanted its readers to understand that after the unity of Christians, the next, inevitable step would be advocating for unity with “other religions on the principle of monotheism.”¹⁴ That the two actual candidates for such a union would be Islam and Judaism, both of which were common targets of the Hispanic right both in the Americas and Europe, would not be lost on readers at the time. Engaging with other religions was never a Christian practice, the authors claim:

The Church in antiquity preferred to suffer the great persecutions (against which it later triumphed) rather than participate in idolatrous syncretism which would have decomposed the essence of Christianity... unfortunately, in our times the example of the old Church is no longer followed.¹⁵

The dangers of religious syncretism were known to early Christians, a wisdom lost to modern minds and apparently even the Vatican itself.

From relations with other monotheists ecumenicism would naturally result in similar reconciliation with non-believers and outright atheists. Such rapprochement was already occurring at global Church meetings, which included “atheists” in their number and thereby acknowledged atheism as a force equally deserving of a spot at the table. This inclusion revealed the “secret relation” between “ecumenicism and its brother, communism.” The authors go so far as to suggest that ecumenicism is a creation of the Masons, a perennial enemy of the Catholic hierarchy, making their critique more of a warning and call to action than mere analysis of what was happening to their Church.

Most tellingly, though, the priests quoted in *Roma* argue that those who push for ecumenical reforms “do not represent...the **opinion or the voice of believers** [sic].”¹⁶ On one level this statement is unsurprising, claiming that their opponents are not the real bearers of Christian tradition and that they are out of touch with actual practitioners. This is perhaps exactly what one would expect of the critics of ecumenicism. Yet a complication remains—neither the Orthodox priests quoted above nor the conservative Catholics quoting them believed that it was the job of priests or the hierarchy in general to represent their congregation. They instead came from a tradition in which the clergy lead their congregations in accordance with established theology and tradition.

This is a perfect example of how the critics of the modernization efforts that stemmed from the Second Vatican Council used those very changes to voice and organize their opposition—these are conservative Catholics arguing for the power of the hierarchy by implying that it is their job to

¹³ Anonymous Orthodox Priest, “Ecumenismo y comunismo,” *Roma*, no. 12 (1969): 65-68

¹⁴ Anonymous Orthodox Priest, “Ecumenismo y comunismo,” 66.

¹⁵ Anonymous Orthodox Priest, “Ecumenismo y comunismo,” 67.

¹⁶ Anonymous Orthodox Priest, “Ecumenismo y comunismo,” 68.

“represent” the laity, a theological position more associated with Protestantism, and particularly Congregationalism, than with even the most liberal of Catholic traditions.

Concerns with ecumenicism weren’t rare—they appeared in publication after publication. The Argentine journal *Roma* was so worried over ecumenical changes to the Catholic Church that it devoted stories to it in nearly every edition of its publication, which began in 1967 just as the changes which the Second Vatican Council brought to the Church were taking their effect. These changes led *Roma*’s editors and readers to be deeply concerned about the direction the Church was heading, and to be particularly worried that the Church was being internally transformed in a manner entirely opposed to their understandings of Catholicism. Here the culprit for this transformation was called “modernism,” a term closely related to progressivism in the minds of these conservative authors

Roma’s second volume, published in November of 1967, contained a lengthy article on modernism as “the internal crisis in the Church.”¹⁷ Written by a German bishop and translated into Spanish, the article begins by quoting St. Jerome and his lamentations over Arianism, a form of Christianity popular in the 300s and which was among the major motivations for the convocation of many early ecumenical councils. Later condemned as heresy, Arianism was for Jerome a terrifying internal enemy which the Church must root out. The article takes a famous quote of his regarding Arianism’s appeal and inserts modernism in its place: “the whole world moans and surprises itself in its modernism.” Even the pope was quoted as seeing modernism to be an “error.” Here *Roma* was asking its readers to see modernism as a transformative danger which they have suddenly woken into. The Church’s changes to the mass, the article noted, have perhaps blinded readers to these more subtle ecclesiological shifts. This article sought to “open the eyes” of its readers to what is happening inside the Church, right under their noses, with respect to not just modernism but all sorts of transformations and shifts.

Roma acknowledged that this enemy was itself “hard to define,” that the modernists were a “collective term which designates false or deviational points of view which emerged after 1900 from the desire, according to modernists themselves, to proclaim the contents of the Christian faith in a way more adequate to the men of our times.” The conservative perspective on modernism was summed up by Pope Pius X as nothing more than “the conglomeration of all heresies” active in the twentieth-century Church.¹⁸ It was a reformist impulse akin to the movements that resulted in the Protestant Reformation, an attempt to transform the Church in such a way as to make it unrecognizable to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Modernism inspired a “disdain for tradition,” a “mania for change,” and, paradoxically, a “conformism” which threatens the internal nature of the Church.

In this article *Roma* emphasized that while the documents produced by the Council might seem to be on the side of the modernists—in that they deal directly with ecclesiological and ecumenical questions much like those the modernists were concerned with—the Council was in their estimation “entirely opposed to the denounced modernist dangers.”¹⁹ While the Council might have represented a “renovation” within the Church, it was not so much a revolution as a “renewal” of the Church’s traditional positions devoted to the grandeur and tradition of the Church.²⁰ Rather than “reducing” the Church to the level of its primitive past, in the days of the Gnostics and other pre-Roman forms of Christianity, the Council in their mind renewed the Church

¹⁷ Rudolf Graber, “El Papa Paulo VI y la crisis interna de la iglesia,” *Roma* no. 2 (1967): 18-38.

¹⁸ Rudolf Graber, “El Papa Paulo VI y la crisis interna de la iglesia,” 21.

¹⁹ Rudolf Graber, “El Papa Paulo VI y la crisis interna de la iglesia,” 35.

²⁰ Rudolf Graber, “El Papa Paulo VI y la crisis interna de la iglesia,” 38.

in its Catholicism. The rest of the issue bore out this same anxiety and reassurance, with the following article also quoting Pope Paul VI's "refutations and condemnations of the concrete manifestations of modernism," the "internal crisis of the Church."²¹

The very next issue of the journal continued in the same vein, devoting nearly a quarter of its pages to an article by Julio Garrido on "the post-conciliar mentality" that was presently invading the Church and laity.²² "Without a doubt," the article began, "under the pretext of the Second Vatican Council there has been a violent shake-up in all Catholic media." The article then continued for dozens of pages noting the internal crisis. Here the article walked an important and common tightrope in these kinds of pieces. This "post-conciliar mentality" must at once be a major threat to the internal unity and nature of the Church and also a "passing storm provoked by isolated groups, which give the impression of being a major movement."²³ Thus the author reminded his readers that the so-called "post-conciliar" mentality was nothing more or less than the "liberal Catholicism of the previous century."²⁴ It was however the occasion of the Council that allowed these tendencies to unite and manifest themselves as a coherent challenge to the traditional workings of the Church, using it opportunistically "to accentuate differences, close eyes, and balance" the Church according to their own particular understandings.²⁵

By exacerbating problems and looking for them where they did not exist, the modernists—like the liberal Catholics of the nineteenth century, themselves inheritors of millennia of heterodox thinking—used the "tactic of deformation" to distort the Church from within using its own words, seizing the occasion of the Council to their own ends rather than those of maintaining the Church as a coherent whole. This is especially true of one of the Council's most major changes, that of altering the rite of Mass so that it can be held in the vernacular:

...[I]t is difficult to destroy the Mass with only the tactics of silence or of deviation, another supplementary tactic is needed, and this is that of **deformation** [sic]. This aims to deform the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and to do so employs two different procedures: changing its exterior form and changing or altering the significance and spirit of the ceremony.²⁶

These changes were not haphazard or incidental—the article presents them as part of a coherent "strategy" of disinformation and manipulation, one intended specifically to change the Church from within and to set it on a path distant from its traditional trajectory, a "strategy of transformation and change."²⁷ This connects the "post-conciliar mentality" to every modern transformation, from changing the language of the Mass to the embrace of modern science instead of traditionally informed thinking dating back to Aristotle and the Church Fathers.

To combat this transformation, the article exhorts its readers to act:

as if there existed in the Church an active and numerous group (organized or not) which means to force the evolution of the Catholic faith in the following directions:
a) revise the truths of the faith and adapt them to the secular mentality of the modern

²¹ Editorial Board, "Habla Roma," *Roma* no. 2 (1967): 39-41.

²² Julio Garrido, "La mentalidad postconciliar y las verdades de la fe," *Roma* no. 3 (1968): 4-39.

²³ Julio Garrido, "La mentalidad postconciliar y las verdades de la fe," 5.

²⁴ Julio Garrido, "La mentalidad postconciliar y las verdades de la fe," 6.

²⁵ Julio Garrido, "La mentalidad postconciliar y las verdades de la fe," 7.

²⁶ Julio Garrido, "La mentalidad postconciliar y las verdades de la fe," 20.

²⁷ Julio Garrido, "La mentalidad postconciliar y las verdades de la fe," 24.

world... b) give primacy to social preoccupations and actions over matters of the spirit and contemplation... c) destroy all that which is opposed to their ends, and to that end work to diminish or eliminate the sense of the sacred and to criticize and eradicate traditions.

Roma's readers were to behave as if the potential progressive shifts in the Church were an existential threat to the Church as an institution and the Christian faith which it embodied in the world. The Council, by opening Pandora's box of reform and renewal, made possible precisely the kinds of transformations which conservative and right-wing Catholic commentators considered to be the most dangerous—those that went against tradition, and those that edged the Church towards Protestantism.

Articles such as these reveal the balancing act undertaken by conservative Latin America Catholic theologians and their publications in Argentina and Chile. The Council was an earnest effort on the part of the Church's greatest authority to change what it meant to be Catholic. Believers would need to accept this impulse without losing sight of Catholic tradition *and* without succumbing to simple reactionary positions. This was the goal, the dream for the Council, that it would renew the Church and draw it more under its wing without losing any of what it had spent the last several centuries maintaining. Instead, in these two countries the legacy of the Council was another source of division and internal conflict, wrangling over national and religious belonging.

There But for the Grace of God

Catholic commentators in Latin America saw themselves as part of a world-wide community of Catholics, and understood challenges to Catholic orthodoxy as global, even universal. They also took pains to remind their readers that these concerns had real and everyday consequences both at home and abroad. Their concern and attention to foreign Catholics served both as a sign of their commitment to the international nature of Catholic identity and as a warning to Catholics worldwide. This often took the form of lamentations over the state of the Church elsewhere, usually in places like North Vietnam or Poland where it was under the thumb of an officially atheist leftist government. Other countries, though, were referenced not because they had already fallen to the Communists but because they were on their way: one such country which received a surprising amount of attention from Latin American conservative and right-wing Catholics was the Netherlands.

An Argentine journal that bridged the theological and political, *Verbo*, devoted its cover story in November of 1970 to the Church in the Netherlands (Holanda).²⁸ *Verbo* printed an article titled "Metachristianity in the Netherlands" by Joseph Lortz noting that "...[t]he evolution of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands has occupied, for some time, featured articles in the global press." The article identified the Netherlands as a site of change in Catholic practice, namely in "liturgical experiments (lacking on more than one occasion the necessary decorum)" which show a "deformed interpretation of... fundamental principles of dogmatic theology." The experiment in question was the Dutch adoption of the first vernacular catechism commissioned and approved by the Catholic clergy of a country in the post-conciliar era.²⁹ The article took pains to note that these deviations were not a provincial matter, something that can be dismissed as a local variant; this

²⁸ Joseph Lortz, "El metacristianismo de holanda," *Verbo* 106/107 (1970): 6-12.

²⁹ Dorr, Donal J. "The Dutch Catechism." *The Furrow* 19, no. 8 (1968): 477-81. Joseph Ratzinger, "The Dutch Catechism: A Theological Appreciation." *The Furrow* 22, no. 12 (1971): 739-54.

was after all the Catholic Church, an institution which the conservative sources in Latin America understood to be the representative of a complete and divine truth with traditions that needed no updating. These events in the Netherlands weren't only about Catholics there—they were about “our Church.”³⁰

The issue wasn't with any one of the changes brought by the clergy in the Netherlands but with the holistic nature of them, their “attitude toward faith” and all “Catholic ecclesiastical thinking.” Their national catechism declined to confirm the divinity of Christ, and from there followed a series of changes, most notably that of the nature and role of the clergy. Changes in how Christ was viewed meant that the clergy's status as his contemporary representatives and “imitators” was at best suspect or, more accurately, unnecessary, amounting to “radical alterations and interpretations of Revelation and of the teachings of the Catholic faith.”³¹ “Priests” were now merely “ministers,” in the Protestant sense, and were “charged by their community” rather than the Church hierarchy to act as teachers and guides, not the divine mediators that conservative and right-wing Catholics held priests to be.

Importantly, these changes did not come from outside the Church but rather from the country's Pastoral Council, a governing body of the Church which united bishops, other clergy, and theologians in discussing how to implement the changes to the liturgy brought by Vatican II.³² That such a body would go so far as to recommend that the Church in the Netherlands teach a “distorted interpretation of the concept of God as the genesis and initiation point of current theological debates,” opting instead for a “modern criticism” that starts from the point of the material world rather than the spiritual and the metaphysical, indicated their near total break with the Catholic Church as conservatives understood it. They chose to present the Church as something that was “becoming” rather than something that “is,” demoting it to the level of the human and social rather than the divine and transcendental. This was precisely what the dissenting and critical voices in Vatican II had warned of, that these kinds of reforms would spell the end of the Church as a permanent, ahistorical institution and transform it into a human one.

Subsequent articles in the same issue of *Verbo* repeated this narrative of warning and condemnation, tracing these changes in the Catholic Church in the Netherlands back to the 1930s but culminating in a “theological rupture” after the Second Vatican Council.³³ And while “the Council is Catholic, the national ‘council’ makes one think of liberal Protestantism—at times very liberal, an irreligious humanism.” Here was a conservative Catholic journal in Argentina not only paying close attention to their fellow Catholics in the Netherlands but deeply worried that they might be sliding away from their faith into Protestantism, or even atheism, all in the name of an ecumenical council from whose “spirit” they continued to slide further and further away.

The article noted that this might be the result of Vatican II's endorsement of “what it called a pluriformity in the expression of faith”—in other words, the changes to the liturgy that invited the bishops and other priests of any given country to write their own Mass, catechism, and other texts, to translate the Bible and other sacred works from Latin and rupture the centuries-long unity in Catholic Latin practice. Filtered through layers of theologians, lower-level clergy, and lay teachers, this results in an understanding of the Catholic Church as something much less united and whole than it ought to be, opening the door to a whole series of potential changes from divorce

³⁰ Joseph Lortz, “El metacristianismo de holanda,” *Verbo* 106/107 (1970): 6-12.

³¹ Lortz, “El metacristianismo de holanda”

³² Peter Hastings and Cornelius Ernst. “The New Dutch Catechism.” *New Blackfriars* 49, no. 572 (1968): 190-98.

³³ Hastings and Ernst, “The New Dutch Catechism” 98.

to euthanasia to recognizing homosexuality as a legitimate form of love.³⁴ While such changes might seem “unbelievable” in the context of the Catholic Church, they were nevertheless occurring.

To be sure, some of the attention given to these changes was in the interest of sensationalism, effectively accusing the Dutch clergy of reforming the Church out of existence. But vitally their concern was that there were Catholics who were being stripped of their right to tradition and that these changes represented a real, credible challenge to the Church on a global scale. Right-wing Catholics in Latin America understood their problems to be international, not just regional. They considered themselves to be at once temporarily better shielded from these developments and vulnerable to them as the Church continued to transform over the course of the 1960s.

Later the Argentine journal *Roma* would repeat these warnings and anxieties about the Netherlands in a 1971 article on the “Church of Silence in the Netherlands,” a reference to the churches in Eastern Europe which were under the thumb of the officially atheist Soviet or Communist states, those that were behind the “Iron Curtain.”³⁵ The Netherlands, of course, was not a Soviet state, but nevertheless it was under the influence of what the authors of *Roma* considered to be a rough equivalent, the creeping influence of secularism and modernity. They republished, in full, the text of a letter signed by “273 priests of the Bishopric of Haarlem,” describing the plight of the people and Church in their country. Their central concern was over the decisions of the Pastoral Council of the Netherlands, which they considered to be a danger worthy of “denunciation.”³⁶

The article centered on the Netherlands’ Pastoral Council’s post-Vatican II recommendations for changes in the structure of the Church, a document they consider to be “VERY DANGEROUS [sic].” This document “reduces Divine Revelation” to “inspiration,” “reduces hierarchical structures to human institutions,” eliminates the distinction between the clergy and the laity, and goes against the perception of the Church as the “salvation of mankind.” This resulted in a Church that was “not Catholic,” as in neither one and united nor in keeping with centuries of tradition, a Church that could turn against some of its most central and oldest teachings, such as priestly celibacy.³⁷ In other words, they were concerned that the Church was being reformed into nonexistence. The author of the *Roma* piece, Fray Miguel Oltra OFM, noted that these priests and their objections went “unheard,” hence the idea that theirs was also a Church of silence despite not being ruled by the organized left like those in Eastern Europe.³⁸ Rather than living behind an Iron Curtain they were imprisoned by “cackling heretics” and the “dictatorship of the LIBERTINES [sic].” This could only result in a “Catholicism which has gone mad.”

That the Netherlands, a country far from Latin America, could occupy such a large part of the imagination and pages of Latin American journals was both out of solidarity with their fellow Catholics and out of a personal, motivated fear of what would become of the faith in their own countries. As a cautionary tale and as a reminder of their universal obligations to their fellow Catholics and to the Church in general, this example reminded readers of the dangers of modernization wherever it reared its head.

³⁴ Lortz, “El metacristianismo de holanda,” 31.

³⁵ Fray Miguel Oltra O.F.M., “La iglesia del silencio en holanda,” *Roma* no. 18 (1971): 56-59.

³⁶ Fray Miguel Oltra O.F.M., “La iglesia del silencio en holanda,” 57.

³⁷ Fray Miguel Oltra O.F.M., “La iglesia del silencio en holanda,” 58.

³⁸ Fray Miguel Oltra O.F.M., “La iglesia del silencio en holanda,” 59.

Medellín and Modernization

Recalling that in their criticism of the Netherlands these Argentine and Chilean Catholics so often focused on the behavior of the Netherlands' own bishops' council, these councils were an excellent place to begin investigating their concern into Church modernization. There have long been bishops' associations and meetings in Catholic history, and in fact some of the more important reforms of some of the early modern councils required such meetings among bishops and among the diocese of bishops. Originally the purpose of these meetings was to standardize Catholic practice and doctrine by gathering bishops and priests together to heed the word of their superiors, and ultimately Rome, but gradually the nature of these meetings slipped into something different. One of the clearest examples of the collegial nature of the Church is the College of Cardinals, which convenes on the occasion of the need to elect a new Pope.³⁹

Thus collegiality represented a tricky issue for conservative theologians and Church leaders. It was a longstanding part of Catholic religious and theological practice, but in the modern context had taken on a threatening aspect. At its most basic the conservative critique of collegiality is that it gives too much power to those who are lower on the hierarchy, and challenges established Church doctrine that defines specific rules on doctrinal authority, particularly regarding the infallibility of the pope and how that authority extends through the rest of the hierarchy. At stake was where ultimate authority in the Church lay.

For conservative Catholics one conference stood out as an example of this danger—the Second Episcopal Conference of Latin America, known both by its Spanish acronym of CELAM and by the name of its host city, Medellín. Taking place in 1968, CELAM was the first such conference after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. The Medellín conference realized many of the greatest fears held by those who were skeptical of the Council and its aims. Specifically, it engaged in what they would have described as both the Protestantization and the “communization” of the Church—the theologians who developed this new direction for the Latin American Church called their position Liberation Theology, which will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

The Argentine journal *Roma*'s anxiety about Medellín meant that it considered some of those churches which followed in its footsteps to be proceeding toward communism. An article in its 8th issue, “How Communism Inserted Itself in the Uruguayan Church,” held that not CELAM itself but various Catholic groups and priests were “violent partisans.”⁴⁰ These men had taken the impulse of the Second Vatican Council entirely out of context to the extent that they considered themselves to be greater arbiters of Church doctrine than the pope himself, something at once terrifying and unsurprising for conservative Catholic observers given their position that any deviation from doctrine could and would spell theological disaster, enabling lowly priests and bishops to “contradict” the pope.

Medellín's greatest theological sin was the endorsement of the Base Ecclesiological Community movement, already operative and of increasing importance to many peoples throughout Latin America, primarily those who were underserved or not privileged within the normal hierarchy of the church - indigenous peoples, people of African descent, and the economically precarious. CEB's (generally known as such via their Spanish acronym) empowered their members to read the Bible themselves, to discuss it and engage with its message on a personal

³⁹ Josep M. Colomer, and Iain McLean. “Electing Popes: Approval Balloting and Qualified-Majority Rule.” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29, no. 1 (1998): 1–22.

⁴⁰ Federico Giraldi, “Como se impulsa el comunismo dentro de la iglesia en el uruguay,” *Roma* no. 8 (1969): 50-60.

level. This was of course only possible after the Second Vatican Council, which allowed and promoted the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages.

The Argentine theological journal *Criterio* devoted an entire issue in 1968 to the Medellín conference and reprinted its final documents in full, noting that the conference had proven to be an opportunity “to experiment with the worth of episcopal collegiality.”⁴¹ Even their relatively optimistic reaction to Medellín’s declarations regarding CEB’s noted that one might be “skeptical” of the ability of the laity to engage in that kind of theological debate and organization on their own, especially given that even the most pious Christians “attend Mass but do not pray in their homes”—how could they be trusted to make of their family a “domestic Church?”⁴² Medellín was a “shock treatment” for the Church.

Conservative Catholics considered the CEB’s and similar lay formations that were not under the strict supervision of the priest to be the manifestation of all their fears regarding the liberalization of the Church after the Council—it disempowered the priesthood, decentered the Church both as a hierarchy and as a physical space, emphasized personal connections with fellow Christians and with the word of God. This emphasis on the experience and position of the poor, particularly in Latin America, is another aspect of the Medellín Conference which so vexed conservative Catholics and right-wing political actors—the so-called “turn to the poor.”

Encouraging parishioners to consider their problems, both spiritual and political, through the lens of the economy rather than that of spiritual growth and difficulty was a literal capitulation to socialism as a potential aim of the Church as a sacred body. Incorporating class identity not only into the Church’s potential political work but into its definition of its members, into the very concept of what it meant to be a Catholic or a believer, was the substitution of an identity based upon one’s relationship with the divine for one based on one’s relationship with the means of production. Conservative Catholics argued that this Marxist and materialist definition of poverty and property relations was not only opposed to the traditionalist Catholic perspective that lauded the past of medieval guild and peasant relations but also the more class conciliatory politics of corporatism and post-corporatism which were current across the right in Latin America in the mid-twentieth century. Leaning heavily into the concept that the Church could be identified as the body of its members, and that they should be understood in Christian terms as the downtrodden and meek, meant that the right’s position of not just respecting but venerating leaders in both the business and political worlds potentially ran counter to the new direction theology was taking. This posed serious problems for political coalition building and theologically informed policy making.

When conservative traditionalists point to the “Protestantization” of the Church, this is what they mean—CEB’s look suspiciously like Protestant forms of worship and Church organization. Though not coterminous with the concept of the “progressive,” this introduction to Liberation Theology provides some context to the relationship between the rejection of the Protestants at Trent and the conflict over “progressivism” at Vatican II. The categories of progressive and Protestant would merge and collapse in on one another, uniting old enemies with the new. This rhetorical mixing went far beyond including progressives in the listing of the enemies of tradition and the nation, an older pastime. It connected the betrayal of the Lutheran and other Protestant bishops in the sixteenth century to what conservatives understood as the similar betrayal of the progressives in the twentieth.

⁴¹ Criterio Board, “La Segunda Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano,” *Criterio* no. 1558 (1968): 755.

⁴² Segunda Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano, “La Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina a la luz del Concilio Vaticano II,” *Criterio* no. 1558 (1968): 757-804.

The Protestantization of the Church

Conservative observers argued that these changes, which were transforming the Church, weren't just reforming it but were specifically flirting with what they considered to be the most dangerous and transformative event in the Church's modern history: the Protestant Reformation. This turn to the laity and their personal relationship with the Lord and the divine texts, this deemphasis of doctrine and theology, this transformation of each member of the laity into their own priest and their own interpreter of the divine word, represented to conservative and right-wing Catholics everything the forces of tradition had fought against for over four hundred years.

Concerns over the Protestantization of the Church didn't wait until after the Council had concluded but instead began during its deliberations. The *Boletín Eclesiástico de Buenos Aires*, a Catholic journal intended mainly for internal circulation among the clergy and dealing more with Church news and other mundane affairs, chimed in as part of a debate regarding the provision of the Eucharist outside of Mass. It noted that Church doctrine, and specifically the pastoral liturgy of the episcopate of Buenos Aires, specified that communion could not be denied to parishioners "who could not congregate during the ceremony," referring to the sick, elderly, or excessively remote. However the priests who led the journal felt the need to note that the "systemic and habitual practice of receiving communion outside Mass cannot be accepted."⁴³

Given that the transformation of the Mass was one of the clearest and least avoidable outcomes of Vatican II, this concern over changes to the rite set conservative Catholics against prevailing trends in the Church in its aftermath. Though relatively few would actively break with the Church over these differences, they did inspire real fears that the Church was being transformed beyond recognition. Even more, conservative and right-wing Catholics argued that these changes meant the loss not just of the Church and the society it underpinned, but potentially of what was defensible or laudable in human nature itself.

Some conservative and right-wing Catholic concern over Protestantism's influence over the Church in Latin America was about actual Protestants and their relationship with their societies and the Catholic Church. Nearly the entirety of the 1960, 11th edition of the *Anales de la Facultad de Teología*, from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, was dedicated to Protestants and Protestantism in the country and region. Articles on the "General State" of Protestantism in Latin America, the "Sociology of Sects" in Chile, a "Study of Protestantism in Chile," individual articles on "Pentecostalism" or "Orthodoxy" filled the issue.⁴⁴

"General State of Protestantism in Latin America," written by Father Humberto Muñoz, was an attempt to correct what the author considered to be the dearth of Catholic studies of Protestantism, reflecting poorly against the "North American Protestants" who "are always included to talk and opine about South American Catholicism."⁴⁵ He noted that while there have always been Protestants in Latin America, particularly in Portuguese colonies, even when one counts "Dutch and English pirates and filibusters," Protestantism as such remained a religious minority throughout the region. According to Muñoz, this was due to potentially irreconcilable differences between the two sects of Christianity, in that "Protestant psychology is the polar

⁴³ Editorial Board, "Laicos," *Boletín Eclesiástico de Buenos Aires* no. 84: 48.

⁴⁴ D Mario Veloso, "Visión General de los pentecostales," *Anales de la Facultad de Teología*, no. 11 (1960).

⁴⁵ S Pbro. D. Humberto Muñoz S.Th.D., "Visión general del Protestantismo en Latinoamérica," *Anales de la Facultad de Teología*, no. 11 (1960): 62-73.

opposite of that of Catholics.”⁴⁶ This led to centuries of misunderstanding and vilification, starting with Protestant criticism of the Spanish and continuing through the post-colonial period. Thus the separation of Protestants and Catholics was almost complete in the Americas, where countries colonized by the English were predominantly Protestant and all others Catholic, except for “Dutch Guiana” which had a “Mahometan”⁴⁷ [sic] majority.⁴⁸ Alarming for the author—and presumably his readers—among the Hispanic Latin American countries, Chile had the highest proportion of Protestants. This was not due to the “lack of priests,” or other common explanations. He argued that Chile’s isolation made it the “Britain” of Latin America, set aside and secularized. The only answer to this “Protestant advance,” not just in Chile but in Latin America in general, was “Church unity.”⁴⁹

Another article on “the various Protestant sects in Chile” divided them into five categories: the “essentially foreign,” such as Anglicans; the “historic sects,” such as Methodists and the “Pentecostals;” “Others;” and the “Semi-Christian” sects, such as Christian Scientists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Mormons.⁵⁰ The author notes that in Chile Protestants predominate in the cities, despite the lack of priests in the countryside, because of the “psychological frustration and misery” experienced in major metropolitan areas.⁵¹ Here Chileans’ attendance of Protestant churches is literally connected to social ills and should be understood as a failing not only of the Church but of Chilean society in general, a symptom of a social disease “inherent in great industrialized masses.” The only direction this could progress is toward “religious decadence” like that of “Northern Europe,” where irreligiosity and secularism result from “Protestant subjectivism and egocentrism.”⁵² Ultimately, the conclusion of Protestantization is “de-Christianization,” as these reforms lead formerly traditionally practicing Catholics first to progressivism, then to Protestantism in all but name, and finally atheism.

These anxieties about the slippery slope that was Protestantism render all discussions of Church unity not as a call for ecumenical understanding or reconciliation to differences but as a call to defend the particularities of the Catholic faith from potential challengers both domestic and foreign. On the eve of the Second Vatican Council, held explicitly for the purposes of considering ecumenical reforms, this attitude spoke of more than uncertainty—it demonstrated a real fear that the Church, and the societies that depend on it, would crumble from within.

Tellingly, the remainder of the publication dealt with preparations for the upcoming Second Vatican Council, an exhortation by the deacon of the Theology Faculty, Marcos McGrath, to his colleagues to attend to the legacies of “Nicea, Trent and Vatican [One]” and to defend the traditions of the Church such as the “Tridentine Mass” to “the unity of the Church,” with all reforms implicitly an attack on that unity.⁵³ Other articles, for example on “The Eucharist, Symbol of the Unity of the Church” by Egidoio Vigano, emphasized the decision at the Council of Trent to confirm the mystical truth of transubstantiation against the Lutheran interpretation of the Eucharist

⁴⁶ Pbro. D. Humberto Muñoz S.Th.D., “Visión general del Protestantismo en Latinoamérica,” 69. “Filibuster” originally referred to someone engaging in a military act without the authorization of a state, usually to carve out an autonomous territory or aid a local organization in its bid for autonomous political power.

⁴⁷ “Mahometan” is a pejorative term for “Muslim,” in that it centers the following of Mohammed as analogous to the way that the term “Christian” centers the following of Christ.

⁴⁸ S Pbro. D. Humberto Muñoz S.Th.D., “Visión general del Protestantismo en Latinoamérica,” 71.

⁴⁹ S Pbro. D. Humberto Muñoz S.Th.D., “Visión general del Protestantismo en Latinoamérica,” 72.

⁵⁰ RP Ireno Roster, O. Carm., “Estudio del Protestantismo en Chile,” *Anales de la Facultad de Teología*, no. 11 (1960): 91-120.

⁵¹ RP Ireno Roster, O. Carm., “Estudio del Protestantismo en Chile,” 93.

⁵² RP Ireno Roster, O. Carm., “Estudio del Protestantismo en Chile,” 97.

⁵³ RP Ireno Roster, O. Carm., “Estudio del Protestantismo en Chile,” 7, 18.

as a symbol or metaphor, in which “Christ feeds the Church, not just as if with his own blood and body, but with his own blood and body.”⁵⁴ The anxiety present in this issue over the potential Protestantization of the Church in the name of reform or ecumenicism was transparent in its pages.

Teología y Vida, a Chilean Catholic journal, continued this concern through the time of the Second Vatican Council itself. Two articles from their 1964 edition focus on the ecumenical changes brought by the Council: “Ecumenicism in the Catholic Church” and “The Situation and Problem of Ecumenicism in Latin America.”⁵⁵ The former article was a rundown of the ecumenical efforts undertaken by various parts of the Catholic Church after WWII, whose ultimate goal was the “unity of all the Christian Churches.”⁵⁶ Yet notably, the problem which the article focused on was not the differences between the Catholic Church and other types of Christians but rather between various types of Catholics. The issue of a “Catholicity in plurality” was the central concern of Vatican II, enabling Catholics to practice in different ways while maintaining unity. Conservative commentators both at the Council and their observers in Latin America were concerned that, after this, the Church would not remain “one.” Even the Protestant author of “Situation and Problem of Ecumenisms in Latin America” was concerned that this dialogue would prove insufficient to result in the “unity” of the Church.⁵⁷

The May-August 1965 edition of the *Revista Católica de Santiago*, released during the final session of Vatican II, revisited the question of the priest’s relationship to the rest of the hierarchy and the question of where the “authority” in the Church ultimately lay.⁵⁸ At stake here was the role of the priest and the future relationship between the global Catholic hierarchy ending in Rome and the various local episcopal conferences that were already being held and which Vatican II granted significantly more power and influence, for example in their ability to decide their country or region’s new vernacular liturgy.

Some right-wing Catholic commentators weren’t so understanding or understated. For example, the Argentine journal *Roma* published a lengthy piece by Guillermo Gallardo, member of the Ecclesiastical History Society of Argentina, entitled “Luther and the Rupture of Christian Unity.” The piece began with the simple, if questionable claim that “at Luther’s birth, in 1483, Christianity was united.” The Great Schism between Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity was entering a period of rapprochement, the English Church’s separation had yet to begin, and the “Catholic Kings and the grand Cardinal Ximenez de Cisneros” were in the heady days of their success in their efforts to transform the Iberian peninsula into a bastion of Catholic faith and practice.

Into this supposedly untrammelled world of Christian unity, Luther erupted “with a clamor of theological disputes and filthy injuries.”⁵⁹ Concerned more with “feeling grace” than with the objective truths of practice and doctrine, Luther expounded a “peculiar interpretation” of Christianity that would soon consume much of the Christian world. According to this twentieth-century Argentine interpreter of Luther’s theology, the German priest thought that “man had left his malleable state because of the sins of Adam and is thus incapable of any good work. Not baptism, nor penitence, nor any sacrament can reestablish man in his relationship with God.”⁶⁰

⁵⁴ RP Ireneo Roster, O. Carm., “Estudio del Protestantismo en Chile,” 32.

⁵⁵ P Juan Ochagavía, SJ. “Ecumenismo en la iglesia católica,” *Teología y Vida* (1964): 99-107. Rev Emilio Castro. “Situación y problema del ecumenismo en américa latina,” *Teología y Vida* (1964): 108-118.

⁵⁶ P Juan Ochagavía, SJ. “Ecumenismo en la iglesia católica,” 100.

⁵⁷ P Juan Ochagavía, SJ. “Ecumenismo en la iglesia católica,” 118.

⁵⁸ Pope Paul VI, “La iglesia, el papa, la jerarquía,” *Revista Católica* no. 1002 (1965): 4611.

⁵⁹ Guillermo Gallardo, “Lutero y la ruptura de la unidad cristiana,” *Roma* no. 5 (1968): 8-22.

⁶⁰ Guillermo Gallardo, “Lutero y la ruptura de la unidad cristiana,” 10.

Furthermore, mankind couldn't rely on the priests and popes they had served as sources of salvation, considering that they had for centuries led their congregants so far astray.

Roma emphasized that this was not just a theological question. "From the first moment," the author wrote, "Luther relied on the help of powerful defenders, such as the Duke of Saxony, Frederick, one of the seven lords of Germany in whose hands was the election of the emperor."⁶¹ This bit of history was necessary as the author argued that Protestantism didn't grow and spread on its own, but instead as a result of political pushing on the part of elites. This was done through a "violent campaign" against Catholic believers in the parts of Germany where Protestantism grew.⁶² These alone were legitimate reasons for Catholics to distance themselves from Protestants, their theological disagreements over transubstantiation, Mary, or the authority of the pope notwithstanding. Gallardo argued so vehemently against thinking of Luther as anything other than a destroyer of Catholic unity precisely because reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics threatened to eliminate what he considered to be vital parts of Catholic doctrine. He went so far as to quote the Protestant theologian Oscar Cullmann, saying that "'the gravest danger of ecumenicism today is the tendency to diminish that which separates us.'"⁶³ That separation needed to be defended in the face of the changes brought by Vatican II, which in the minds of conservative commentators threatened to eliminate Catholicism in the name of a "union."

As the potential changes brought by Vatican II were realized in the form of changes to the liturgy, CEB's, and other new formations in the Catholic world, these calls for alarm grew more serious. *Resistencia*, a Spanish journal affiliated with TFP, wrote in 1977 that the changes in the Church's ecclesiology amounted to nothing more than a "show."⁶⁴ By this point the hierarchy had been consumed by the liberals, the "socialist-reformists," who, "in the name of the true Church teach a false doctrine." Ecclesiology, ecumenicism, and the turn to the laity had run their full course and transformed the Church into its antithesis, a modern institution more interested in rapprochement with Communists and atheists than in the business of preserving the Catholic faith.

Progressive Nightmares

The previous sections of this chapter present a conservative Catholic Latin America deeply anxious about threats to the Catholic Church, and the problem was that their version of the Church *was* under threat and had been for decades. For conservatives this threat came not just from without, in the form of modernizing discourses rendering it increasingly obsolete and relegated to a past age, but also from within, as internal enemies developed strength and challenged the definition of what the Church was and could be. Vatican II and the changes it brought to Catholic practice opened the Church to alterations so serious and transformative that it realized almost a century of nightmares.

When the conservative Catholics studied in this chapter referred to their fellow Christians as progressive, they were participating in a conversation that went back to the nineteenth century and the efforts at Church reform which were defeated during the First Vatican Council, a conversation deeper than that concerning the actions of individual priests or the organization of the laity. This conversation also occupied the pages of the journals that were precursors of those

⁶¹ Guillermo Gallardo, "Lutero y la ruptura de la unidad cristiana," 11. Frederick the Wise was an Elector in the Holy Roman Empire, holding the Electorate of Saxony between 1486 and 1525.

⁶² Guillermo Gallardo, "Lutero y la ruptura de la unidad cristiana," 12.

⁶³ Guillermo Gallardo, "Lutero y la ruptura de la unidad cristiana," 22.

⁶⁴ Anonymous, "Guerra psicológica revolucionaria: uruguay," *Resistencia* no. 2 (1977).

quoted so far, such as *Balcón*, a conservative cultural magazine from Argentina run by Father Julio Meinville, who will show up in later chapters as a fascist apologist and ideologue but in this case was the magazine's Chief editor and resident clergyman. In 1946, by which time Meinville had only recently stopped openly supporting the Italian Fascist movement, *Balcón* ran an article on the "death" of the "Religion of Progress" movement.

The author of the piece, Juan Casaubon, argued that progressive Christianity coincided with modernity, roughly from the late eighteenth century to their present day of the mid-twentieth century. This movement sought a "rupture with the past and a dynamism toward the future" in keeping with the philosophical transformations ongoing in Western thought at the time.⁶⁵ *Balcón*'s writers took a textbook position that modernity consisted of the tension between advocating for the "complete autonomy" of two opposed groups—the "individual," as in the liberal tradition, and the "collective" in the communist tradition. Theologically this had resulted in a massive societal shift to a functional "agnosticism" as previously sacred religious answers to moral questions were undermined or no longer respected. Both the individualistic and collective responses to the changes brought by the modern world had resulted in a slide into a materialist abyss from which philosophy and theology could not escape. The only way out of this dilemma, indeed the only way forward, the only way to preserve the dynamism that motivated these philosophical and theological questions, was to go backward, "to return to the virtues of the past." The only way to preserve the best of the present was to become a "reactionary." This perspective—openly reactionary, hostile to modernity, offering the past as an answer to the problems of the present—was a clear encapsulation of much of the conservative Catholic thinking so far discussed. It will come back, in a more explicitly and violently political form, later in this dissertation.

By the time of the Council's deliberation the foretold "death" of progressive Christianity was clearly premature. In 1969 *Roma* was still printing long pieces on the failings of progressive theology and doctrine. One such piece—by the same author, Juan Casaubón—sought to expose the "foundational, fundamental, and final" errors of progressive theology and its "fatal" consequences.⁶⁶ Decades later, Casaubon offered the same prescription for an ailing faith—reaction, a return to the past. A return to the idea of "human dependence" on God, to the experience of divine "Majesty," to meet God with "reverence and fear." Fighting off those who would change Christianity from the inside would be an immense task, but it was the only option available. Casaubon, no longer the young man who had written in *Balcón*, rested that responsibility on the "best youths of today."

Seeking to return the Church to the "world," progressives were accused of mistaking what that "world" was. It could either be a truism, that the Church was a part of creation and as such inherently part of the world as much as anything else, or it could mean the secular world, in which case progressives betrayed themselves by admitting to the heretical notion that what the Church needed was more secularism, underlying their "lack of criticism for the modern world" in their attempts to emulate it.

The ultimate end of this tendency was the "destruction of the sacred and the mystical in the liturgy, and the dissolution of Christian and even natural morals." From these relatively minor changes in the way progressive Christians talked about their faith and more dramatic changes to the liturgy and doctrine comes the "**complete dissolution of Christianity** [sic] along with all the speculative and ethical truths it presupposes." Progressive Christianity was not the future of Christianity and the Church, but its conclusion. Embracing the modern world—from the

⁶⁵ Juan A Casaubón, "La muerte de la religión progreso," *Balcón* no. 7 (1946): 4-5.

⁶⁶ Juan A Casaubón, "Error inicial, error terminal y raíces del progresismo cristiano," *Roma* no. 9 (1969): 18-34.

acceptance of the freedom of religion, which leads only to “pantheism” to Teilhard de Chardin’s attempts to reconcile Catholic faith with modern biological science, which leads only to the “auto-deification of man”—was nothing other than the loss of thousands of years of truth.

The Argentine journal *Verbo*, republishing an article by the French theologian and Jesuit Jean Danielou, dealt directly with this problem. Christianity, according to the article, had always been walking a tightrope between its involvement and place in the world, between the sacred and the secular. Catholic doctrine and politics were tools Catholics could use to navigate that boundary and make a “Christian life” possible.⁶⁷ But Christianity couldn’t access the secular world on the level of a “nation” or a “government.” Only at the level of a “civilization” could Christianity take its rightful place in the secular world. But how could that square with the demonstrable, unavoidable fact of the “dechristianization” of the masses? Christianity could not become a personal choice, one among many ways of being in the modern world. Without a mass, universal following in its society, it was empty. Given the decline in the Church’s secular influence since the beginning of the nineteenth century this was no philosophical exercise, but rather a serious question as to how the Church could move forward into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

This article struck directly at the fear conservative Catholics had for efforts to reform the Church to better fit the modern world. None disputed that some kind of reaction to their loss of power and status was warranted. The question was, would this change dilute the nature of Christianity such that it became one ideology among the rest? Fears of such an empty Christianity, bearing the name but not the importance and centrality, changed from the inside and unrecognizable, motivated an overwhelming number of conservative and right-wing reactions to Vatican II by naming this potential erroneous reform: progressivism.

Argentine sources expressed serious anxiety about progressives after the conclusion of the Council. During the end of the Onganía government, in 1968, the theology and politics journal *Ulises* devoted an article to the dangers of “Progressivism in Action,” beginning by lamenting a recent conference attended by the Cardinal of Buenos Aires at which his Mexican counterpart disputed the veracity of a recent Marian apparition, arguing that while the Church doesn’t “deny” the possibility of supernatural events of this kind it must be prudent.⁶⁸ From this event and correspondence around it the magazine’s editorial board weaved a story that goes from the denial of recent Marian apparitions to the denial of Mary’s appearance at Fatima, to the dissolution of the Church’s relation to the metaphysical entirely through “ambiguity and false objectivity.”

This descent from grace had a name—progressive Christianity, this “progressive madness, which through countless strategies is already in the minds of the Argentine Catholic flock.”⁶⁹ This “crusade” undertaken by “modernist clergy against old Christians” would inevitably descend into “blasphemy,” all from the most modest of reforms. The introduction of “democracy and egalitarianism within the ecclesiastical structure of the Church, a concession to the spirit of modern times... is a historic discontinuity introduced voluntarily in the Church.” That this sentiment was expressed in the middle of the Onganía dictatorship, when rumors about countercoups abounded and social unrest was high, directly connects these concerns about the dissolution of the Church with similar anxiety about the dissolution of society and the need to shore up social control under strong leadership.

This concern about progressives extended to other Argentine journals as well, particularly *Roma*. One such article by Alberto García Vieyra argued that while the Church might seek to

⁶⁷ R.P. Jean Danielou, S.J., “La iglesia: pequeño rebaño o pueblo inmenso,” *Verbo* no. 48 (1965): 22-26.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, “El progresismo en acción,” *Ulises* no. 38 (1968): 11.

⁶⁹ Anonymous, “El progresismo en acción,” 12.

“renovate” itself in the name and image of Christ the dangers of actual progressive turns were real and frightening.⁷⁰ Catholics could renew the Church by doubling down on conservative and historical commitments to a “life of sacrifice, renunciation, and prayer,” one that “promotes the validity of the supernatural.” This is as opposed to the “progressive version” of Catholic renewal, which instead hands the Church over to “two doctrines and one politics: the doctrines are **ethical personalism** and **Christian humanism**; the politics (which is also a doctrine) is **communism** [sic].”⁷¹ Communism “instrumentally” used the Church to advance its materialist agenda, leading progressive Catholics to denounce “Scholasticism and St. Thomas” in favor of a “theology of the concrete.”⁷² Here again was the slippery slope, leading such rapprochement with “modernism” directly into a “symbiosis, a ‘fraternal’ encounter between Christians and Marxism,” from which communism emerges “intact” while Christianity must “renounce and silence the Truth of Christ.” And all of this, ultimately, from a “false conception of ecumenicism.” Rather than fall down this rabbit hole, the author exhorted his readers to “leave the religion of Man and return to Christ.”⁷³

Roma proselytized against progressive Christianity in issue after issue. Its ninth installment from 1969 contained another article by Casaubon and titled “Initial Error, Terminal Error, and Origins of Progressive Christianity” began with a quote from Thomas Aquinas, saying that “a small error at the beginning can grow to the end.”⁷⁴ One could hardly find a better critique of progressive Christianity from a conservative perspective.

The initial error the article spoke of was the progressives’ failure to “distinguish between the world and the ‘world,’” that is, the difference between the world made by God and the modern world made by man. This led progressives to put the Church in the context of the rest of manmade institutions rather than keeping it apart and transcendental. And from there the final error, the “destruction of the sacred and mysterious in the liturgy” and “the dissolution of Christian and natural morality” couldn’t be far off. That such a terrible result could come from basing one’s Christian practice in “individual or social moralism and intellectualism” spoke at once of the difference between the traditional Catholic worldview these conservatives held and secular modernity, and more importantly reveals how incredibly fragile they considered their conservative world to be.⁷⁵ Even moderate changes to liturgy, theology, or philosophy threatened everything.

Seemingly triumphant after Vatican II, progressive Catholicism stoked fears of the dissolution of the Church in conservative Catholics in Argentina and Chile. In decades-long debates that began on the common ground of ecumenicism and the need for reform in a modernizing world, conservative Catholics went from modest optimism about the changes the Council could bring to alarm at the transformation of the Church and its most sacred principles. Suddenly what it meant to be Catholic was different. Collegiality meant that the Church functioned differently. Changes to Mass and the liturgy meant that Catholics worshipped differently. Modernization of the Mass and other Catholic practices meant that the things that separated the Catholic Church from other Christian institutions were being eroded, something which these right-wing commentators were convinced they could see not just in their countries but throughout the

⁷⁰ Alberto García Vieyra O.P., “Renovación y progresismo en la iglesia,” *Roma* no. 6 (1968): 17-50.

⁷¹ Alberto García Vieyra O.P., “Renovación y progresismo en la iglesia,” 19.

⁷² Alberto García Vieyra O.P., “Renovación y progresismo en la iglesia,” 21.

⁷³ Alberto García Vieyra O.P., “Renovación y progresismo en la iglesia,” 50.

⁷⁴ Juan A Casaubón, “Error inicial, error terminal y raíces del progresismo cristiano,” *Roma* no. 9 (1969): 18-34.

⁷⁵ Juan A Casaubón, “Error inicial, error terminal y raíces del progresismo cristiano,” 27.

world. And all together the sheer magnitude of changes that followed the Council meant that some conservatives argued that Catholics stood to lose not just the Church but their grip on human nature and natural law. The language the Catholic right used to describe progressive Catholics doesn't mirror the language they used to describe political subversives—in many national contexts it prefigures and informs it. These priests were equally connected to international, foreign powers, equally corrupted by the modern world and modern culture, equally young and disinterested in traditional forms of loyalty and connection, equally confused about gender roles and gender presentation, and finally even more disturbing in that their disloyalty threatened not just the existence of a nation but the people of Christ.

Progressive Catholicism represented more than a rhetorical enemy against which conservative and right-wing Catholics could define themselves. For it wasn't just the ideologies and theologies of the progressives that threatened the conservatives' notion of order. Their behavior, their acting on what appeared to be a newfound progressive consensus was an immediate, acute danger to the Church and its people. One of the central pillars of conservative's understandings of the Church, Mary and Marian devotion, was a particular site of fear and debate in Argentina and Chile. This facet of the Church, and its potential modernization or reform, is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter Two

Mary, Gender, and Politics after Vatican II

The Church has as its mission raising its children to perfect union with Christ, to participate in his praising the Father, with Him and in Him. Mary acts to move the Church in the same direction. Mary's acts are the acts of the salvation of Christ which permeates the Church, which was founded with Her.

This text appears in an article called “Reflections on the Marian Pastoral in Chile,” published in the Chilean theological journal *Teología y Vida* in late 1964.⁷⁶ Stripped of their context, these words could be read as theological musings on the nature of the Church, something appropriate to the ivory tower or a seminary classroom, divorced from the real world in which Catholic parishioners lived their lives. Theology might seem disconnected with the lives of the laity, but this chapter shows how questions about how the Church and its Latin American members should venerate Mary were closely connected to discussions of the family, celibacy, divorce, contraception, the specter of female ordination, and even anticommunism. Arguing over the particulars of Mariology and Marianism, wasn't esoteric, but rather a serious contest over gender and the family. Marian worship was an important part of the gender politics of the Church, a facet of the “feminization” of the Church.⁷⁷ Marian devotion connected the divine with the everyday, connected the social with the individual, and the political with the personal. References to Mary were both a means by which right-wing Latin American Catholic commentators could connect to their readers and a guide for proper Catholic living.

The role of Mary in the Church was particularly relevant to debates in the Catholic Church through the 1960s and 1970s due to the influence of the Second Vatican Council. Tensions between different interpretations of Mary's position in the Church both on a theological and on a social level were running high during the Council's deliberations and afterward as its decisions changed Catholic practice and politics. Two questions—of the worship of Mary, or Marianism, and the theology of Mary, or Mariology—occupied the Council and its observers. This chapter follows these discourses among conservative Catholics, primarily in Argentina and Chile in the mid-twentieth century. Following these threads from theology to domestic and international politics shows how theological debates had become intertwined with political issues that ranged from the Cold War to family planning. This chapter will focus particularly on the mid-60s, immediately before and after the release of the Conciliar documents dealing with Mary, with additional material to illustrate the longstanding nature of this rhetoric. For these conservative Catholics, Mariology needed to be respected as a major part of Catholic thought, and Marianism had to be held up as vital to everyday Catholic life, particularly as it pertained to issues of gender and the family. This

⁷⁶ Mons. Enrique Alvear U, “Reflexiones Sobre la Pastoral Mariana en Chile,” *Teología y Vida* (1964): 180-186.

⁷⁷ JAN ART, PATRICK PASTURE, and THOMAS BUERMAN, “THE CULT OF THE VIRGIN MARY, OR THE FEMINIZATION OF THE MALE ELEMENT IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH?: A PSYCHO-HISTORICAL HYPOTHESIS,” in *Gender and Christianity in Modern Europe*, ed. JAN DE MAEYER et al., 1st ed., Beyond the Feminization Thesis (Leuven University Press, 2012), 73–83.

chapter will show that, having had neither of these desires met by the Second Vatican Council, conservative theologians, priests, and lay leaders used their positions in media and the Church to promote the idea of attention to Mary as an important way to differentiate themselves not only from non-Catholic Christians but from progressive Catholics as well.

Mary's veneration had long been a contested issue in the Church. Her status as intermediary between the human and divine was a major part of the Protestant Reformation, and her veneration was connected to debates over iconography which date back to the Great Schism that separated the Eastern and Western Churches.⁷⁸ It has also historically been a point of contention between "higher" and "lower" forms of Catholicism, with the veneration of Mary being associated with laypersons and especially lay people in peripheral geographic areas, such as the Americas.⁷⁹ Most predominantly Catholic nations in Latin America were host to their own Marian patron, such as Mexico's Virgin of Guadalupe, Guatemala's Lady of the Rosary, Argentina's Lady of Luján, and Brazil's Lady of Aparecida. These apparitions—often taking the phenotypic characteristics of local or even specifically indigenous peoples—allowed laypersons to identify with the divine.⁸⁰ Marian veneration lay at the confluence of the Catholic Church's status as a universal (that is, "Catholic") institution and the myriad of local practices, saints, and traditions that one would expect of a global organization with almost two thousand years of history.⁸¹

Though Mariology received relatively little attention in ecumenical councils since the Council of Ephesus in 431, which affirmed that Mary had given birth not just to a man, Jesus, but to God, it was an important part of Catholic education from the parish to the seminary. Through the nineteenth century Marian devotion remained an important part of the spiritual lives of many Catholics the world over, with Marian shrines flourishing throughout the Christian world from antiquity to the modern era, such as the Marian shrine in Lourdes, France.⁸²

In the mid-twentieth century Marian devotion remained an everyday part of the life and worship of many Catholics the world over, not least in Latin America. In the *Revistas Eclesiásticas* of the dioceses of Santiago and Buenos Aires, magazines run by the clergy that documented the comings and goings of priests, published papal speeches, and distilled theological questions for an informed but lay audience, Marian devotion was featured in numerous articles. The *Revista* of Buenos Aires featured articles about Argentines joining other Catholics in the celebration of a "year of Marian devotion" in 1954. Quoting Pope Pius XII, it encouraged readers to "continuously meet with the multitudes of the faithful who, not just privately, but publicly and with one soul send up praises to our most sweet Mother."⁸³ Noting that the full, original name of the city of Buenos Aires (Puerto de Santa Maria de Buenos Aires) is itself a reference to Mary, the journal hoped that the city would continue in this tradition of being "entirely devoted to Our Lady." Santiago's counterpart magazine, the *Revista Eclesiástica de Santiago*, echoed this sentiment fifteen years later by reprinting the opening speech of the Third General Episcopal Conference of Latin

⁷⁸ WHALEN, BRETT. "RETHINKING THE SCHISM OF 1054: AUTHORITY, HERESY, AND THE LATIN RITE." *Traditio* 62 (2007): 1–24.

⁷⁹ Hall and Eckmann, *Mary, Mother and Warrior*; Hontiveros, "The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Second Vatican Council."

⁸⁰ O'Malley, *Trent and All That*.

⁸¹ HONTIVEROS, "The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Second Vatican Council"; Wright, *The Early Modern Papacy*; Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770*; Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*; Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire*.

⁸² François Roy, "The Meaning of Lourdes," *The Furrow* 9, no. 2 (1958): 79–89.

⁸³ Santiago Luis Copello, "Sección Oficial del Arzobispado de Buenos Aires," *Revista Eclesiástica de Buenos Aires* (1954): 438–443.

America, held in Mexico. The entirety of the speech is devoted to Mary and the “eminent Marian tradition” brought to the Americas by the colonizers. Marianism caught hold of the peoples of the Americas so strongly that each country, region, and even town had its patron Mary, an “endless list.”⁸⁴

In the 1960s the status of Mary and Marianism were key questions during the Second Vatican Council. Would Marianism be upheld as a positive part of the Church? Would her veneration be considered something to be renewed or discarded? What role would Marianism have to play with the question of women’s power and position within the Church? What would this imply for the gender politics that pervaded right-wing thought? And finally, for those in the Church who hoped that the Council would challenge the boundary between Catholics and other Christians, how would this be possible without moving away from the saintly cults that had partially defined that split in the middle and early modern ages?

In the end the Council took a middle path in these debates. Marianism was addressed not in a separate, dedicated document but instead was the focus of the final section of the Council’s most influential document, *Lumen Gentium*, which primarily addressed questions of ecclesiology and reforming the relationship between the laity and the hierarchy.⁸⁵ The section on Mary, Chapter Eight, was a compromise. It neither fulfilled the hopes of Marian devotionalists who wanted the Church to redouble its commitment to her as a “Mediatrice” between God the Father and humankind or the “Co-Redemptrix” alongside Christ, nor did it concede to those who hoped that Marian devotion would be de-emphasized in an attempt to modernize the Church.⁸⁶ Instead, Mary’s “subordinate” position relative to the Lord was emphasized, while also singling her out as being unique among the faithful for her dedication to her Son and the Father of her child, a position with clear “real world” implications for the idealized role of women in the family. Yet those skeptical of Marian devotionism were disappointed by the extent to which her separation from other Christians was maintained, by the acceptance of previous documents⁸⁷ describing her own immaculate conception and her lack of sin or failing that would put her on the level of other humans.⁸⁸ For the conservative commentators in this dissertation, that was an attack on one of the most foundational aspects of Catholic tradition.

Wrangling over Mary and her position in the Church didn’t stop at the Vatican or with the Council’s decisions, however. Conservative and right-wing Catholic publications in Latin America were deeply concerned over these changes and what they might mean for the Church. By the Council’s conclusion articles were noting that “it is a widespread opinion that the veneration of Mary has been prohibited by the Council,” indicating what these right-wing Catholics considered to be the serious threat posed by the Council’s decisions for Marian devotion.⁸⁹ Their attention to these questions indicates both an earnest concern over potential changes to one of the most beloved traditional parts of Catholic practice as well as serious questions about the real-life topics Marianism was connected to.

⁸⁴ O.R. 19, “María: el comienzo de un mundo mejor,” *Revista Eclesiástica de Santiago* (1979): 41-43.

⁸⁵ “Light of Nations” in Latin. Also known as *The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church. Lumen Gentium*, in accordance with tradition when referencing Conciliar documents, is referred to by the first few words of the text in their original Latin.

⁸⁶ Hall and Eckmann, *Mary, Mother and Warrior*.

⁸⁷ Namely the Papal Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, Pope Pius IX, 1854.

⁸⁸ Linda B. Hall and Teresa Eckmann, *Mary, Mother and Warrior: The Virgin in Spain and the Americas*, 1st ed (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004); ART, PASTURE, and BUERMAN, “THE CULT OF THE VIRGIN MARY, OR THE FEMINIZATION OF THE MALE ELEMENT IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH?”

⁸⁹ S.E.R. Mons. Rudolf Graber, “El puesto de María en la Iglesia,” *Roma* no. 8, (1969): 10-18.

These debates played a major role in how conservative and right-wing Catholics in Latin America talked about not just changes to the Church but social issues such as divorce, birth control, and women's roles in society. From these social questions Marianism touched on grand narratives of civilizational decline, and particularly the infiltration of both nations and the Church by communist forces. Their anxieties over the reduction in emphasis in Marian devotion fed directly into their polemics over the dissolution of the Church and their nations. While scholars today rightly point out that it is reductive to rely too heavily on Mary as an image of womanhood in Latin America, conservative and right-wing commentators—themselves invariably male—were deeply invested in precisely this kind of reduction of femininity to service and motherhood.⁹⁰ While the connections between gender discourse and right-wing governments in the Southern Cone have been the focus of numerous informative texts, these have focused on the use of gender in the construction of the subversive other (which, in this dissertation, is the focus of Chapter Three).⁹¹ Instead, this chapter will focus on connections between the theological wrangling during and after Vatican II and how this informed conservative and right-wing gender politics, not just as it related to their enemies but for society as a whole.

Mary Mattered

Many sources of Catholic political and religious writing mused heavily about Mary and her place in the contemporary Catholic world. For the Catholic clergy and laity of the mid twentieth century these questions were not merely academic, neither rarefied and incomprehensible nor abstract and divorced from the problems of the real world. Instead, the Marian question touched on and even stood in for a series of political commitments regarding everyday questions in everyday people's lives.

Mary and her position in the Church mattered greatly to conservative Catholic commentators in Argentina and Chile during and after the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council. The August 1964 edition of the *Revista Eclesiástica de Buenos Aires* published a short piece titled “María, Madre de la Iglesia” between long translations of Papal decrees and other articles, such as one on how to run a business that was in keeping with Catholic values. Noting a special Marian Audience held at the Basilica in Rome, the article's author, a clergyman, made his position on the Marian question extremely clear: Mary's proper position in the Church was revealed through the language with which she was referred to by the Church fathers, such as St. Augustine, whom the author quoted as saying that “Mary physically embodied the head of the mystic body [of the Church] and the Church spiritually embodies this in its members.”⁹² This tied the perspective of this magazine directly to a particular interpretation of Mary's role, one in which she was vital not only as a popular figure among the faithful but much more importantly in that her existence and holiness was constitutive of that of the Church itself. Mary, “essentially” identified with the Church, is the “only mediator” between God and the humans who are his

⁹⁰ Navarro, Marysa “Against Marianismo,” in *Gender's Place* pg 257-272. Mooney, Jadwiga E. Pieper. *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile*. Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009.

⁹¹ Margaret Power. “The Engendering of Anticommunism and Fear in Chile's 1964 Presidential Election.” *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 5 (2008): 931–53. Valeria Manzano. “Sexualizing Youth: Morality Campaigns and Representations of Youth in Early 1960s Buenos Aires.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, no. 4 (2005): 433–61. Valeria Manzano, “Sex, Gender and the Making of the ‘Enemy Within’ in Cold War Argentina.” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47, no. 1 (2015): 1–29.

⁹² Editorial Board, “María, Madre de la Iglesia,” *Revista Eclesiástica de Buenos Aires*, no. 80 (1964).

charge—“he who loves Mary must love the Church, just as he who loves the Church must love Mary.”

In a later issue from August 1965 after the release of *Lumen Gentium* and its section on Mary, the *Revista* ran another piece regarding the place of the Virgin in the Church which explicitly called upon Catholics to “restore their devotion to Mary,” to “gather ourselves, with trembling hands, around the images of Jesus and Mary...” This is an explicit reference to perhaps the most public aspects of Marian devotion, the attendance and pilgrimage to places where her image had appeared to the faithful, and the time spent praying before her image in shrines and Churches. Mary is the “model of all Christian and human virtue,” the human key to salvation, a perfect example for all to follow in her devotion to Christ.

The article went further: “We must restore in our hearts the cult of devotion to the Virgin.” This statement, small and simple, belies a great import regarding the then-present state of the Church. It first implied that the author considered the cult of the Virgin to have been eroded in recent memory, a clear reference to the debates over Marian devotion and the potential transition which was occurring within the Church to emphasize her role as intermediary of Christ’s love, or as an example for all to follow. Second, the quote emphasized that Marian devotion was something else, something unique and special, which identified certain types of Catholics compared to others. This use of Marian devotion as a signifier of belonging and theological identity was a major part of many articles on Mary.

The Boletín Eclesiástico del Arzobispado de Buenos Aires was another official church publication which, while avoiding taking a position about where the Mariology of the Church would or should land, dedicated particular attention to Mary and her position in the Church immediately before and during the deliberations of the Council. Published monthly and with local priests and involved laity as its intended audience, the *Boletín* focused most of its pages on noting the comings and goings of the clergy throughout the Archbishopric of Buenos Aires and its environs, official messages from the archbishop, and advertisements for tailors who specialized in vestments or for new electric organs. Not an academic publication, the *Boletín* was intended for an everyday clerical audience in their actual practice and performance as clergy.

In the August 1964 issue of the *Boletín* the front-page story was “Holy Mary and the Priest.” Mary was the “confidant” of the priest, his ally in lonely contemplation of the Lord, in public performance of the mass, and within. “There are secrets, priestly secrets, which cannot be shared even with one’s own worldly mother... only the most holy, heavenly Mary can bear such secrets.” Mary was not only of benefit to priests but theologically above them, standing in relation to them in much the same way as she did to the laity. While priests were closer to God than laypersons, they were also vastly more burdened by the weight of the problems of the world, responsible for their flocks, for maintaining traditions and practices thousands of years old in the modern world. This relationship to Mary, seeing her as a savior of those who save, was another way *Boletín* emphasized how priests were connected with their “inheritance” from Christ.

Moving from sources intended for a priestly audience to those that had both lay and clerical readers, *Teología y Vida*, the in-house academic journal of the Theology Department of the Universidad Pontificia Católica de Chile, was among the most prestigious theology journals in Latin America. Beginning publication in 1960, immediately after the announcement of the Second Vatican Council, *Teología y Vida* offers a useful glimpse into the theological reactions of an influential group of Latin American scholars to the transformations that the Council would bring to Catholic doctrine and practice. Like so many other theological sources, in 1964 and 1965 *Teología y Vida* paid special attention to Mary, publishing several articles on Marianism and its

place in the world. The 1964 issue of the journal carried two articles on Mary, one on Mary in the Bible and a second on Marian veneration in Chile itself.

In one article, “The Virgin in Biblical Theology”, the author noted that “Mariological studies have grown prodigiously in recent years,” adding to an admittedly already extensive collection of theological perspectives on Mary.⁹³ The article briefly recounted the theologies of Mary’s place in two of the Gospels, Luke and John. Luke’s position was that Mary, in her “supernatural maternity embodied in her person the people of God,” not only, in her act of motherhood, represented but literally *was* the spiritual and social body of Christianity. John’s emphasis on Mary’s place at the foot of the cross was the article’s second major point, leading back to the exploration of the idea of Mary as “Co-Redemptrix.” These efforts to emphasize the position of Mary in the Gospels was a clear attempt to shore up the case for maintaining, or even expanding, her position relative to other saints, clearly aligning the author with the traditionalists and against modernists and reform.

Ultimately the author concluded that he agreed with St. Cyprian that “none can have God as their Father without having the Church as Mother”—yet he cautioned readers to remember that the “Maternity” of the Church was an embodied one in a particular human person, “Mary, the Mother of Jesus.” While not exceptional or particularly outstanding on their own, sharing these perspectives to coincide with the release of the only Vatican II document which related to Marianism and Marian devotion was an indicator that, to the author of the piece, the maintenance of Mary’s role in the Church was not only important but vital to the maintenance of the Catholic faith. The second of the articles released in that year’s edition, on the “Marian Pastoral in Chile,” focused on presenting Mary as a “collaborator” in the mission of Christ, literally in “forming the People” (as in, the mystical body of Christ, the Church).⁹⁴ Mary was more than just the literal mother of Christ, she was his closest human ally, and therefore a close and necessary collaborator for those who served Christ on Earth. Christ “founded the Church with her” in his self-sacrifice on the cross.

Yet the article also noted the real “risks” of Marian devotion. Marian devotion could be “regional,” with its own forms, sites, and rites which did not translate from place to place: “such that, when moving from region to region, one might be left without a religion.”⁹⁵ While popular, Marian devotion could sometimes verge upon the “iconic,” a heresy condemned in ecumenical councils centuries ago and relating to the supposed veneration of images rather than divine presences and personalities. More perniciously dangerous rather than necessarily heretical, holding Mary in such high regard risked promoting her as a venerable person because she was popular, rather than trying to promote her popularity because she was venerable—in other words, it risked using Marian devotion as a crutch to attract parishioners, who should be drawn to the Church by its mission and message rather than the popularity of a particular Marian apparition.

Thus the attention to Mary was both a defense and a warning for conservative Catholic commentators in Argentina and Chile—a defense of what they understood to be Catholic tradition, and a warning about following when it should be the clergy and theologians leading the way. The tension between these two trends would inform their writing on Mary throughout the middle of the twentieth century. This was particularly true of journals which were deeply Catholic but not officially connected to the Church or Catholic universities, which weighed in on the question of Mary’s role in the Church somewhat more heavily than their academic or clerical counterparts.

⁹³ Beltrán Villegas, SS CC, “La Virgen en la Teología Bíblica,” *Teología y Vida* (1964): 159-168.

⁹⁴ Mons. Enrique Alvear U, “Reflexiones sobre la Pastoral Mariana en Chile,” *Teología y Vida* (1964): 180-186.

⁹⁵ Mons. Enrique Alvear U, “Reflexiones sobre la Pastoral Mariana en Chile,” 184.

One such publication, Argentina's *Roma*, paid close attention to the outcome of Conciliar debates over Mary's role in the Church and specifically to "an important movement which longed for the institution of the dogma of the Marian mediation in the economy of the Redemption"—that is, Mary's role as the intercessor between her son, Christ, and Catholic congregations and believers.⁹⁶ This would have been in line with the "already received truths of the Church" and what *Roma* already considered to be centuries of Catholic practice, particularly considering that the "liturgical feast of the Mediation," that is Mary's mediation between Christians and God, had already been declared for the 21st of January some forty years ago in 1921 by Pope Benedict XV.

Despite this, and much to *Roma*'s consternation, the "minimalist" faction at the Council was the successful one. Rather than receiving a full document dedicated to her, Mary was referred to in a section of other documents. What was worse, these minimalists—whom these conservative commentators clearly identify with the "progressives" who were the focus of the previous chapter—"drank strongly from the waters of the silence of those interested in preserving Marian devotion, to overcome the Rosary and diminish the cult of the Holy Virgin."⁹⁷ Since "the mediation of Mary and the praying of the Rosary contribute to put us on the path of faith and sacramental life," this constituted nothing less than a crime against their fellow Catholics.⁹⁸

This "sinister anti-Marian propaganda" had infiltrated all corners of the Christian world, from the "cities to the countryside," denying centuries of Christian tradition from Papal encyclicals to the documents promulgated by other ecumenical Councils.⁹⁹ By the time of Vatican II itself this had infected not just certain parts of the Catholic priesthood but the Conciliar documents themselves. Here the text closes in on the section in *Lumen Gentium* which dealt with Mary's role in the Church, noting that the text identified Christ as the "Mediator" of salvation for Catholics. And yet Mary herself was granted "her own, singular role in the economy of salvation" at Christ's side—meaning that "if Jesus is the mediator between God and Man... reconciling the human race with God...if such is the role of Jesus then such and the same is the role of the Holy Virgin, united with Him in this role."¹⁰⁰ This "evidence" of Mary's role in Christianity meant to the author, Alberto García Vieyra, that Mary's place in the Church was clear: she was a Mediator, like Christ himself. The article went into Biblical and other theological precedents at length identifying Mary as such, as the "**Mediatrice** [sic], Advocate, Auxiliary and Salvation."¹⁰¹

Being the Mediatrice meant that Mary occupied a place between the faithful and Christ, as a literal mediator between divinity and humanity. This was clear both in her person, being the only person born without sin through the Immaculate Conception, and in the fact that she was taken immediately and bodily to heaven upon her death, in the Ascension. The problem was that while the Second Vatican Council acknowledged Mary's central role and the importance she had to millions of Catholics, it still denied her the title of "Mediator," though such would have been a simple "reduction" of the myriad definitions given of her place in the Church. This muddying of the waters of Catholic traditions and practices that predated the Council by centuries was a perfect example of what these conservative and right-wing Catholic publications were concerned about.

⁹⁶ Alberto García Vieyra O.P., "La meditación de María," *Roma* no. 19 (1971): 10-21.

⁹⁷ The Rosary was, and still is, an important part of much Marian devotion. See Nathan Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary: Marian Devotion and the Reinvention of Catholicism* (New York: University Press, 2009); Michael P. Carroll, *Catholic Cults and Devotions: A Psychological Inquiry* (Kingston [Ont: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

⁹⁸ Alberto García Vieyra O.P., "La meditación de María," 11.

⁹⁹ Alberto García Vieyra O.P., "La meditación de María," 12.

¹⁰⁰ Alberto García Vieyra O.P., "La meditación de María," 15.

¹⁰¹ Alberto García Vieyra O.P., "La meditación de María," 17.

Formally, the Council did not contravene pre-existing Catholic practices regarding Mary or devotion to her, but what the Council did decide could easily be interpreted as such—and was. In the minds of the conservative authors of *Roma* and the other publications considered here, this was nothing more than a screen for a more insidious goal, one of changing the Church from within in a way that would render it unrecognizable not just to theologians who could closely read Conciliar documents in Latin, but to everyday Catholics who prayed the Rosary and who kept Marian shrines and Marian devotions throughout Latin America.

The Chilean journal FIDUCIA, which began as an independent publication of conservative Catholic political criticism but later joined the international network of the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP), offers a good window into this.¹⁰² In November of 1964, shortly before the release of *Lumen Gentium* as the new foundational framework from which the Marian question would be approached, FIDUCIA ran a short, plaintive paragraph contemplating modern Marian apparitions, and specifically, why so many appear to be “crying.”¹⁰³ Against the “optimism and superficiality of the modern [contemporary] man,” Mary appears “weeping, maternally admonishing us.” Mary was not only present, and present in a way that the modern world often forgot, she was also aware of humanity’s failure to live up to her example and that of her son, particularly in what the magazine’s editors considered to be modern, “superficial” times.

In the following number of FIDUCIA, from December 64-January 65, a story on Mary occupied the center of the paper. “[F]rom the first moment of the Incarnation in her virginal womb,” Mary’s role as the mother of the Church, and thereby of all the faithful, was assured.¹⁰⁴ She was beseeched to preside over the Council itself, to “protect” and “assist” its participants in their “arduous task.” They needed her help so that they might recall why they were in the Council at all—to promote and protect Catholicism from “tribulation.” Special mention was given to protecting the voices and souls of those Christians who “suffer persecution” or “find themselves imprisoned for their faith.” Only closeness with Mary could provide these people their “just liberty.”

Invoking Mary in this way and for this cause was a signal that FIDUCIA, like the other journals analyzed here, was going beyond standard Catholic practice, which mentioned Mary in a time of need or used Marian devotion to ensure the continued popularity of the Church. Mary was a symbol of specific traditional values and practices held up as an exemplar of hope for Catholics who lived in conditions in which they might “suffer” for their faith. These conditions are left unnamed in the journal article, but this was an implicit reference to Catholics living behind the Iron Curtain, or living in countries where Catholic values, once held dear, were being challenged or undermined by outside influence—a concept explored in Chapter One of this thesis.

These conflicts over the veneration of Mary were clear examples of theological arguments with massive, real-world importance not just for the members of the hierarchy but for the laity as well. The pages written and ink spilled over her veneration were clear indications that many of the same publications that despaired of other transformations in the Church saw the Marian issue as vital to the future of Catholicism. Theological questions like these shared the same page as lengthy diatribes about decolonization, international finance, and domestic political contests. Beyond the earnest concern over her role in the Church, calls to protect Marian devotion were a kind of dog-

¹⁰² More on the TFP in Chapter Five of this dissertation, which examines how they straddled the political and theological worlds.

¹⁰³ Editorial Board, “Nuestra Señora lloró sobre el mundo contemporáneo,” *FIDUCIA* no. 13 (1964): 3.

¹⁰⁴ Uncredited, “María, madre de la Iglesia,” *FIDUCIA*, reprinted from the Spanish journal *Ecclesia* no. 14 (1964-65): 6.

whistle for other social and political commitments, namely those that concerned the role of women in society. The same publications that so deeply concerned themselves with Marian devotion displayed a deep anxiety over twentieth-century developments in gender equality and women's rights.

Birth, Divorce, and the Family

Birth and population growth was a central way that conservative and right-wing Catholic authors in Latin America united social questions with discussions of Mary as a role model and intermediary between the human and the divine. The *Anales de la Facultad de Teología de Chile* in its 1965-1966 issue included a one-hundred page treatise on birth control by Juan de Castro Reyes, acknowledging that birth control was a complex issue that touched not just on questions of the family and gender but also on national development and international power relations.¹⁰⁵ And yet despite this complexity, Christian communities could not “remain silent” in the face of the problems posed by the very concept of birth control. As the article quoted a Father Mertens, SJ, sociology professor and expert on the Church's doctrine on “fecundity,” “an immense effort of explanation and diffusion is required, in which all, priests and laity, must take their part, following an urgent necessity.”¹⁰⁶ Science and “modern times” had produced a concrete problem with major theological implications and connections.

Beginning with a section on “The Dynamism of Conjugal Chastity” and moving to another on “Conjugal Onanism in the Sacrament of Penitence,” the lengthy article addresses theological questions raised by the recent commercial viability of the birth control pill.¹⁰⁷ The central theological question was this: if couples had been practicing forms of natural birth control for centuries or millennia with Church approval and even endorsement, what difference did it make that these scientifically verified methods of reducing the likelihood of pregnancy were now joined with an artificial contraceptive pill? In answering this question the author reminded his readers that even these common “techniques,” such as the “Ogino method”¹⁰⁸ (generally known in English as the “rhythm method”), “cannot guarantee an authentically moral Christian life.”¹⁰⁹ Thus even when carried out between two loving, married Catholics, any method whose intention was to reduce the likelihood of childbirth was not just suspect but potentially against Catholic doctrine. Indeed the very “condition of matrimonial love” was “fecundity.”¹¹⁰ This was the case even when the married couple practiced “chastity” in the interests of not having more children, which was the only method of birth control which the author of the piece holds as theologically viable.¹¹¹

“Contraception” went against all these virtues, “attacking the specific end of matrimony which is fecundity” and the “conjugal unity and the values of loving reciprocity.”¹¹² Even worse, contraception represented a “lie” on the part of any woman who used it, as she both negates the purpose of sexuality and matrimony *and* seeks to “brusquely renounce her gift” of being able to

¹⁰⁵ Juan de Castro Reyes, “La regulación de los nacimientos,” *Anales de la Facultad de Teología*, no. 17/18 (1965-1966): 5-99.

¹⁰⁶ Juan de Castro Reyes, “La regulación de los nacimientos,” 6.

¹⁰⁷ Juan de Castro Reyes, “La regulación de los nacimientos,” 12. Onanism is a synonym for masturbation.

¹⁰⁸ So named for Dr. Kyusaku Ogino, a Japanese obstetrician and gynecologist who was one of the first doctors to measure the length of menstrual cycles to calculate fertility.

¹⁰⁹ Juan de Castro Reyes, “La regulación de los nacimientos,” 17.

¹¹⁰ Juan de Castro Reyes, “La regulación de los nacimientos,” 31.

¹¹¹ Juan de Castro Reyes, “La regulación de los nacimientos,” 38.

¹¹² Juan de Castro Reyes, “La regulación de los nacimientos,” 45.

bear children. This was a gift she doesn't deny to her counterpart, but something she "takes from herself." Contraceptives "center pleasure" rather than procreation, and represented a "submission to the genital," resulting in "massive social repercussions." While the author didn't believe that chastity could be something regulated by law—"if chastity cannot be achieved through a technique, neither can it be an attitude... as a product of accommodating oneself to a law because it is a law"—he did believe that it could be taught by Catholic education.¹¹³ This was one of his central suggestions for Catholic countries and political actors, the promotion of Catholic education about the purpose of marriage and birth.

This was why these priests would pay such attention to these gendered questions of marriage, childbirth, and gender. Birth and birth control were of particular concern because they lay at the confluence of the personal and the societal—birth control wasn't just about particular couples but "modern western civilization" in general.¹¹⁴ Thus despite socioeconomic and any personal issues it was the obligation of Catholics to "combat techniques of conception" as much as "unnatural methods" of contraception, not only for the moral good of the families concerned but for the good of Christian society. These matters were at once personal and deeply political. Birth control, birth rates, and other family matters were thus perfect examples of how Catholic teaching connected contemporary social issues with literally ancient theologies, with gender at the intersection.

Another of the most important roles played by Mary and devotion to her was in the representation of proper married life. This was particularly important in Argentina and Chile in the mid-twentieth century, as these countries were at the time in the midst of arguments over the legality of divorce—divorce was briefly legalized in Argentina in 1954 and then made illegal again in 1956 with the coup that ended the first Peronist government, for example.¹¹⁵ Neither Argentina nor Chile would legalize divorce through the mid-twentieth century, and Chile remained without a divorce law until the twenty-first century.¹¹⁶ This conflict over divorce was a central one for conservative Catholics, a bellwether of their control over a given society and the government that presided over it, particularly after their loss of control over educational systems in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (with notable reversals in the form of right-wing governments as in Argentina and Spain, which returned education to the Church as part of their social programs).¹¹⁷

Divorce was thus a constant concern on the political and theological Catholic right. *Teología y Vida*, the magazine of the Theology department of the Universidad Católica de Chile, took pains to specify that despite all the changes and challenges to Christian doctrine in the intervening millennia, Jesus's prohibition against divorce stood.¹¹⁸ The article emphasized that the potential legitimate reasons for divorce, namely adultery or other injury committed against women, were intended to protect women from predatory or abandoning men. In the opinion of the article's author, himself a theologian, the biblical passages usually cited to potentially justify divorce were in contradiction with other parts of the passage. He reminded his readers that

¹¹³ Juan de Castro Reyes, "La regulación de los nacimientos," 47.

¹¹⁴ Juan de Castro Reyes, "La regulación de los nacimientos," 77.

¹¹⁵ Donald A. Wiesner, "Enactment and Suspension of Absolute Divorce in Argentina," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 9, no. 1 (1960): 94–104.

¹¹⁶ Claudia Rojas Mira, "Contradicciones de La Modernidad: El No Divorcio En Chile," *Debate Feminista* 16 (1997): 341–56.

¹¹⁷ JAVIER MARTÍNEZ-TORRÓN, "School and Religion in Spain," *Journal of Church and State* 47, no. 1 (2005): 133–50; Virginia W. Leonard, "Education and the Church-State Clash in Argentina, 1954–1955," *The Catholic Historical Review* 66, no. 1 (1980): 34–52.

¹¹⁸ Antonio Moreno C. Pbro., "¿Jesús admite divorcio?" *Teología y Vida* (1960): 101–106.

assuming Biblical contradiction ran against Catholic doctrine, and that therefore this principle invalidated any interpretation which could be construed as accepting of divorce. Instead, he engaged in a deep theological exegesis to arrive at the conclusion already taken by the Church—that divorce could not be permitted. Rather than falling into such “contradictions,” unity was maintained, and “matrimony” preserved as “Christian perfection.”¹¹⁹

La Revista Católica de Santiago began its 1964 article on divorce with lengthy quotes from the Council of Trent, firmly establishing their position that the question of divorce had been answered in the sixteenth century by affirming the “perpetual and indissoluble ties of marriage,” and needed no revisiting. “[T]he greatest philosophers, canonists, moralists, and modern theologians, unanimously and without exception, hold up the same doctrine,” that the permanence of marriage was in accord with natural law, and therefore with Catholic practice and doctrine. *Teología y Vida* concurred, arguing that “Matrimony (as with Virginity) is in the service of the nuptial love of Christ’s Grace” and that ultimately every Christian was “‘married’” to God.

Considered in isolation this emphasis on and need to protect traditional gender and family roles might seem uninteresting and innocuous. However in the context of a transforming Church and transforming world the fact that these sources considered it not only relevant but *necessary* to emphasize the sanctity and permanence of marriage indicates their knowledge that with changes in the Church’s understanding of the divine family could come changes in its understanding of human families as well. This is one way in which discussions of Mary’s motherhood and marriage—of Christ and of the Church—dovetail with discussions of everyday, human motherhood and marriage.

Other journals went further in using the question of divorce to unite these threads of theological and political gender traditionalism. *FIDUCIA* noted in its September 1965 issue that Chile was considering the legalization of divorce, something which “Catholics cannot accept” due to the “teachings of the Church fathers.”¹²⁰ They understood divorce as a literal assault by the modern world on tradition and the family, which were the “foundation” of Christendom, and on the nation. Having characterized their defense of Marian devotion in the same language, which paralleled discussions of divorce in its connecting theological arguments about permanence and immanence with practical, contemporary questions, *FIDUCIA* emphasized the connections between these theological problems and the changing, modern world. In another *FIDUCIA* article from later in 1965 while the Chilean parliament was deliberating divorce law, the editorial board (the authors of the piece) reminded their readers that “Catholics know that we cannot accept divorce,” and further that “the teachings of the Popes” show that “divorce is a corruption, an offense equally to the natural as well as the supernatural, Godly order.”¹²¹

Roma, a politically and religiously charged journal in Argentina, was more direct when its own Congress was considering a divorce law in 1968 after the promulgation of the changes brought by Vatican II. They expressed their “hope that the President of the Nation [Argentina] stay vigilant, and, with the help of Our Lady [Mary], have the necessary fortitude to fight against such trends.”¹²² Mary was specifically invoked to provide strength to political actors who were tasked with defending the traditional family and traditional gender roles. As noted in another conservative

¹¹⁹ Antonio Moreno C. Pbro., “¿Jesús admite divorcio?” 106.

¹²⁰ Javier Polanco Silva, “El Divorcio y las Tendencias Románticas,” *FIDUCIA* no. 19 (1965): 4-5.

¹²¹ Javier Polanco Silva, “El Divorcio y las Tendencias Románticas,” 5.

¹²² Editorial Board, “Divorcio,” *Roma* no. 3 (1968): 1-3.

Argentine journal, *Verbo*, this was especially vital given the assault on the family from “neopaganism,” which the Council failed to adequately address and confront.¹²³

Concern over divorce, its legalization, and what this might represent for the future of Catholic traditionalism remained in the spotlight for many conservative and right-wing Catholic publications through the 1970s. The December 1975 issue of the Argentine journal *TFP Informa*, the flagship newsletter of that country’s branch of the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property, included a letter from a Brazilian bishop, Antonio de Castro Mayer, regarding that country’s proposed new divorce laws. Bishop Mayer was of course incensed by this possibility, which he considered to be a tool of the “enemies of the family, which is founded on monogamous and indissoluble marriage.”¹²⁴ These enemies sought to “implant this scourge of decadent nations,” divorce, “in our country as well.”

He exhorted his fellow Catholics in light of the “recent Council” to protect “the orthodox Faith.”¹²⁵ Faithful Catholics had the “obligation” to protect the “sacred character” of marriage from outside influences. This is because marriage’s function in a Catholic society was as a producer and defender of the family, the vehicle of the promotion of “religion” within a community. The bishop reminded his readers that the divine function and nature of marriage was confirmed by Pope Pius XI in the Encyclical “*Casti Connubii*,” in which he wrote that “matrimony was not instituted or restored by man but by God.” Marriage was a perfect example of a human, social, and legal institution which a secular society might mistake as belonging to the world of man but which *in fact* fell under the purview of the Church. It was not a merely human agreement but a “supernatural” one, something which Catholics had recognized for “centuries” and couldn’t justifiably retreat from now that their power in the secular world was waning.

Contemporary campaigns against the legalization of divorce in Spain drew similar attention from Catholic organizations. The Spanish magazine of the TFP, *Covadonga*, printed a letter signed by over 1,000 Spanish priests opposing the law on July 10, 1978:

Directors, members, and beloved members and collaborators of the society of Covadonga, accompanied by a group of Priests from the Archdiocese of Madrid, made their entrance in Spanish court... with a petition signed by more than 1,000 priests from all regions of Spain, in which they requested that the clause which permits the introduction of divorce in our legislation be eliminated from the future Constitution.¹²⁶

These universal concerns—of family and its structure and function—were part of global Catholic debates, not only in Latin America but in Spain and elsewhere as well. Battles over the legalization of divorce and abortion, two things which the Latin American right couldn’t condone as part of the modern world, challenged gender power structures which the Church studiously policed.

These issues—birth, divorce, and the family—are perfect examples of the intersection between theology and politics. Not only in the sense that political actors looked to the teachings of the Church, but in that theologians and priests directly intervened in political affairs through advocacy and activism during a period of transition in gender roles in Latin America and the world.

¹²³ José m. Escobar, “Familia y concilio,” *Verbo*, no. 52 (1965): 14-17.

¹²⁴ Don Antonio de Castro Mayer, “El divorcio,” *TFP Argentina* no. 27 (1975): 18-25.

¹²⁵ Don Antonio de Castro Mayer, “El divorcio,” 19.

¹²⁶ Editors, “Eurocomunismo y catolicismo progresista,” *Covadonga Informa*, (1978).

That right-wing and conservative Catholics would oppose abortion rights and seek to prevent the legalization of divorce should surprise no one. What is important and interesting in these polemics against social change is how these commentators connected issues as disparate as the question of Mary's relationship to the divine and these more practical, everyday questions of how everyday people would engage with one another. Debates over Marian devotion connected these issues in the minds of these publications, from university departments to political organizations.

But the theological question of Marianism was also more basic than its relation to the place of women in society, or the ways in which women were or are venerated in predominantly Catholic cultures. It was also a question about the position of women *in the Church itself*, and thus the relation of women to the hierarchy of male priests. This question had two related aspects, one regarding the relation between lay women and the hierarchy and the other between nuns and the hierarchy. With the liturgical and doctrinal changes brought by the Second Vatican Council, women were enabled to participate in the liturgy as never before.¹²⁷ For the first time in millennia, since the formalization of what could really be understood as the Catholic liturgy, women were able to physically participate in the dissemination of communion materials. They could handle sacred objects on the altar, could even read homilies and other Biblical messages from the very pulpits used by the priests themselves. This kind of gender democratization of Christian practices and holy rites was literally inconceivable in a Catholic context before the Council. And while arguably one consequence of this shift was the increased buy-in of women to the Council's alterations to the Church, another was a perceived major threat to the very nature of what it meant to be Catholic.

The March 1965 edition of *Verbo*, coinciding with the release of the text of *Lumen Gentium*, published a lengthy article on Mary and her role in differentiating Catholicism from other Christianities, namely Protestantism. The mid 1960s was a "critical moment in the history of Christianity," according to the article in *Verbo*.¹²⁸ The piece referenced one of the original intentions of the Second Vatican Council, to move toward Christian unity—to progress in the direction of mending the Great Schism between Rome and what came to be known as the Orthodox Churches, as well as the divide between Protestants and Catholics. This unity was a noble cause, the piece notes, but cannot be based on a "doctrinarian Babel," achieving unity with other Christian denominations at the expense of what makes Catholics Catholic, in this case Marian devotion. The author exhorted Church leaders not to abandon the hallmarks of Marian devotion, such as the "Rosary, the Scapulary¹²⁹, and the Crown" which were all too often denigrated as belonging only to "little women and fools." Here again is a conservative Catholic commentator arguing for the maintenance of tradition in the face of modernizing reform.

The error with which *Verbo* was concerned in this piece was the relegation of Marian devotion to the background of Catholic practice. This article in *Verbo* holds the conceptual key to the two major points of this chapter. One, that Marianism was understood by conservative Catholics to define Catholicism against other Christianities (understood as heresies). And two, that this distinction was not drawn only in terms of intellectual debates. As much as Marianism was an answer to a question about the relationship between the divine and the human, it also related to modern questions about family and gender, leading theological debates, and play-by-plays of

¹²⁷ Pilcher, Carmel, David Orr, and Elizabeth Harrington. *Vatican Council II: Reforming Liturgy*. Havertown: ATF Press, 2013.

¹²⁸ San Luis MG Montfort, "Devoción a María," *Verbo* no. 48 (1965): 19.

¹²⁹ The scapulary, or Scapular, is a form of Catholic devotion consisting of wearing divine quotes or images under one's clothes as a reminder of faith—these often either reference Mary, or are a motif in Marian art.

Conciliar proceedings off the pages of magazines and journals into legislative chambers, government offices, and bedrooms.

The maintenance of traditional gender norms was something that could unite disparate members of the right wing in a defense of tradition. This was the crux of the problem with Mary's relation to power, and why this problem came to a head and came to stand in for so many other conflicts during the Second Vatican Council. Venerating Mary as a saint, perhaps even the highest and most important saint, holding her to have been born without sin, and the myriad of other ways in which Mary was separated from regular humans made her something of a divine figure in her own right—just one that is more relatable, more human, more accessible, more understandable, and more feminine than God or Christ specifically.

Defending what conservative and right-wing commentators understood as traditional Marian devotion wasn't an academic exercise. In their minds, threats to Marianism were like cracks in the edifice of Catholicism itself, threatening the entirety of the Church and its essence, that is, what made it distinct from other forms of Christianity. Even more than that, though, these challenges portended greater threats to Catholicism—that in the face of the political left the Church might not only cease to be Catholic but cease to be Christian altogether. Here Marian devotion served to protect not only Catholicism but western civilization itself.

A Marian Conference Against Communism

To commemorate the sesquicentennial anniversary of Argentina's independence from Spain, and in honor of Latin America's independence and identity as a region in general, the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires convened the First Interamerican Marian Conference in 1960. Invitations were sent in February to the leaders of the episcopates in many Latin American countries, including Chile, where the journal of the Archdiocese of Santiago, the *Revista Católica*, published the invitation in full. Here Cardinal Caggiano, the highest ranking priest in Argentina, called upon his fellow Catholic leaders to begin an annual tradition of holding a conference to venerate the Virgin, positing that this might be only the “first” of a “series that will periodically continue, repeating throughout all of America.”¹³⁰ Caggiano wrote that he had received authorization from the Holy See “to make this proposal to the Venerable Episcopates of each and every American country, requesting that they attend.”

Pairing the veneration of Mary with the celebration of national independence was not unusual, but it was telling of the cardinal's motivations for calling the conference. He wasn't interested merely in the veneration of Mary for her own sake, or even for the sake of the Church and its congregants. Instead, his goal was:

...to put us under Mary's maternal protection in the organized, thought-out, and no-quarter-given fight against heresy and heretics who seek the destruction of the Kingdom of God, beginning our fight, in the Continent, with an act of faith in Mary, saying “Thou alone in the entire world has crushed all the heresies.”¹³¹

His convening a conference for the veneration of Mary was not motivated by devotion, nor by academic interest in discussions of possible changes to Marian devotion which might be

¹³⁰ Cardinal Antonio Caggiano, “Invitación del Episcopado Argentino a un Congreso Mariano Interamericano con ocasión del Sesquicentenario de la Independencia,” *Revista Católica* no. 986 (1960): 2575-2576.

¹³¹ In Latin in the original, taken from the Immaculata prayer.

brought by the upcoming Second Vatican Council—instead, it was due to the “danger” faced by “all peoples of the Continent.” The cardinal summed up this danger in a single word: “communism.” Together with its allies, “atheism” and “materialism,” communism threatened the “Christian civilization” of the Americas. In response, the cardinal argued that the Catholic peoples of the Americas needed to rely on the “Immaculate and eternal Virgin Mary.”

On March 26th the Archbishop of Concepcion, Alfredo Silva Santiago—who was Cardinal Caggiano’s Chilean counterpart as the President of the Episcopal Conference of his country—responded to the invitation, an answer also published in the *Revista Católica*. Archbishop Santiago expressed his “gratitude” for the invitation and promised his country’s “cordial assent and most enthusiastic collaboration” with the initiative.¹³² He echoed his Argentine brother’s rationale for convening the conference, that devotion to Mary would surely prove an “effective weapon to fight against that heresy of heresies, atheist communism.”

That two mid twentieth-century Latin American archbishops would agree on the importance of venerating Mary, or that they would similarly concur that the primary enemy of their congregants and their countries was communism, is not in itself remarkable. Yet in the context of the preparations for the Second Vatican Council, which many hoped would produce documents that would fundamentally change the way Mary was worshiped by Catholics the world over, this conference took on a greater significance. Here were the leaders of the hierarchies of two major Catholic countries discussing the veneration of Mary, not to engage Catholics with the Church, or to popularize the faith, but instead as a religious and political tool to defend against a global foe. The occasion of the Conference offers historians a useful window into the construction of this consensus, literally made up of the coming together of priests from around the region to proclaim their continued devotion to Mary, who as both a symbol of each individual nation through her various apparitions *and* as a symbol of Catholic unity through her divine motherhood could unite the region.

The September 1960 edition of the *Boletín Eclesiástico*, a publication of the Archbishopric of Buenos Aires, devoted its cover to the conference, which was to be held in a few months.¹³³ It noted that the purpose of the conference was a simple one: “to plan works before the grave danger of communism and adopt opportune resolutions in the light of Marian doctrine.” Here, as ever in these contexts, Mary herself and the precise content of devotion to her was eclipsed by the dangers of communism and the need to defend the country and continent from its forces. Clearly the purpose of the conference was not strictly devotion to Mary, nor even a discussion of theology related to Marian devotion, but instilling in its attendees and observers the idea that “Communism constitutes the greatest and the worst of the heresies that have emerged throughout the centuries up to the present.” This was particularly vital in Latin America because, there, the continent’s “sixty-four Catholic Universities and far greater number of middle and high schools” are where “the future leaders” learn not only their faith but their national obligations. Marian devotion, “so rooted in our peoples,” could be the force that “will closely unite us in a true crusade against communism and will assure us of a definitive victory.” Marian devotion will “immunize” the people against “modern heresy, communism.”

¹³² Alfredo Silva Santiago, “Respuesta del Episcopado Chileno a la invitación del Episcopado Argentino al Congreso Mariano Interamericano,” *Revista Católica de Buenos Aires*, no. 986 (1960): 2576.

¹³³ Editorial Board, “Primer Congreso Mariano Interamericano,” *Boletín Eclesiástico del Arzobispado de Buenos Aires*, no. 33 (1960): 117.

The conference itself took place between the 10th and 13th of November of 1960, a month which the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires proclaimed as the “Mary Month.”¹³⁴ The December issue of the *Boletín* celebrated the event which, presided over by the “Virgin of Luján, sworn patron of Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay,” was held in the city’s cathedral on the Plaza de Mayo, just around the corner from the Casa Rosada, Argentina’s Presidential palace. The conference began with a parade so exciting that not only the monks and priests who were in attendance but drivers who stopped their cars and “workers of various businesses left their labors and joined in the general enthusiasm”—a sure sign of the ability of Marian devotion to produce the kind of unity which was the conference’s aim.

Notably most coverage of the conference itself referenced none of the anticommunist aims proclaimed by its organizers or attendees, and outwardly to the parishioners the conference appeared to be a celebration mixing “floral arrangements,” the “Boy-Scouts,” and “horsemen in gaucho costumes” in honor of the Virgin. For the conference organizers Mary was a useful means to unite the people behind conservative interests in preventing their country’s sliding towards communism, whereas for its lay observers who were the targets of this message it was a spectacle that one might take a child to see. The celebrations continued after the conference’s conclusion, such as the erection of “monumental cross that presided over the meetings of the Congress,” which was donated to the government of Argentina to be placed in the Río de la Plata close to the dockyards of Buenos Aires.¹³⁵



Cross and Monument of the First Interamerican Marian Congress, Av. Libertador and Av. Sarmiento¹³⁶

The message given by Pope John XXIII on the occasion of the conference, read aloud to the crowd and broadcast on the radio, conveyed this message of continental unity through Mary: “The Virgin of Luján [Argentina], of Guadalupe [Mexico], of Copacabana [Bolivia], of each and

¹³⁴ Editorial Board, *Boletín Eclesiástico del Arzobispado de Buenos Aires*, no. 33 (1960): 151.

¹³⁵ Editorial Board, “La cruz monumental del 1er. Congreso mariano internacional,” *Boletín Eclesiástico del Arzobispado de Buenos Aires* no. 44 (1961): 1.

¹³⁶ Photographer Uncredited. From Archivo Amancio Williams, “Monumento del primer Congreso Mariano Interamericano,” <https://www.amanciowilliams.com/archivo/monumento-del-primer-congreso-mariano-interamericano> (accessed May 5 2022).

every Sanctuary that adorns the varied geography of your continent” came together to “irradiate life and supernatural breath” into the lives and works of Catholics in Latin America.¹³⁷ While less openly anticommunist than the messages shared by the Argentine and Chilean Archbishops who convened and attended the conference, the Pope’s message was nevertheless one of the necessity of Christian unity in the face of common foes and the need to “defend the Christian faith.”

This Marian conference was the primary focus of the journals of the largest and most influential diocese of both Argentina and Chile when it was announced and while it was being held, clearly indicating its importance to the authors as they attempted to direct the focus of their readers. The conference drew clergy from throughout the continent together and led congregants back to the Church, particularly back to the traditional, national symbols of their countries on the anniversary of their independence. Marian devotion allowed the clergy to reinforce the connections between their congregants’ nationalities and their Catholicism to protect them from a continental enemy—communism—that threatened to undo the power of both nation and Church. Because Mary was both a universally revered saint and a set of apparitions and patrons of individual countries, her veneration was a perfect site for organizing inter-American Catholic solidarity against non-Catholics.

Argentina’s most important journal of theology and politics, *Criterio*, devoted its cover story to the conference in its November 10, 1960, issue. Written by the editorial board and titled “Against Communism (The theme of the Interamerican Marian Congress),” the article began with a quote from theorist Jean-Ives Gálvez on Marx and Marxism, noting that as “800 million people live today under governments which apply the Marxist doctrine” the danger posed by Marxism was more than one of political difference.¹³⁸ Rather the danger of Marxism was that it “divides families, societies, nations, and empires. It separates friends.” Marxism was a challenge to the entirety of society, because of its effect on people’s lived experiences. The editorial board asked its readers to imagine what these changes would mean “for the future of Argentina” and “the future of Latin America and the western world.

And yet, because “Marxism is a theory of action,” it couldn’t be fought simply with words. This was even more urgent given the “effectiveness” of communism in organizing new adherents, particularly among the downtrodden.¹³⁹ Attention to this danger was necessary in order to “preserve western civilization.”¹⁴⁰ The internal guiding documents of the Marian Congress itself, reprinted in *Criterio*, bore out this totalizing attention—their goal was to preserve “religious, cultural, and socio-economic order” as “Marxism is the antithesis of the Christian concept of God, man, and the community.”¹⁴¹ At the Congress, attendees debated the influence of Marxism on subjects as diverse as “indigenous nationalism,” “architecture,” and “music,” but their attention was particularly drawn to the effect that Marxism would have on the family and its place in the socio-economic order.

The next two editions of *Criterio*, from December 1960 and January 1961, continued the story of the Congress by printing its concluding documents. The December issue printed the

¹³⁷ Pope John XXIII, RADIOMENSAJE DE SU SANTIDAD JUAN XXIII AL FINAL DEL PRIMER CONGRESO MARIANO INTERAMERICANO CELEBRADO EN BUENOS AIRES AS 52 (1960) 980-982; *Discorsi, messaggi, colloqui*, vol. III, págs. 11-14.

¹³⁸ *Criterio*, “Frente al comunismo (El tema del Congreso Mariano Interamericano),” *Criterio* no. 1367 (1960): 803-806.

¹³⁹ *Criterio*, “Frente al comunismo (El tema del Congreso Mariano Interamericano),” 804.

¹⁴⁰ *Criterio*, “Frente al comunismo (El tema del Congreso Mariano Interamericano),” 806.

¹⁴¹ Congreso Mariano Interamericano, “Primer Congreso Mariano Interamericano,” *Criterio*, no. 1367 (1960): 820.

conclusions of the conference focused on “God, Man, and Community.”¹⁴² These documents argued that “from its intrinsically materialistic and theistic conception of man and history, Marxism refutes the spirituality and immortality of the human soul.” Whereas communists held that man was trapped in the material world, Catholics argued that mankind was fundamentally “free.” Marxists, seeing people as being under subjugation, sought to liberate them from “family, State, Religion... private property,” and a host of other things which conservative Catholics reading and writing in *Criterio* would consider worthy of fighting for. This was particularly true where the personal and the social intersected, such as in education: “Christianity, against [communism’s] totalitarian thesis, defends the natural right of the family over education... and the divine right of the Church to orient it in conformity with the supernatural end to which man is destined.” Education was for the “common good.”

Combining the personal and the social was precisely the function of the focus on Marian veneration as a means to oppose communism. Centering her experience as a mediator, mother, and link between the human and the divine reflected the connection to regular human matters of the family and society, something *Criterio* and other publications accused communism of undermining. In place of the natural familial order communism offered a family “produced by the citizen... It recognizes neither relation nor obligation between parents and children or within married couples. The consequence is that there aren’t connections, unity, faithfulness, or indissolubility in marriage.”¹⁴³ Conversely, in Christianity, marriage “is the natural [state] of society... and is a sacrament.” Marriage was the foundation of all human society and therefore something that needed defending.

The next edition of *Criterio* continued the release of these documents. These primarily stressed the need to maintain Catholic or Christian dominance in the fields of society and culture which directly impacted the organization of the family and the raising of children, in addition to more of the same analysis on the dangers of communism. But this document also got into some of the more fundamental problems facing the Church in Latin America, namely that given the ground it had already lost culturally and politically to the secular world it would be difficult to defend what it had left. To correct this, Catholics must “intervene” in their respective nations to “elevate the quality of life of the inhabitants of Iberoamerica.”¹⁴⁴ The final documents of the conference focused on the need to maintain the order of private property while not allowing people to fall into such need and deprivation that they would be enamored of communism. Again, the end of a secular political platform limiting the negative personal impacts of economic organization was to preserve a Catholic social tradition, namely the family and its indissolubility before both God and the law. The provision of “dignity and wellbeing” to the poor was an instrumental means to ensure that they remained loyal Catholics rather than descending into Marxism.

The documents which concluded the Marian Conference were a perfect example of the use of Marian language and devotion to get at other social or political questions. Mary and references to her allowed the attending priests and theologians to work for the defense and advancement of the Catholic Church against the secular left. Mary and Marian devotion itself ceased to be the focus of the conference, giving way to the things which Mary represented—the rootedness of the Catholic faith in the everyday fabric of society.

¹⁴² Congreso Mariano Interamericano, “Conclusiones de las jornadas de estudios del Primer Congreso Mariano Interamericano,” *Criterio* no. 1369-70 (1960): 952-953.

¹⁴³ Congreso Mariano Interamericano, “Conclusiones de las jornadas de estudios del Primer Congreso Mariano Interamericano,” 953.

¹⁴⁴ Congreso Mariano Interamericano, “Conclusiones de las jornadas de estudios del Primer Congreso Mariano Interamericano, Continuación,” *Criterio* no. 1371 (1961): 21-23.

This international Marian conference united politicized Catholic priests and observers from across the continent in defense of both Mary and their respective countries. Mary was both a symbol of the traditionalist Catholic world and the namesake of an explicitly anticommunist event, herself the content of anticommunist Catholicism, both the theory and the practice of this traditionalist Catholicism. Latin American Catholics didn't limit Mary's role as such to their region, but rather understood her power as a symbol of tradition and a unifying figure in the fight against communism and all of modernity to be universal. No aspect of Mary demonstrates that better than Fatima.

Fatima

One of the most important and often cited Marian apparitions in conservative Latin American Catholic circles was Our Lady of Fatima.¹⁴⁵ This Marian apparition was particularly important for several reasons—it occurred in the hinterlands of Iberia, one of the central locales of the kind of mythic Old World around which the right's nostalgia pivoted. She appeared to children, specifically a set of cousins, emphasizing the importance of the family. And, finally, she appeared at a particularly opportune time in world history to tie Mary to the fight against communism. Sighted in 1917, this Marian apparition was claimed by the only one of those three children to survive to adulthood, Lúcia de Jesus Rosa dos Santos,¹⁴⁶ to have made several prophecies, some of which have been interpreted as accurate—namely those dealing with geopolitical conflict, such as the Second World War. Specific references to Catholic concerns about Russia also appeared in the prophecies from the Virgin of Fatima, making an important connection to the histories of the relation between the Catholic Church and the rise of communism.

Politicized Marian devotion in the form of the veneration of Fatima was a regular feature of many Catholic conservative Latin American publications. In the Argentine journal *Roma*, a conservative Catholic journal that tasked itself with the defense of “tradition” and whose editorial board mixed clergy and laymen, regularly incorporated references to Mary and Fatima throughout its run. The first volume of the journal, released in September 1967, opened proclaiming as its first two objectives “1) To spread the traditional doctrine of the Church” and “2) To promote the worship of the most Holy Virgin,” among other goals from uplifting the power of the hierarchy to maintaining the Church's right, or obligation, to intervene in temporal affairs. These secular concerns were the cause of anticommunism and the defense of traditional values.¹⁴⁷

The journal's regular references to Fatima—as opposed to Argentina's particular Marian patron, Our Lady of Luján—belie its primary concern with issues that mixed the secular and religious. The journal's fifth volume, from July 1968, contained an insert referencing the “message of Fatima” as reported by those three Portuguese cousins decades earlier. *Roma* reminded its readers that the Fatima apparition warned that God would “castigate the world” for its crimes, and that this castigation would take the form of “war, hunger, and persecutions against the Church and the Holy Father”—all of which, in the minds of conservative Catholic readers and writers, did transpire in the early twentieth century. The authors were also careful to remind their readers of the centrality of Russia to Fatima's message. Fatima promised that “her Immaculate Heart will triumph” and that “the Holy Father will consecrate Russia and it will be converted” to the Catholic

¹⁴⁵ Cadegan, Una M. “The Queen of Peace in the Shadow of War: Fatima and U.S. Catholic Anticommunism.” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 22, no. 4 (2004): 1–15.

¹⁴⁶ She later became a nun with the Discalced Carmelites.

¹⁴⁷ Pope Pius XXII, “María Reina,” *Roma* no. 1 (1967): 14.

faith, thus earning itself and the world an “age of peace.” Here Russia meant both the Soviet Union, the state itself, and the danger of communism which it represented.

The journal’s ninth volume featured a long story on Fatima by Pierre Lemaire. Placed between a story on the “Cultural Revolution” and another on the dangers of progressive Christianity, the article argues for the continued relevance of Fatima’s message even fifty years after her appearance.¹⁴⁸ Fatima’s warning remained vital due to the dangers posed by “The dragon, Lucifer,” who represented “atheist materialism,” threatened to destroy the conservative, Catholic way of life. Most of the article chronicled the story of the Fatima apparition itself, but its concluding sections returned to political commentary. However, rather than focusing on the geopolitical implications of Fatima’s words, the article instead centered the interpersonal, everyday politics of Fatima’s message regarding the “laws of God.” Principally, these concerned the obligations of men toward their families and their faith: “the obligation to remain in our [men’s] homes, with our wives and before our children, and in our work.” Here Mary’s role was a reminder not of one’s obligation to the nation or major political struggles but of the everyday tasks laid out by conservative Christianity, those of maintaining traditional family structures with men providing for their families and playing a central role in their communities. Of course, these are standard positions on gender and family to come from a conservative Catholic journal. But that such points would be made with reference to a Marian apparition most notable for her role as a symbol of anticommunism and as a call to arms in the fight against the left both domestically and internationally is telling. Rhetorically, Mary could unite the fight against communism with struggles against the transformation of social norms.

Roma’s attention to Fatima and devotion to her continued through the magazine’s run. In their seventeenth edition they printed a lengthy article titled “The Message of Fatima,” which related the entirety of the series of Marian apparitions before the three Portuguese youths that received them, as told by the eldest child, Lúcia dos Santos. She said that when Mary first appeared they were frightened, but the “angel” told them: “Be not afraid. I am the angel of peace. Pray with me.”¹⁴⁹ Subsequent conversations with the apparition were confirmations that the children were speaking with the mother of God as well as that she was herself particularly concerned with and proud of Portugal and the rest of the conservative Catholic world.

The very next issue of *Roma* continued in the same vein with an article titled “Prayer to our Lady of Fatima,” which was indeed a prayer. And in keeping with the nature of devotions to Fatima it wasn’t just a prayer but a request for intercession on a national and regional level on behalf of the children of God, begging that she “in this hour of so many dangers for our country and all the nationals of Latin America put aside the scourge of atheist communism.”¹⁵⁰ The prayer continued “on the part of all nations born and raised under the sacred influence of Christian Civilization [sic],” requesting that she “keep alive and increase the repulsion which communism has encountered in all social strata in Latin America.” Here *Roma*’s editors, the authors of the piece, tipped their hand—communism was both a major danger in Latin America and something that had already been bested. Crucially, though, the danger it posed continued and required constant vigilance to be fully defeated.

The remainder of the prayer was a rundown of the Ten Commandments, requesting Mary’s intercession in Latin America that they might be followed while noting how communists violate them. The commandments about God and worship were confronted with communism’s attempts

¹⁴⁸ Pierre Lemaitre, “Fátima, esperanza del mundo,” *Roma* no. 9 (1969): 6-17.

¹⁴⁹ Editorial Board, “El mensaje de Fátima,” *Roma*, no. 16 (1970): 4-10.

¹⁵⁰ Editorial Board, “Oración a Nuestra Señora de Fátima,” *Roma* no. 17 (1970): 9.

to “extinguish the Faith [sic],” the commandment against murder was confronted with communism’s violence in the name of “ideological expansion,” and the commandment against bearing false witness by communism’s “systematic lies.” Still the greatest complaint was laid against communism’s assault on the family, and thus on the commandments that relate to family and gender: “Today communism wishes to break the ties between father and son, deliver education into the hands of the state. It denies the virtue of virginity and teaches that marriage can be dissolved for any reason.”

These social issues—education, sexual relations, and marriage—were at the heart of how conservative Latin American polemicists talked about Mary in the mid-twentieth century. Mary and Marian devotion, particularly but not only in the context of Fatima, was a means to discuss and lament the erosion of what they considered to be sacrosanct family values. These were under assault not only in *Roma*’s native Argentina but in “all the sister nations of Latin America.” As noted in the section above, issues of gender and the family were clear candidates for universalizing language, uniting right-wing Catholics upset about social and political transformations from Latin America to Europe. Fatima’s promise was essentially national, in that she appeared to Portuguese children and repeatedly spoke of their nation, but her attention to universal questions of motherhood and family allowed these observers to bridge the gap between the national and the international.

Fatima’s place in the Church was always one of connection—the *Revista Católica de Santiago* printed an article by Pope John Paul II regarding her role in the late 1970s, arguing that Fatima’s place was “close to man” and that prayer to her would bring Catholics “closer to God.”¹⁵¹ Fatima and the pilgrimages associated with her worship were key to “bringing Catholics together” in difficult times, and promoted “harmony within our Holy Church.” That the *Revista* was in favor of Marian devotion is itself to be expected, but devoting attention to this letter—written by the Pope and sent to a priest in Portugal—showed their commitment to international Catholic organization and to Mary, in particular her apparition at Fatima, as a symbol and harbinger of that unity. Fatima was a full embodiment, literally, of the connection between the divine and the familial, the personal and the partisan, the national and the international.

This chapter has explored the many ways in which conservative and right-wing Catholic commentators in Latin America used Marian devotion and questions of Marian theology to touch on major social and political issues which were at the heart of their disagreements not only with the secular world but with their rivals within the Catholic Church. The position of Mary within the Church was another front in the fight against progressivism and Protestantism in the Church, as well as an important means of organizing and galvanizing the laity in the defense of traditional social mores, particularly as they related to gender and the family. The Second Vatican Council’s deliberations over Mary’s position in the Church brought these problems to a head. For these Catholics, wavering on the theological questions brought up by Marian devotion meant undermining the entire edifice of Catholic tradition and practice as well as the societies founded on it. In these publications a clergy and committed laity showed themselves to be deeply worried over how the Council’s reforms, or lack thereof, would impact fundamental aspects of Catholic teaching, stemming from debates over Mary’s nature.

¹⁵¹ Pope John Paul II, “Plegaria del Papa a la Virgen de Fátima en el mes de Mayo,” *Revista Católica de Santiago* (1979): 10.

Questions and uncertainties about Mary and her position in the Church spilled out from their theological bounds and touched on countless other questions. Theology and politics were crucially and complexly mixed. The deep anxieties held by these observers were, from their perspectives, entirely justified. As shall be seen in Chapter Three, much ground had already been lost to their opponents both within and outside of the Church. The following chapter focuses on those priests and members of the laity whom conservative Catholics thought to be “subversive” in their own right—subversive against both their nation and against their faith.

Chapter Three

Internal Enemies of Church and State

In contrast with the previous two chapters, which focused on theological reactions to Vatican II, this chapter engages with how conservative and right-wing Catholics understood religious dissent, or subversion, in the Church after the Second Vatican Council. Secular, political subversion has received much attention from scholars and was one of the central organizing logics of the Revolución Argentina¹⁵², the Proceso¹⁵³ in Argentina, as well as Pinochet's Chile, and was used to define the enemies of the state.¹⁵⁴ A wide social category, subversives in these cases meant anyone from armed Trotskyists to members of Socialist or Peronist political parties to bell-bottomed teens to Masons to sexual minorities. At times the category seemed so wide, so inclusive, that many contemporary and historical observers have concluded that being called a subversive and being targeted as such was, in fact, ad hoc or random.¹⁵⁵

Other recent scholarship challenges this perspective, looking closer at the kinds of people who were deemed to be subversive and the motivations for their being labeled as such. Subversion was a widely applied and malleable political category employed by conservatives and the rest of the right-wing in Latin America and Iberia throughout the twentieth century. Even when the word itself was not in use, the category of subversive was operative in the condemnation of the enemies of the right-wing as they emphasized the dangers of an internal, invisible set of enemies corrupting their societies from within. Whether through their individual sexuality or their collective politics, so-called subversives were dissidents within the status quo and were targeted for surveillance, repression, disappearing, and more public means of execution.¹⁵⁶ This chapter will show rhetorical connections between how conservative Catholics discussed secular and religious subversion, whether the latter was in the lay Catholic world or the Church itself.

Some of the perspectives seen here reflect the legacy of Catholic conservatives' attitude toward the laity and the "social question" as it had been understood in the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁷ Essentially the social question referred to the changing nature of modern life, particularly in the industrialized west. Vatican II, in its generally accepted liberal interpretation, was a nod in the direction of the kinds of change that social reformers of many stripes advocated for. Social Catholicism, a nineteenth-century Catholic intellectual tradition whose commitment to engaging

¹⁵² Name of the military junta which led Argentina from 1966-1973, often identified with its first leader, General Onganía. Relatively moderate, it ended with free elections and ultimately the return of Juan Perón as President.

¹⁵³ Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (National Process of Reorganization), often abbreviated to "El Proceso." This was the official title of the junta that ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983, which unlike its counterpart in Chile did not devolve into rule by an individual and remained a committee with a rotating set of leaders.

¹⁵⁴ David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History, and Its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents* (New York: New York: New Press; Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2004); William A. Booth, "RETHINKING LATIN AMERICA'S COLD WAR," *The Historical Journal*, undefined/ed, 1–23..

¹⁵⁵ Mark J. Osiel, "Constructing Subversion in Argentina's Dirty War," *Representations* 75, no. 1 (2001): 119–58.

¹⁵⁶ Benjamin A. Cowan, *Securing Sex: Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

¹⁵⁷ Lisa M. Edwards, "Latin American Seminary Reform: Modernization and the Preservation of the Catholic Church," *The Catholic Historical Review* 95, no. 2 (2009): 261–82; Robert Sean Mackin, "In Word and Deed: Assessing the Strength of Progressive Catholicism in Latin America, 1960–1970s," *Sociology of Religion* 71, no. 2 (2010): 216–42; Robert C. Holub, "The Social Question," in *Nietzsche in the Nineteenth Century*, Social Questions and Philosophical Interventions (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 125–72.

with the poor and downtrodden, laid the theological groundwork for much of what would become the left wing of the Church by the twentieth century and is another precursor to the ideologies which conservative Catholics would later understand as subversive.¹⁵⁸ These threads of Catholic teaching continued to resonate through the Latin American Church well into the twentieth century.¹⁵⁹

Still, by the 1960s and 1970s things had changed. Rather than being one theological or ideological tendency among many, these more progressive directions for the Church had seemingly received the highest official endorsement they could from the Vatican itself. After Vatican II the connections between these leftist strains of Church thinking had, in the minds of conservative and right-wing observers in Latin America, metastasized into an existential threat to the Church.

Subversion must be understood as a product of the cultural situation in which it appeared. Mark Osiel's article "Constructing Subversion," an examination of the development of the category "subversive" in Argentina during the twentieth century, reminds readers that while it is "tempting to dismiss" the worldview of the conservatives and right-wingers, doing so will only obscure their motives.¹⁶⁰ He gives some excellent attention to the rhetoric of "antisubversive" warriors in Argentina, and points out that "right-wing theologians" helped the secular right develop a concept of the "enemy" that enabled and justified the repression seen in the Dirty War. This work is important context for this chapter and indeed this dissertation, but the focus here isn't on the secular subversives but on specifically *Catholic* subversion carried out by priests, lay Catholics, and Catholic political organizations as it was understood by their conservative and right-wing counterparts. Additionally, while Osiel acknowledges the connections between the Argentine right's use of subversion and the ways it was used by their Latin American neighbors, his work remains focused in that national context. This chapter, and the rest of this dissertation, widens the lens to show the inarguably transnational nature of these systems of thought and social condemnation. Additionally, this chapter widens the temporal lens by looking at developments from the late 1950s, just before the announcement of the Council, to the 1970s, when the dictatorships that operated on the logic of subversion were in control of much of the Southern Cone.

The central ecclesiological shift of Vatican II, transforming the formal organizational structure of the Church from a hierarchical, instructional body to one comprised primarily of the laity, prompted conservative clergy and theologians to argue that progressive priests' identifications with the people, and even Marxism, created a series of internal, invisible, corrupted, enemies—progressive priests, leftist laity, women who appeared to be good Catholics but took birth control pills, etc. In the minds of Catholic commentators these people were no less subversive than violent insurgent leftists. The rhetoric surrounding these Catholic subversives coincides with that applied to the secular subversives who were the targets of the dictatorships of South America in the 1960s and 70s, particularly in Argentina and Chile. These ecclesiological and theological arguments had direct, political connections and consequences, demonstrating not only that religion was more than a tool for the justification of military regimes but also that the outcomes of deeply theological arguments were intimately connected with their more famous political counterparts.

¹⁵⁸ Paul Misner, "The Predecessors of 'Rerum Novarum' Within Catholicism," *Review of Social Economy* 49, no. 4 (1991): 444–64.

¹⁵⁹ Stephen J. C. Andes, "A Catholic Alternative to Revolution: The Survival of Social Catholicism in Postrevolutionary Mexico," *The Americas* 68, no. 4 (2012): 529–62.

¹⁶⁰ Mark J. Osiel, "Constructing Subversion in Argentina's Dirty War," *Representations* 75, no. 1 (2001): 119–58.

Whereas the first two chapters of this thesis focused on the time of Vatican II itself, this chapter moves forward to the late 1960s and into the 1970s. This was a time of massive upheaval and change in both Argentina and Chile. The former spent the 1960s oscillating between military and civilian governments, resulting in a tumultuous 1970s with the reintroduction of Peronists to the legal political world as first Héctor Cámpora and then Juan Perón himself were elected President. Perón's death in office and the assumption of the presidency by his wife, Isabel Perón, set off a cascade of political events that concluded in the establishment of the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional, the official name for the military government that would rule the country from 1976 to 1983 and was responsible for the worst atrocities of the Dirty War against leftists and other dissidents. Contemporary Chilean history was no less tumultuous or violent, with the presidency of Eduardo Frei followed in 1970 by the election of Socialist Salvador Allende. The coup against Allende conducted by the Chilean military and ultimately leading to the dictatorship under Pinochet which would rule that country through the late 1980s, carried with it a similar and intimately connected legacy of violence and repression.¹⁶¹

The 1960s and 1970s were explosive and transformative in the Catholic world, as by the late 1960s the changes brought by the Council weren't just official but were in effect. The intervening years between the early and late 1960s gave conservative Catholics enough evidence that their fears of Catholic dissolution and transformation in the wake of Vatican II were, indeed, being realized. Beginning with a look into the Catholic press's view of the Christian Democratic movement and party, the chapter continues with analysis of how this perspective on Catholic laity extended to subversive Catholic priests as well. A section on the Argentine government's surveillance of the Sacerdotes del Tercer Mundo shows how concern over the influence of Vatican II had spilled from the Catholic press into the state security system, with the secret police paying close attention to the theologies and ecclesiologies of subversive priests. The chapter concludes with a look at how these Latin American Catholic conservatives dealt with schismatic movements within the Church, namely the Society of St. Pius X, and how their tolerance of such movements shows the partisan, political nature of their understanding of subversion.

Political Subversion by Lay Catholics

There are many good works on the applications of the category subversive in Latin American political contexts, some of the most useful of which are cited above. This section does not purport to supplant those studies, but instead to build on them in the context of coming to the study of the right-wing in Latin America through its theology and religiosity, starting with a case that mixes the religious with the secular—the Christian Democratic Party of Chile.¹⁶²

Originating as a youth wing of the Conservative Party but later splitting off in 1935 in order to move in a more progressive direction, the Christian Democratic Party transitioned through

¹⁶¹ Constable, Pamela., and Arturo Valenzuela. *A Nation of Enemies : Chile Under Pinochet*. New York ;: Norton, 1991. Deutsch, Sandra McGee. *Las Derechas : the Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1999. Dinges, John. *The Condor Years : How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents / John Dinges*. New York: New Press, 2004. Rock, David. *Authoritarian Argentina the Nationalist Movement, Its History, and Its Impact*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. Halperín Donghi, Tulio. *La República imposible*. 1a. ed. Buenos Aires: Ariel, 2004.

¹⁶² Yuri Contreras-Vejar, "Unorthodox Fate: The Rise of Chile's Christian Democratic Party," *Journal of Religious and Political Practice* 1, no. 1 (2015): 58–72; Juan Pablo Luna, Felipe Monestier, and Fernando Rosenblatt, "Religious Parties in Chile: The Christian Democratic Party and the Independent Democratic Union," *Democratization* 20, no. 5 (2013): 917–38.

several of the possible “third positions,” from corporatism to a Catholic politics that paid attention to the needs of the poor while remaining staunchly anti-Communist and opposed to the emerging power that would become the Popular Front.¹⁶³ Under President Eduardo Frei (1964-1970), they threaded this needle to become the first national government in Chile to support a national land reform policy in the name of a more natural and fair capitalism.¹⁶⁴ The Christian Democratic Party remained internally committed to this intermediary position, emphasizing social uplift while maintaining distance from outright socialism. Conservative and right-wing observers didn’t trust this middle path, however, and responded to the party’s policies, and particularly its actions with regard to agrarian reform, with alarm and condemnation.

Of course anxieties about the agrarian question predated both the rule of the Christian Democrats and the Second Vatican Council—the December 1957 issue of *Política y Espíritu*, a Chilean journal whose principal concerns were listed in its name, ran a story on “realistic solutions to the Agrarian problems” by Tomás Cox Palma, a farmer in the Ñuble region.¹⁶⁵ The author addressed then Senator Frei regarding his attention to the agrarian question, but was concerned that some of the more potentially radical directions which Frei and his allies might take would undermine basic values held by him and other Chileans. They wanted agricultural reform, yes, but were concerned that it would move the country toward a more collectivist model. The only acceptable form of agrarian reform was one at once “just, Christian democratic, and national.”¹⁶⁶

By the mid 1960s these concerns had fully manifested both theologically and politically. The journal *FIDUCIA*, the Chilean organ of the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP, which is the primary subject of the final chapter), focused on land reform in many of its issues. In its January issue in 1963, for example, the journal devoted its center spread to an article titled “Either one pays for land, or they pass agrarian reform,” connecting their opposition to the reform to their preexisting anxieties about socialism and Marxism.¹⁶⁷ They note that the concept of the reform itself emanates from the cities, from the intellectual elite and not from farmers themselves, and that once one begins on this road there is no end in sight. Instead, it is likely to metastasize from a social reform into a “war” between the classes. Some columns in *FIDUCIA* regarding the reform were written by Jaime Guzmán, a then up-and-coming political agitator who would later play a key role in the Pinochet dictatorship.¹⁶⁸ These articles included one from January 1965 on the protection of the “rights to property” ahead of agrarian reform, and another from later that year on the relationship between “capitalism and third-positionist Catholics.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Edward A. Lynch, *Religion and Politics in Latin America: Liberation Theology and Christian Democracy* (New York: Praeger, 1991); George W. Grayson, “Chile’s Christian Democratic Party: Power, Factions, and Ideology,” *The Review of Politics* 31, no. 2 (1969): 147–71.

¹⁶⁴ Nancy Diane Lapp, *Landing Votes: Representation and Land Reform in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); William C. Thiesenhusen, *Searching for Agrarian Reform in Latin America*, Thematic Studies in Latin America (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Robert J. Alexander, *Agrarian Reform in Latin America*, Latin America Series (New York: Macmillan, 1974).

¹⁶⁵ Tomás Cox Palma, “Hacia una solución realista de los problemas agrícolas,” *Política y Espíritu* no. 190 (1957): 27–32.

¹⁶⁶ Tomás Cox Palma, “Hacia una solución realista de los problemas agrícolas,” 32.

¹⁶⁷ Javier Polanco Silva, “O se paga por la tierra o se hace reforma agraria,” *FIDUCIA* (1953).

¹⁶⁸ José Manuel Castro, *Jaime Guzmán: ideas y política, 1946-1973*, Primera edición. (Santiago: Ediciones Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, 2016).

¹⁶⁹ Jaime Guzmán, “El derecho de propiedad y el proyecto de reforma constitucional,” *FIDUCIA* no. 14 (1964-1965): 9; Jaime Guzmán, “El Capitalismo y los Católicos de Tercera Posición,” *FIDUCIA* no. 20 (1965): 4–5.

Other TFP organs outside of Chile both republished these diatribes and issued their own, framed as updates about the situation in Chile and warnings about what this meant for their own countries.¹⁷⁰ For example, the Argentine journal *Roma* ran a lengthy article in its March 1968 issue on “The Situation in Chile,” written by Andrés de Asboth, the magazine’s longtime Director. The article, written by an Argentine for an Argentine audience but deeply concerned with the fate of neighboring Catholics, was primarily concerned with the state of the Christian Democratic Party in Chile, both regarding the direction it was taking the country and the direction the party itself was headed. De Asboth bemoaned the “false dilemma” that pitted Frei as the only alternative to full blown communism, arguing that this slogan belied the fundamental similarity and connection between Frei’s program and that of the Soviet Union, asking whether these two ideologies didn’t “travel side by side” instead.¹⁷¹ His evidence for this was the recent series of “typically socialist” policies implemented by the Frei government, such as “salary and benefits” protections, as well as the “increasingly pedagogical” positions taken by Frei himself in the government and with relation to the populace.

Further evidence for this connection was more literal. Frei had appointed the “former ambassador to the Soviet Union” as Chile’s Education Minister, for example, and in this capacity, he regularly noted the importance of Chile’s relationship with the USSR.¹⁷² De Asboth even went so far as to imply that the Education Minister was some kind of Soviet plant due to his propaganda on their part, as he wrote that the Soviets merely wanted “a sincere friendship with the Government [sic] and people of Chile.” To the conservative audience of *Roma* such a statement would be laughable at best, and a thinly veiled threat at worst. These weren’t merely phrases of “diplomatic protocol” but rather evidence that key parts of the Frei government had been infiltrated by people loyal and beholden to the Soviet Union. Implicitly any “friendship” with the Soviet Union was only the beginning of a process that would end in communist takeover.

Specifically, the role that de Asboth attributed to Christian Democracy was that of infiltrator—that is, the subversive, an internal force whose actions knowingly or unknowingly undermined the status quo. “One of the greatest dangers of Christian democracy,” he wrote, “is that it works wrapped in a rosy aura” using words with double meanings and taking advantage of a press that was both susceptible to precisely that kind of subterfuge, and itself infiltrated by communist ideology.¹⁷³ In contrast, and to combat this perspective, “it is the obligation of the Catholic press to demonstrate reality” rather than allow those perspectives to remain unchallenged. By way of conclusion de Asboth quotes Saint Francis de Sales saying “‘it is a great work of love to cry WOLF! [sic] when it is in the flock.’” The flock is the nation and the Church, and the wolf is the subversive element, the intrusive force that challenges that internal unity and peace with its presence. *Roma* and the other conservative Catholic observers covered in this dissertation considered this to be their central obligation, to call out the infiltration of the Church and nation.

Roma’s worry over the direction of politics in Chile was fully consummated by the 1970s, with the ascension of the Allende administration. In March of 1971 their cover story, written by the Archbishop of Mendoza, was simply titled “Communist Chile” and was a warning and cry of alarm:

¹⁷⁰ Elena Scirica. «El grupo “Cruzada”-“Tradición Familia y Propiedad” (tfp) y otros emprendimientos laicales tradicionalistas contra los sectores tercermundistas. Una aproximación a sus prácticas y estrategias de difusión en los años sesenta». *Memoria y sociedad* 18, n.º 36 (2014): 66-81.

¹⁷¹ Andrés de Asboth, “La situación en Chile,” *Roma* no. 3 (1968): 56-59.

¹⁷² Andrés de Asboth, “La situación en Chile,” 57.

¹⁷³ Andrés de Asboth, “La situación en Chile,” 59.

Salvador Allende, by his own admission *Marxist, Atheist, and Mason* [sic], leader of the largest minority in the Chilean elections of the previous year, was raised to the head of state of our brother country by the parliamentary votes of all variety of communists and socialists, as well as Christian democrats.¹⁷⁴

Including the Christian Democrats among those responsible for Allende's election was accurate—it was indeed their votes that allowed him to triumph over Alessandri in the Parliamentary vote that decided what was essentially a three-way tie of the popular vote. For conservative Catholic observers in Chile and neighboring Latin America countries this was irrefutable evidence of the relationship between the Christian Democrats and the left, revealing their true nature as not only the allies of the left but their vanguard, “valorous collaborators with communism.”¹⁷⁵

The article went on to name these collaborators. First among them were “vast sectors of the clergy.”¹⁷⁶ Lamenting that “until 1960”—that is, until the Second Vatican Council—“the Catholic clergy was the firmest bastion against communism,” the article notes that with the infiltration and changes wrought by the Council and its progressive interpreters “a considerable portion of the Chilean clergy *has become pro-communist* [sic].” These priests, according to *Roma*, had not only convinced themselves that they could collaborate with the left but that the “red program adheres to Christian goals.” In so doing they abandoned their sacred duties and obligations, principally to God but also to the “hierarchy” itself. The list went on, specifically naming the Cardinal of Chile, Silva Henríquez, for his involvement with the Allende campaign and his later acceptance of that government. This “prince of the Church” had become an ally of the Allende regime and thereby an agent of the left, rather than an authentic Catholic leader.¹⁷⁷ In the minds of these conservative commentators, Henríquez's actions debased the hierarchy itself.

Finally, Christian Democracy, both the party and the political concept, was listed as an enemy of all right-thinking conservatives and of the Church in that it yoked lay Catholics to the will of the left. Its “destructive power” was now evident in Chile as much as it was in various European states which had had similar rapprochement with their communist or leftist elements. Frei himself set about “disarming Chile in the face of communism, removing the Constitutional principle which protected the “inviolability of property” in an important move to ally his movement with the “class warfare” that was the central pillar of Communism. With this, the author noted, “the Christian Democrats had achieved the disgrace of being recognized as deserters and traitors.”¹⁷⁸ There was no room for the nuanced facts behind the Christian Democrats' siding with Allende in the Chilean Congress to win him the election after his agreeing to certain terms of governance, let alone for a consideration of the ideological coalition that was Allende's own Unidad Popular. All association with the Socialist candidate was enough to warrant condemnation.

Here a Catholic Archbishop lamented the transformation of a political movement ostensibly organized in the name of Catholicism into an ally of what he considered to be the Church's primary enemy, that is the Marxist left. This ideology had infiltrated not only lay Catholic spaces but the Church itself, and indeed its highest echelons in Chile. This language of co-optation, corruption, and the internal enemy was precisely the language of subversion, here on display with regards to the “communist subversion” of an entire deeply Catholic country. In this case an

¹⁷⁴ Editorial Board, “Chile comunista,” *Roma* no. 18 (1971): 1-13.

¹⁷⁵ Editorial Board, “Chile comunista,” 2.

¹⁷⁶ Editorial Board, “Chile comunista,” 3.

¹⁷⁷ Editorial Board, “Chile comunista,” 4.

¹⁷⁸ Editorial Board, “Chile comunista,” 6.

ostensibly Catholic party was framed as a subversive force, undermining the nation and the Church at once.

Subversion was also found in the lay religious world. The Argentine journal *Verbo* devoted its cover in October 1966 to the issue of the laity after Vatican II, quoting the Conciliar decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* in saying that “the laity must assume as their own work the renovation of the temporal order.”¹⁷⁹ The remainder of the issue bore out this focus, with stories on the relationship between the Church and the economy, and several questioning whether these changes in Catholic doctrine brought about by Vatican II had resulted in the formation of a “New Church” in the place of a previous one.¹⁸⁰ This focus on the laity did not, however, change what its editors apparently considered to be the fundamental questions facing them and their readers—the fact that there were Catholics who were attempting to change the Church from the inside and remake it as something new, transformative, and even transgressive.

Among the most regular targets of the ire of Catholic political journals were the lay leaders of Catholic Action. An international lay organization begun in continental Europe in the nineteenth century, Catholic Action was a distributed network of Catholic lay activists and organizers with a varied agenda and position depending on the country and time in question.¹⁸¹ In Argentina, for example, Catholic Action was a relatively conservative organization while in France it emerged as the leading light of politically progressive Catholics and was particularly associated with labor and gender organizing and development. Another continental European Catholic Action identified with the political left was in the Netherlands, where it was partly led by a woman named Govaart-Halke—this branch of Catholic Action was regularly targeted for criticism due to its progressive tendencies, and this ire often extended to directly confront the leader herself.¹⁸²

One example can be found in the mid May edition of the right-wing Spanish Catholic journal *Fuerza Nueva*. Juan Nuevo wrote feverishly in his regular column, “Diario de un ingenio,” of a female Dutch lay leader who’d participated in Vatican II, about the slippery slope of the social order:

For those of you who aren’t worried about slippage, I have an example: the case of Mrs. Govaart, the director of Catholic Action in Holland. Said woman, who can be accused of much but not of discretion, has said, in light of the recent words of the Pope: ‘I began to use birth control while I was at the Second Vatican Council’... We must assume that she was accompanied by her husband.¹⁸³

The outrage and concern with which Juan Nuevo accused this woman of sacrilege and adultery is inextricable from the context—she took the pill not just in a Cathedral, but in St. Peter’s, during the deliberations of the Council. There could hardly be a more succinct example of everything the

¹⁷⁹ Editorial Board, “A nuestros amigos,” *Verbo* no. 65/66, (1966): 1-5.

¹⁸⁰ Editorial Board, “A nuestros amigos,” 3.

¹⁸¹ Ana María Bidegáin, *From Catholic Action to Liberation Theology: The Historical Process of the Laity in Latin America in the Twentieth Century*, Working Paper ; #48 (Notre Dame, IN: Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame, 1985); Christopher D. Denny, *Empowering the People of God Catholic Action before and after Vatican II*, 1st ed., Catholic Practice in North America (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014); Albert C. O’Brien, “Italian Youth in Conflict: Catholic Action and Fascist Italy, 1929-1931,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 68, no. 4 (1982): 625–35.

¹⁸² Marjet Derks, “Changing Lanes. Dutch Women Witnessing the Second Vatican Council,” *Trajecta. Religion, Culture and Society in the Low Countries* 22,1 (2013) 81-102.

¹⁸³ Juan Nuevo “Diario de un Ingenio” *Fuerza Nueva* no. 19 (1967).

conservatives feared about the changes brought to the Church by Vatican II, with modern, even radical thinking and practice penetrating the Church itself. And not only that, but Mrs. Govaart wasn't ashamed of her actions but proud of them, and spoke of them as if they were becoming not just of a Catholic woman but of a leader of the laity.

This example of a Dutch Catholic subverting what the Church stood for was not unusual—Latin American and Spanish Catholics were deeply concerned about the fate of Catholics elsewhere. This was obviously true in places behind the Iron Curtain, such as Poland and Hungary, but they shared perhaps their most intense fear for Catholics who lived in liberal democracies but who were nevertheless, in their eyes, being influenced or infiltrated by Communists. The eleventh volume of the Argentine journal *Roma* began with an article titled “An Atheist Church for the Communist State,” full of polemics over the dangers of “the anti-Christian Revolution” in the Netherlands.¹⁸⁴ Precisely what they mean by this is answered in a later article in the same issue, “Has the Church in the Netherlands Fallen into Apostasy?”

Such an incendiary title encapsulated an article deeply concerned with and fascinated by the position of Catholics in the Netherlands, who, it argued, had all but collapsed under the weight of post-Conciliar reforms. This led them to engage in “fantasy and imagination” regarding not only esoteric theological questions but foundational Catholic rites, including the Eucharist.¹⁸⁵ So terrible were these changes that the author accused the Church in the Netherlands of “liturgical anarchy.” After a lengthy rundown of the Church's failings in that country it becomes clear why the author was concerned—here was a Catholic Church in a liberal democratic society which was being, in the author's opinion, destroyed from within in precisely the way that they were worried their own Churches and nations would be.

As noted in the previous chapter, the Netherlands was a particular focus due to its position as the first country to publish a new catechism after the Second Vatican Council, a catechism which was understood by conservative Catholics as representing a capitulation to liberal and progressive forces in the Church.¹⁸⁶ Thus not only were the Dutch the focus of much criticism and attention from conservative observers due to their being the first to produce such a document, but they also drew concern because every conservative observer knew that their country and region was in the process of developing its own catechism and liturgy in the wake of the Council's changes to the Church's structure. In critiquing the Dutch Church they hoped to hold off changes to their own. Their concern was not for the Netherlands per se, or for the Dutch people in particular, but for Catholics the world over and specifically for Catholics in their own country. The article concluded with a warning that the “House of God, the Church, is on fire and the pastors give beautiful speeches assuring us that the House cannot and must not burn. Will this be enough to put out the flames?”¹⁸⁷ In other words, the author and *Roma* were calling for action in the face of the dissolution of the Church.

¹⁸⁴ Editorial Board, “Una iglesia atea para el estado comunista,” *Roma* no 11 (1969): 1-6.

¹⁸⁵ André Laforge, “La iglesia de holanda en sendas de apostasía?” *Roma* no. 11 (1969): 30-40.

¹⁸⁶ Ratzinger, Joseph “The Dutch Catechism: A Theological Appreciation.” *The Furrow* 22, no. 12 (1971): 739-54. Ratzinger would later go on to become Pope Benedict XVI.

¹⁸⁷ André Laforge, “La iglesia de holanda en sendas de apostasía?” *Roma* no. 11 (1969): 30-40.

Ecclesiological Subversion: CELAM

Some Catholic subversion was neither rhetorical nor practical but structural, pertaining to the organization of the Church and the hierarchy, an ecclesiological subversion. Ecclesiology did indeed change rapidly in the wake of Vatican II, and not only in terms of the hierarchy's internal structure. The congregation's relationship to the hierarchy was transformed by *Lumen Gentium*, one of the most influential of the Constitutions passed in Vatican II. *Lumen Gentium* redefined the Catholic Church as the collective of all Catholic people, "the People of God."¹⁸⁸ For some conservative theologians and lay observers this represented a fundamental shift in the ecclesiological nature of the Church, which had generally emphasized the role of the clergy and specifically the Roman Curia. Rather than an immortal institution run by the clergy, or even a marriage between the knowledgeable priests and the ignorant but faithful laity, the Church was now coterminous with the community of Catholics.

Navigating this change was complicated for conservative Catholic thinkers. It could not be reasonably contested (with some exceptions, noted in the conclusion to this chapter), given that it came from the highest echelons of power. However its consequences, which could potentially verge on the disastrously transformative, couldn't be easily accepted either. A complex dance of acquiescing to the Council's decisions while avoiding its more potentially massive changes to Catholic life was the only option, with conservative and right-wing Catholics lamenting how these post-conciliar changes to the Church undermined it from within while maintaining that there was some traditional whole that could be protected and revived.

One of the more curious cases of potential subversion was the Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamericana (Latin American Episcopal Conference), or CELAM, convened in Medellin, Colombia in 1968.¹⁸⁹ Just one in a series of regional bishop's conferences that grew out of the context of Vatican II, CELAM is among the most famous of these conferences due to its role in the promulgation of Liberation Theology, in part through the works of Father Gustavo Gutiérrez, as discussed in Ch. 1. Originally, though, CELAM was only intended to be part of the process of delegating Church activities and policies onto regional as opposed to Vatican authorities, one of the reforms brought by Vatican II. During the Council CELAM and its counterparts played a major role in developing the ecclesiological coalitions that would produce the liberal results of Vatican II.¹⁹⁰ This was precisely the kind of transformation within the Church which right-wing Catholics feared.

CELAM posed some ideological complications to those who sought to root out subversion from the Church. It wasn't just a meeting of priests but an officially sanctioned organization by the hierarchy in Rome, and wasn't composed of the clergy in general but of bishops and cardinals from the region. Its decisions therefore could be understood to represent *the* hierarchy in Latin America. At its meetings, and particularly the meeting in Medellin in 1968, CELAM made decisions and produced documents that would have profound effects on theology and ecclesiology

¹⁸⁸ Dulles, Avery Cardinal. "The Sacramental Ecclesiology of "Lumen Gentium"." *Gregorianum* 86, no. 3 (2005): 550-62. Accessed April 17, 2021.

¹⁸⁹ DAVID ABALOS, "THE MEDELLIN CONFERENCE," *CrossCurrents* 19, no. 2 (1969): 113-32; François Houtart, "L'Histoire Du CELAM Ou l'oubli Des Origines," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 31, no. 62.1 (1986): 93-105; William T. Cavanaugh, "The Ecclesiologies of Medellín and the Lessons of the Base Communities," *CrossCurrents* 44, no. 1 (1994): 67-84; Donald Eugene Smith, *Religion, Politics, and Social Change in the Third World; a Sourcebook*. (New York: Free Press, 1971).

¹⁹⁰ Wilde, Melissa J. *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change*. Edition Unstated edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

in Latin America, the most influential of which was their endorsement of Liberation Theology. Summarized, Liberation Theology doubled down on the turn to the laity that was the focus of Vatican II's reforms and which also lay at the heart of much talk of "subversion" in right-wing circles.¹⁹¹ Liberation Theology put the congregation at the center of the Church, and in doing so accepted that the purpose of Catholic life was to better the lives of Catholic believers—who, in Latin America in the mid-twentieth century, were still mostly impoverished and in many cases members of oppressed minority groups.¹⁹² Centering these perspectives, rather than those of disproportionately white and in many cases foreign clergy, meant not just accepting but in some cases actually promoting land reform, labor reform, and other economic measures.

These changes prompted serious responses from the Latin American Catholic right-wing. The sixth volume of the Argentine conservative journal *Roma* included a long selection of the address given by Pope Paul VI in Medellín convening CELAM. His message was relatively straightforward, focused on reminding the priests present of the long theological and ecclesiological history of which they were a part. However as his statement went on, he began to warn his fellow priests of the possibility of "theological error," noting that "unfortunately even among ourselves, some theologians do not always walk the correct path."¹⁹³ Precisely which theologians, the progressives or the conservatives, had lost their way is made clear further into the address. It was those who "had broken the unity of the Church itself and confused the legitimate freedom of moral consciousness with a poorly understood freedom of thought, which frequently due to lack of understanding violates genuine religious truths." *Roma's* editors, selecting these words from the Pope's speech on CELAM, were warning their readers that the attendees and speakers at the conference were raising serious challenges and changes to the Church and that the unity and tradition which they so valued was under threat.

The document continues with further warnings about the "secular" work of the Church, particularly related to the social question that was at the heart of the potential changes which CELAM would bring. Here the quoted remarks from the Pope walked a tight line between acknowledging the problems of the "social question" which had concerned the Church for decades, and guiding observers back to the "memorable documents" which had addressed and answered the issues previously.¹⁹⁴ These documents "could not be forgotten nor are they lacking in practical application." Here the pope, and the editorial board of *Roma* which was quoting him, was referring to the many Papal encyclicals which previously covered the "social question"—this is of course no surprise, but referring to these at the opening of what these conservative observers correctly feared would be a transformative event in the Latin American Catholic Church is doing important work. Their claim was that these issues had already been addressed and decided by the Church, and that any new work needed to avoid falling into the theological pitfalls which the pope raised earlier.

¹⁹¹ Berryman, Phillip. *Liberation Theology: Essential Facts About the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America--and Beyond*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987. MACNABB, VALERIE ANN, and MARTHA W. REES. "Liberation or Theology? Ecclesial Base Communities in Oaxaca, Mexico." *Journal of Church and State* 35, no. 4 (1993): 723–49. McNAMARA, PATRICK H. "Conscience, Catholicism, and Social Change in Latin America." *Social Research* 46, no. 2 (1979): 329–49. Núñez C., Emilio Antonio. *Liberation Theology*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985. Schall, James V. *Liberation Theology in Latin America*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982.

¹⁹² Jeffrey L. Klaiber, "Prophets and Populists: Liberation Theology, 1968-1988," *The Americas* 46, no. 1 (1989): 1–15; Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology: Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America--and Beyond* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

¹⁹³ Pope Paul VI, "Inauguración de la II asamblea general del CELAM," *Roma* no. 6 (1968): 66-68.

¹⁹⁴ Pope Paul VI, "Inauguración de la II asamblea general del CELAM," 68.

This sentiment was further illustrated in the next story in the same issue of *Roma*, reprinted from the Italian journal “L’Osservatore Romano” and focused on the “social question.” The article, written by the Archbishop of Genoa, argues that while “economic and social imperfections” could be overcome with mere “techniques,” they can only be “resolved with a moral base”—that is, the social and economic issues which CELAM would come to focus on were in fact moral rather than material questions. These conservative concerns over what would become of their Church in Latin America after it was transformed, again, by CELAM, claiming to act in the spirit of Vatican II, ring out throughout the text.

Coming as they did from the hierarchy, these perspectives raised massive concerns among the right-wing of the Church. The Argentine journal *Presencia*, for example, published a damning editorial in its July 1969 edition condemning the Medellín Conference.¹⁹⁵ “How,” it asked, “can the Church be the Church, when it foments a practically schismatic division” such as that brought on by CELAM’s realization of some of the more radical potential of Vatican II. *Roma*, another Argentine journal, argued that the descent of the Uruguayan Church into communism was in no small part due to the influence of CELAM.¹⁹⁶

These weren’t merely parish priests or lay leaders but entire sections of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church being lumped in with actual socialist militants as dangerous threats to both their nation and their faith, and not for no reason. Subversion encompassed both defying the wishes of the Church leadership by protesting and organizing, and following them, by engaging in new forms of ecclesiology or listening to the decrees of Bishops’ Councils.

Priestly Subversion

Even more than lay Catholic political actors, right-wing journalists and commentators in Latin America were worried about subversion within the Church itself. By this they meant not just the lay actors addressed in the previous section but priests themselves, and at times entire dioceses or national Churches. Priestly dissidence took two main forms—priests who sought to sow dissent within the Church, and priests who participated in political movements or militias. Those on the Catholic right in Latin America understood the 1960s and 1970s to be times of extreme danger for the integrity of the Church due to the ecclesiological and theological changes explained in previous chapters, and considered these dissident priests to be the proof they needed to shore up their case.

Of course the issue of priests working alongside forces which would be identified with the left was not entirely new after Vatican II. The Argentine journal *Cruzada*, published through the 1950s and a precursor to several other publications which form the source base of this dissertation, published a story in 1959 regarding “Worker Priests.” The article notes that the Vatican condemned the behavior of these priests, noting that “the Holy See estimates that factory work or labor in a machine shop is incompatible with the life and obligations of a priest.”¹⁹⁷ Not only does the working priest expose himself to the “influence of his surroundings,” but he is “submerged in a materialist environment,” one entirely unbecoming of a priest whose principal goal and obligation is, in the minds of both the Vatican and the conservative Catholic press quoting them, to nurture and protect the metaphysical and spiritual lives of his congregants.

¹⁹⁵ Editorial Board, “CELAM,” *Presencia*, (1969).

¹⁹⁶ Federica Giraldi, “Cómo se impulsa el comunismo dentro de la Iglesia en el Uruguay,” *Roma*, no. 8, (1969): 49-60.

¹⁹⁷ Editorial Board, “Los sacerdotes obreros,” *Cruzada* no. 14 (1959): 5.

After the Council, though, such a strict condemnation of priests working with their congregants would have been significantly more difficult. Not only did the Council endorse the idea of the laity taking a larger role in the workings of the Church, blurring the previously much stricter separation between the clergy and the laity, the Council also specifically promoted priests and the Church taking on greater roles in the secular world. The perspective quoted by *Cruzada* had by then been supplanted by a new, more progressive one—and that is precisely what the conservative authors and audience of the magazine considered to be the problem of the Council. It not only enabled, but endorsed the muddying of the waters between priest and flock, between the material and the spiritual, and between the Church and the secular, political world. This enabled subversive behavior and activity, such as priests working in factories alongside the laboring classes that made up their congregants, to shift suddenly from condemned problems to officially sanctioned activities. The Council and the progressive interpretations of it outlined in the first chapter of this dissertation had made the subversive official, completing the nightmare of conservative and right-wing Catholics in Latin America of the Church's infiltration and transformation by the left into a tool for outside control.

The way that priestly disobedience was reported in the Catholic press directly mirrored the way that the political activity of the left, or of any group that was less than sufficiently right wing, would either slide into or be directly connected to the concept of subversion. Following the reforms inspired by Vatican II there was a particularly illustrative case involving the priesthood in Barcelona in March of 1969.¹⁹⁸ These priests organized marches and demonstrations in the public squares of Barcelona, pressured their bishops, and pushed for increasingly “post-conciliar” reforms. As much as these men represented a challenge to the political structure of the Franco regime, they could not be met with the kind of repression that a more openly political demonstration might have been—they were, after all, mostly clergy or deacons. Their positions in the Church made their subversive activity even more dangerous to both the state and Catholicism itself.

By pushing for the reorganization of the Church, these priests were seen to be teetering on the edges of actual rebellion. One Spanish columnist in the journal *Fuerza Nueva* set up the following comical dialogue:

One day it was feared that the cap on the petroleum well on the canal of Mancha would reach the coast. Among one group of friends who had met at a cafe, one of their number read aloud from the newspaper “they have taken steps to stop the black sea.” The other distractedly asked “Oh, are they going to prohibit the manifestations of the progressive priests?”

First, the priests are understood to be a political problem that might be mentioned in a newspaper, one that might require government intervention. More tellingly, though, they are likened to a natural disaster, to pollution, to the unsanitary and the disruptive—precisely the kind of metaphor that is used to discuss leftist organizations and militants who would be a disease or a contagion that could be stopped via government intervention and the use of violent force to cleanse. Here we see the same kind of language of overflow, of overstepping boundaries, of contamination, and of cleansing and the management of such disturbances that are used for the political left. If “every

¹⁹⁸ Tarrago, “Frente al ‘show’ cismático, el auténtico Barcelona,” *Fuerza Nueva*, no. 137 (1969).

day one sees more patently the Marxist influence in the Hierarchy and Clergy,” then whatever measures can be taken to stop its growth aren’t only justified—they’re vital.¹⁹⁹

Concern over priestly involvement on the political left didn’t stop at one’s national borders, but rather encompassed Latin America and indeed the whole of the Catholic world. In the March 1969 edition of the Argentine journal *Roma*, for example, a lengthy article lamented “How Communism Penetrated the Church in Uruguay.”²⁰⁰ There leftist priests, benefitting from the changes after the Second Vatican Council, used their position to promote “known crypto-communists” in roles in dioceses throughout the country. They would even “fast” and collect “alms” for “communist organizations” and did so “with the blessing of the archbishop and much publicity.” The communist organizations in question included political groups and labor organizations, such as the “Convención Nacional de Trabajadores (!!!) [sic],” precisely the kinds of organizations that would be repressed by military governments as subversives during the repressive rule of the military dictatorships in Argentina and Chile. While the Argentine authors of this piece didn’t discuss the situation in Uruguay only from brotherly concern—they take their time to note that this kind of activity affected all countries in the Río de la Plata basin: Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay—the fact that they considered the betrayal of foreign priests a threat worthy of commentary tells of the international nature of their politics.

The identification of priest subversives had material consequences in state and paramilitary oppression. Right-wing organizations such as the Liga Anticomunista de Jóvenes Católicos, whose papers are found in the Archivo del Terror in Asunción, Paraguay, kept lists of priests and clergy whom they considered to be involved in communist activity from Brazil to the Caribbean.²⁰¹ Here they recorded the kidnapping and interrogation of priests who were suspected of being involved in leftist organizing, and the deaths of Catholic priests (or ex-priests) who were killed fighting the forces of the right-wing. For example, they celebrated the death of “Indalecio Olivera Ramos, 34 years old, injured with other Tupamarus while assaulting an armory.”²⁰² Another note applauded the bishop of La Vega, Dominican Republic, for prohibiting a leftist Catholic priest from performing any sacraments—the priest was later arrested for telling farmers in the village of San Francisco de Maroci that “the time has come to grease up the guns.”²⁰³ The wide range of nationalities and political affiliations of priests identified in their papers reinforces the international attention that right-wing Catholics paid to dissent within the Church.

¹⁹⁹ Editorial Board “Subversión Marxista en la Iglesia,” *Covadonga Informa*, no. 2 (1977).

²⁰⁰ Federica Giraldi, “Cómo se impulsa el comunismo dentro de la Iglesia en el Uruguay,” *Roma*, no. 8, (1969): 49-60

²⁰¹ “Sacerdotes Comunistas? Guerrilleros?” Liga Anticomunista de Jóvenes Católicos, 1969. Archivo del Terror, Asunción Paraguay no 0221F 2363.

²⁰² “Sacerdotes Comunistas? Guerrilleros?” Liga Anticomunista de Jóvenes Católicos, 1969. Archivo del Terror, Asunción Paraguay no 0221F 2363.

²⁰³ “Sacerdotes Comunistas? Guerrilleros?” Liga Anticomunista de Jóvenes Católicos, 1969. Archivo del Terror, Asunción Paraguay no 0221F 2363.



Cardinal Henríquez of Chile greeting Fidel Castro on the latter's visit to Chile in 1973.
TFP Argentina no. 18 (1973): 3

In the minds of right-wing observers the structural changes brought by Vatican II enabled or even endorsed individual priestly subversion at an unprecedented level. The capriciousness of the political category of subversive meant that even priests who weren't directly involved with the left but who were merely insufficiently conservative were also targets, widening the category of enemy until it could encompass even the most powerful members of the Catholic establishment. Cardinal Henríquez of Chile is a perfect example of this. He was an establishment Church figure, prominent in the hierarchy, not a challenger of Roman power and not a leftist per se, but merely opposed to extrajudicial killing and disappearing.²⁰⁴ Initially somewhat skeptical of the Socialist Allende government, the Cardinal later adopted a more generous attitude to it as the country entered the economic and political turmoil that characterized the country through the early 1970s.

The Argentine branch of the TFP singled out Cardinal Henríquez in their December 1973 edition of their magazine in an article entitled "The self-destruction of the Church," published only a few months after the coup that ousted Allende in September of that year.²⁰⁵ The piece accused not only Henríquez but the Chilean hierarchy in general of not just collaboration with Marxism but enthusiastic support: "The attitude of the Cardinal Bishop of Santiago [Henríquez] leaves no room for doubt: his collaboration with the Marxist government was as extensive as the latter needed." Even worse, when the Allende government was "wavering" or in need of support, the Church in Chile "made heard its voice of cooperation with the regime." Henríquez's supposed

²⁰⁴ M. LOVEMAN, "High-Risk Collective Action: Defending Human Rights in Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina," *The American Journal of Sociology* 104, no. 2 (1998): 477–525; Mario I. Aguilar, "Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, the Catholic Church, and the Pinochet Regime, 1973–1980: Public Responses to a National Security State," *The Catholic Historical Review* 89, no. 4 (2003): 712–31.

²⁰⁵ Editorial Board, "La autodemolición de la iglesia," *TFP Argentina* no. 18 (1973): 2–7.

crimes against tradition are enumerated one after the other, taking up an entire page. These acts range from admitting Communist professors into the Pontifical University of Santiago, to approving of Catholics voting for Marxists, to attending a May Day celebration held by a radical labor union, to capitulating to the “collectivization” of the country’s resources. Since these conservative Catholics considered Allende’s presidency to be the natural result of the Frei government, and thought of Henríquez’s engagement with Allende as an example of the Church’s corruption by the left in the wake of Vatican II, these perspectives reveal how appalled they were at the changes the Council had brought to the Latin American Church in some of its highest echelons.

Cardinal Henríquez, among the country’s most powerful Catholic leaders, actually buoyed the Socialists when they were in need and, in the minds of these right-wing commentators, deepened the crisis. This was not just the Church *being captured* by the left—it was the Church *voluntarily joining* the left in a battle against tradition. Catholic observers opposed to the left, who considered themselves to be the defenders of centuries of tradition, would be justifiably incensed at this behavior. Though the cardinal was acting entirely within the scope of his duties as the leader of the country’s hierarchy, meeting with national leaders and imploring the citizenry to remain calm in the face of social upheaval, his failure to condemn the left made him an enemy of tradition.

The Sacerdotes del Tercer Mundo

Sometimes the subversion priests were accused of was more literal—there were several instances in which priests were directly involved in armed struggle, and more in which priests were affiliated with groups that openly contested state or political power. One notable case was the priests of the Movimiento de Sacerdotes del Tercer Mundo, the Third-Worldist Priest Movement (MSTM). This society, relatively large and popular in Argentina, was the subject of as much secret police surveillance as Peronist political organizations, feminist groups, and Trotskyist youth militants.²⁰⁶ These concerns didn’t stop at the Church itself but spread to and were shared by the security branches of the state. In the Dirección de Inteligencia de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires²⁰⁷ (DIPBA) archives of Argentina, the declassified archives of the secret police of Buenos Aires province begun during the Revolución Libertadora government which overthrew Juan Perón’s first administration, there are extensive files kept on subversive groups from labor unions to Peronist militants—but they also paid close attention to the MSTM as part of their wide ranging surveillance of the Argentine citizenry. These documents reveal that the theological worries of the conservative priests and lay actors were, in a sense, justifiable—there were indeed priests working with the left and using the changes brought by Vatican II to justify their actions. And moreover, they show that the anxieties of Church-related sources had real world consequences, influencing state surveillance and violence.

The DIPBA collected newspaper and other sources which pertained to their surveillance, for example several clippings from contemporary magazine articles which specifically note that leftist priests are hoping to “reclaim the hierarchy” of the Church from its more conservative

²⁰⁶ PATRICIA MARCHAK and WILLIAM MARCHAK, *God’s Assassins: State Terrorism in Argentina in the 1970s* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999); Agustina Adela Zaros et al., “Religión, Utopía y Revolución: Documentos Del Movimiento Sacerdotes Para El Tercer Mundo, 1968–1973,” *Journal of World Christianity* 9, no. 2 (2019): 231–48.

²⁰⁷ The DIPBA’s archives are preserved according to post-Dirty War legislation in Argentina to enable investigations of military and paramilitary violence conducted during the Dirty Wars.

members.²⁰⁸ The leftists did nothing but insult their superiors, accusing them of “docility,” “disloyalty,” and “domestication,” and saying that they had abandoned their obligations to their congregations and their Church. Debates and conflicts between different Church factions received significant attention from the state, not only as they related to priests’ engagement with the left but concerning theological questions such as ecclesiological hierarchy. DIPBA officials considered these breaches of priestly loyalty to be worth not just of note, but alarm. Another newspaper clipping came from the magazine *Analysis* in a September 29, 1969 article titled “Imported Rebellions.”²⁰⁹ The article noted that MSTM priests were working with others from “Bolivia,” “Mexico,” and even “Spain,” as well as attempting to intervene in political affairs in Europe. Both the state and the conservative and right-wing branches of the Catholic Church understood their enemies as operating on an international scale, requiring them to do so themselves as well.

Other magazine clippings concerned Vatican II and to the related theological and ecclesiological debates that were the subjects of the first and second chapters of this thesis. One clipping, from a magazine called *Confirmado* published in October 1969, called direct attention to the “renovation” of the Church by the Council, particularly in the Church’s involvement in the material and social world.²¹⁰ In a subsequent article from the same issue, the magazine alerted its readers to the coming advent of a “new catechism,” one of the consequences of the reforms brought by Vatican II. That magazines reporting events such as these would appear in state sources focused on subversive priests indicates that the DIPBA understood, and to some extent agreed with the interpretation of more religious definitions of subversion offered by the sources listed in previous sections—they knew that these theological and ecclesiological shifts were vital to the rise and appeal of movements like the MSTM. The secret police was paying close attention to the changing theology of the Catholic Church.

Some files in the archive reflect not just the context of the MSTM but actual intelligence gathering on the part of the secret police. The DIPBA regularly updated their list of names and the location of priests who were members, or were accused of being members, of the MSTM.²¹¹ Some reports were granular, focusing on cataloging the religious institutions in a particular locale. One report, for example, was a “guide for the bishopric of Morón,” an administrative subdivision in Buenos Aires province that was part of the Buenos Aires metropolitan area.²¹² The report detailed the entirety of the diocese, every priest, chapel, religious school, and its population (separated out between Catholics and non-Catholics). The document reveals the degree of attention to religious institutions given by the DIPBA in their efforts as the secret police. Alone this could be seen as innocuous, but this meant that the police considered the Church to be a legitimate site for the policing of subversion.

Another file reproduced what purported to be an internal planning document from the MSTM, outlining the possible conflicts they might experience with the hierarchy of the Church, arguing that they must be open to “all possible methods” to influence the Church and the political world in general. In this document the MSTM argued “we must do all that is possible in order that

²⁰⁸ Newspaper Clipping “Tercer mundo, jerarquía y bendición,” (1979), Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo V, Archivo del DIPBA, 234.

²⁰⁹ Newspaper Clipping “Rebeldes importadas” from *Analysis* no. 445 (1969) Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo I, Archivo del DIPBA, 143.

²¹⁰ Newspaper Clipping “Octubre de 1962: conciencia del concilio vaticano segundo,” from *Confirmado* no. 226 (1969) Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo I, Archivo del DIPBA, 144.

²¹¹ Government memo, (23 February 1970) Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo I, Archivo del DIPBA, 80.

²¹² Government memo, “guia del obispado de Morón,” Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo I, Archivo del DIPBA, 279.

division and opposition not occur between the Movement [the MSTM] and the Hierarchy, but rather between the part of the Hierarchy that understands and the processes... and the other [part of the Hierarchy] which, because it does not understand, acts against the people.” In other words, these were priests actively seeking to divide the Catholic Church against itself in the interests of the left, the full manifestation of the nightmares of the Catholic right-wing, subversive in every possible sense. Such a goal would terrify not just the Church but the right-wing state as well, and represented proof of precisely the kind of leftist slippage which conservatives were worried about.

DIPBA officers regularly released updated profiles of the MSTM. The first sentence of one of these read “The Movement of Priests for the Third World in the Argentine Republic is a priestly movement and, thus, Christian. This implies an unbreakable will of belonging to the Catholic Church, the people of God, according to the Second Vatican Council.”²¹³ The wording of this statement revealed a great deal of attention on the part of the police to the nature of the MSTM and why it might be of special concern not just to the state but to other, more conservative priests. Here the MSTM was understood to be Christian by definition, and therefore its ideological content was the contestation of what it means to be Christian. This was further evidenced by the DIPBA’s understanding of the MSTM’s motivation and justification—they were Catholic insofar as they belonged to the people of God, which the DIPBA understood to be the definition of the Catholic community in the wake of the Council. In these short sentences the state police showed that it comprehended not only the motivations of the conflict between the MSTM and their ideological opponents, but also the stakes: the nature and makeup of the Catholic Church. Noting Vatican II as the origin of the MSTM’s understanding of ecclesiology as a justification for their leftist politics indicates both an understanding of and an agreement with conservative Catholics’ assessments of priestly subversion—enticed by the dangerous changes brought by the Council, these priests were turning away from the traditions of the Church and embracing the secular left.

The DIPBA also paid close attention to conservative efforts to combat the left in the Church. One document in their archive is a series of fliers by a group calling itself “GENERACIÓN 2000,” a conservative Catholic organization protesting and fighting against infiltration in the Church on the part of the left and progressives. These priests, whom the conservatives accuse of “abandoning their faith,” are called to question on their relationship to the hierarchy and to the Church as a whole.²¹⁴ The MSTM and its allies “make up the locus of the infection of an infiltrating ideology” within the Church, claiming to be its true representatives and to be the real determiners of the “TRUTH OF THE CHURCH [sic].”²¹⁵ The authors of the flier held these priests “directly responsible” for the formation of a separatist sect within the Church, and thus for the dissolution and disunity with which the Church was, in their estimation, then plagued. This conflict over the internal nature of the Church, combined with their insistence on the “central axiom and basic political-economic theory of Karl Marx” made them enemies not just of the Church but of the state.

One of the more telling documents in the DIPBA archive concerning subversive activity on the part of religious actors came not from religious sources but from a secular one: a letter to the MSTM on the part of the Montoneros, the principal leftist and Peronist guerrilla movement in opposition to the Argentine government from the late 1960s into the 1970s. This document, written by the Montoneros in support of the MSTM, indicated that the Montoneros understood the MSTM

²¹³ Government Memo, “Tercer encuentro nacional del movimiento sacerdotal para el “tercer mundo,”” (1970) Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo I, Archivo del DIPBA, 314.

²¹⁴ Pamphlet, “No prevalecerán,” Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo III, Archivo del DIPBA, 46.

²¹⁵ Pamphlet, “No prevalecerán,” Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo III, Archivo del DIPBA, 47.

to be their allies in the fight against the status quo, which was “overflowing” from the secular world and into the Church.²¹⁶

The anonymous Montonero author of the piece acknowledged the priests of the MSTM as the legitimate “priests of our Homeland” as opposed to the conservatives and those nominally in charge of the hierarchy. The MSTM was thus a “New Church” growing inside the old, much to the praise of the Montoneros and, thereby, to the alarm of their enemies, the state secret police. In this letter the author goes so far as to suggest potentially revolutionary forms of the sacraments, consummating a conservative fear often encountered in this dissertation that leftist political commitments would come to dictate actual Catholic religious practice.²¹⁷ Against the edifice of the old Church the Montoneros hoped for the emergence of a “revolutionary priesthood” that would renew the Church from within.

It would be difficult to imagine a more terrifying prospect for religious conservatives and right-wing forces in Latin America than the idea that the progressives, who had been rebelling within the confines of the Church, would then begin in earnest to rebel as secular actors alongside their straightforwardly partisan counterparts. In the Argentine context this meant collaborating with the Peronists, whereas in Chile it meant working with the forces of the Popular Unity government and the movement that preceded it, but in either case and in others in Latin America these connections meant unity between the religiously and the politically subversive. These police memos reveal that the worries of conservatives were indeed manifesting in the real world, that some priests *did* turn to the left once that path was laid open to them by the Council.

The DIPBA’s reflection of a conservative Catholic understanding of the MSTM and the form of Catholicism it represented included the Catholic right-wing’s analysis of the Second Vatican Council. One particularly telling writeup of the MSTM, from April, 15, 1970, noted that the MSTM was a movement of priests critical of “capitalism” and “the West,” and that they voiced those opinions from within the Church, expressing “harsh criticisms of the ecclesiastical hierarchy” as well as “the national and other Latin American governments.”²¹⁸ MSTM priests were fighting to “break the vertical government of the Church,” and were able to make these advances in the Church, to use Christianity against both itself and the central forces of domestic politics, because of a “social opening in the Church,” specifically “the Ecumenical Council Vatican II and the Pontifical documents of John XXIII.”

This is an internal document from the Argentine police identifying an enemy of Catholic tradition and an enemy of the state by noting their use of Vatican II to infiltrate the Catholic Church. These sources didn’t just agree with their lay Catholic and hierarchical counterparts—they went one step further in not just condemning these views but seeking to, or advocating for, actively persecuting and eliminating them and those who advocate them. In confronting the MSTM the police were knowingly, and intentionally, defending pre-Vatican II Catholic tradition, enacting the theological debates within the Church with real violence.

Thus, Third-Worldism gained and retained the reputation of being the “theology of subversion,” according to another article in the DIPBA archive.²¹⁹ The capture of the Church by

²¹⁶ Letter from Montoneros to the Tercermundistas, “Carta a los sacerdotes del tercer mundo,” Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo V, Archivo del DIPBA, 61.

²¹⁷ Letter from Montoneros to the Tercermundistas, “Carta a los sacerdotes del tercer mundo,” Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo V, Archivo del DIPBA, 68.

²¹⁸ Newspaper Clipping, “Énfasis en el Horizontalismo,” Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo I, Archivo del DIPBA, 115.

²¹⁹ Newspaper Clipping, “Tercermundismo: teología de la subversión,” Referencia Legajo N15281, Tomo V, Archivo del DIPBA, 209.

the subversive element, and the use of the Church and its power, sacraments, and reputation on the part of the politically subversive, was the culmination of the fears and consternation expressed by the old guard of the Church. Modernist theology, the theology of renewal, the perspective that had triumphed at the Second Vatican Council, had reached what its opponents considered to be its ultimate conclusion—unity with literally rebellious and dangerous forces. Together, these religious and political subversives threatened to overthrow not just the material world but the spiritual one as well.

These stories, of priests who were indeed involved in actual leftist organizing and who even encouraged militant violence, remind researchers that while right-wingers' anxieties of social decay might have been overblown, their concerns were not entirely unfounded. There indeed *were* Catholic priests seeking to connect the Church with inarguably leftist, and even literally Marxist political actors, be they outside militants or the priests themselves. These anxieties weren't limited to the borders of Latin America: attempts at reconciliation between Christianity and Marxism in Austria were as much cause for concern as they would have been in Chile.²²⁰

Subversion and Schism

This chapter concludes with an informative counterexample—whereas the MSTM and other subversive priests were accused of attempting to infiltrate the Church or destroy it from within, the right-wing and conservative wings of the Latin American Church were at the same time embracing a group of priests who were literally schismatic to the Catholic Church. The right-wing Catholic press's account of this movement, in contrast to that of the subversive leftist and progressive priests, illustrates how closely connected religious subversion was to the changes brought by Vatican II.

In 1970 Marcel Lefebvre, a French bishop and attendee of the Second Vatican Council, founded a parallel hierarchy of bishops and priests outside the order of Rome by consecrating Churches and ordaining priests without the consent of his superiors.²²¹ He did this due to his dissatisfaction with what he perceived to be the betrayal of the traditions that had been the foundation. Lefebvre's contention was that with Vatican II the Church had lost its way and abandoned many of the principles that were most important to its development, such as the reliance on tradition and the leadership of priests in the face of changing times. He named his new organization the Society of St. Pius X, after the staunchly conservative early twentieth-century Pope. For him and his followers all subsequent popes were suspect in their gradual distancing from the anti-modernist message of that previous ecumenical council, the First Vatican Council.

Lefebvre's actual followers were limited—though numerous for a relatively new religious institution, they were of course dwarfed by the Church to which they dissented. However his influence far outpaced his actual adherents. He was regularly published in journals throughout the Catholic right, from Spain to Chile, where he shared the page with currently serving conservative priests and right-wing lay actors such as those who have made up the source base of this dissertation.

²²⁰ Dr. Oscar Schartz, (trans Kinnen, Eduardo), "Diálogo entre Pensadores Cristianos y Marxistas," *Política y Espíritu* no 290 (1965): 41-43.

²²¹ Patrick Madrid, *More Catholic than the Pope: An Inside Look at Extreme Traditionalism* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc, 2004); Marcel Lefebvre, *J'accuse le Concile!* 1. éd. (Paris: Éditions Saint-Gabriel, 1976); Brian Sudlow, "The Frenchness of Marcel Lefebvre and the Society of St Pius X: A New Reading," *French Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1 (2017): 79-94.

Fuerza Nueva published him summarizing his position in 1969, shortly before he would found the SSPX: “There is already a Christian civilization and it is not necessary to reinvent it.”²²² He argued that the “Council [Vatican II] had been influenced by progressive forces from its inception” and that it therefore represented a rupture with any legitimate Catholic doctrine or tradition. Fundamentally, his position remained unchanged for decades. He was published in TFP journals into the 1980s arguing that Catholic “modernists,” the “ancestors of today’s progressives,” had already attempted to transform the Church in the nineteenth century, and that just as they had been stymied by the hierarchy today’s progressives needed to be stopped.²²³ The US’s TFP journal, *Crusade for a Christian Civilization*, reprinted an open letter which Lefebvre had issued to the Catholics of the world, in which he said that while he and the SSPX “cleave with our whole heart and soul to the Catholic Church of Rome... we refuse, as we have always refused, to follow the Rome of neo-modernist and neo-protestant tendency so clearly manifested at the Second Vatican Council and the reforms which followed.”²²⁴

Lefebvre’s claim here was simple, and essentially identical to that of the Catholic conservatives quoted throughout this dissertation: Vatican II opened a Pandora’s box of change within the Church and the societies founded on it, and these changes could mean the end not just of Catholicism but civilization itself. The difference was that rather than seeking to work within the framework of the Church, Lefebvre was willing to directly condemn not just the Council and its documents but also the pope and Roman leadership that followed and enforced them. Despite his protestations to the contrary, he was a rebel within the Church. Though Lefebvre wasn’t excommunicated until the late 1980s, his schismatic intentions and beliefs are well on display by the 1960s and his opinions and actions led to his suspension *a divinis* by the 1970s.²²⁵ He and his followers believed themselves to be the bearers of the true traditions of the Catholic Church, not their national hierarchy, nor the Curia, nor even the pope himself.

An outside observer might suspect that such behavior would incur the condemnation of those Catholics who had spent the years criticizing subversion, but this was not the case—instead Lefebvre was welcome in their circles, published in their journals, and celebrated as a defender of real Catholic tradition. His defiance of Vatican II, of his superiors in the Church, and of some of the most basic functionalities of the Catholic Church made him a hero to the Catholic right-wing not only in his native Europe but in Latin America as well.

²²² Marcel Lefebvre, “La iglesia ante la crisis moral contemporánea,” *Fuerza Nueva* no. 122 (1969).

²²³ Ronald Reagan, “O presidente Reagan deseja à TFP um ‘contínuo crescimento,’” *TFP Lusa Informa*, no. 6 (1984): 3.

²²⁴ Marcel Lefebvre, “A letter from Archbishop Lefebvre,” *Crusade for a Christian Civilization* (1975): 9-10.

²²⁵ A suspension *a divinis* meant that while he remained a priest, he was not allowed to celebrate any holy rites, including mass. Cersosimo, Facundo *El Proceso fue liberal*, 182.



Lefebvre with Plinio Correa de Oliveira, leader of the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property *Crusade for a Christian Civilization* (1975): 10

In addition to being published in right-wing journals, Lefebvre made famous and well publicized visits to several Catholic countries, such as his 1977 visit to Argentina. The occasion led to features of his beliefs by many publications, such as *Roma*, which published a translation of an interview he had given with an Australian Catholic publication repeating his position that the “traditions” of the Church could return after resolving the “errors committed by the new reforms.”²²⁶ The next edition of the magazine continued the publication of his comments, in which he explicitly stated that his problems with then-Pope Paul VI began, simply, “when he [Pope Paul VI] required that I accept the new Mass and **all** the documents of the Second Vatican Council” [sic].²²⁷ Lefebvre emphasized that he “rejected all that is opposed to Catholic Tradition”—for example the documents of Vatican II that supported religious freedom, not only because they ran against tradition but because they specifically contravened the words of Pope Pius IX’s encyclical “*Quanta Cura*,” which was after all, he pointed out, infallible.

Upon Lefebvre’s arrival in Argentina he was held at arm’s length by the country’s hierarchy but welcomed openly by the leaders of Argentina’s right-wing Catholic organizations and press—he was met at the Ezeiza airport by representatives from *Verbo*, *Cabildo*, and several other conservative and right-wing Catholic publications.²²⁸ He even had a personal meeting with General Videla, who was by then the country’s de facto President by virtue of being the leader of its military junta.²²⁹ These same Catholic commentators and their political allies who had spent, and would continue to spend years condemning subversive priests came out in favor of a priest

²²⁶ Marcel Lefebvre, “Diez preguntas al Arzobispo Monseñor Lefebvre,” *Roma*, no. 49 (1977): 38-40.

²²⁷ Marcel Lefebvre, “De la misa evangélica de luterio al nuevo ordo missae,” *Roma* no. 50 (1977): 18-26.

²²⁸ Cersosimo, Facundo. *El Proceso fue liberal*.

²²⁹ “Asunto: Mons. Marcel Lefebvre en Argentina,” Mesa de Referencias, Factor Religioso, Legajo N17416, Tomo II, Archivo DIPBA.

who had literally been stripped of his ability to perform Mass by the pope because of his brazen defiance of the hierarchy.

The Lefebvre movement never had a significant following in Latin America, and even where it did have adherents, they were a distinct minority among their fellow Catholics. Yet the case of Lefebvre and his followers is an important concluding point to this chapter's exploration of Catholic subversion. Despite their open opposition to Rome and the Pope, despite their open dissent, and despite the literally schismatic activity of Lefebvre and his followers, they weren't considered subversive in the same way as the priests of the MSTM. Lefebvre's message, presenting Vatican II and all the decisions that followed as threats to the nature of Catholicism rather than a modernization of the Church, resonated with many Catholics who were sympathetic to the traditionalist message but unwilling to take the schismatic plunge.²³⁰ He was a darling of these publications *because* of his dissent, *because* he defied the pope in a way that other conservative, traditionally minded Catholics only hinted at and suggested. He gave voice to concerns which they were unable to express for fear of facing the kind of retribution which he did indeed face.

The reception of Lefebvre represents the logic of subversion coming full circle—a schismatic, condemned priest is the defender of the faith against its subversive enemies, in this case the Curia and the pope. His dissent was important not because of his own rebellion against the Church but because he and his movement allowed conservative Catholics to perceive their fellow Catholics as their theological and political enemies. One can hardly imagine a more useful or aggrandizing perspective for the right-wing Catholic commentators who are the source of this chapter and dissertation. In Lefebvre, in his schismatic activity, they found their worldview taken to heights which they did not dare reach themselves, but which were rhetorically, politically, and theologically invaluable.

This chapter has argued that right-wing Catholics perceived Catholic subversion as threatening to the Church in much the same way as their secular counterparts thought of political subversives: as threats to the integrity of what was previously a coherent social whole. The category ballooned to the point that it could include both laity and clergy, both parish priests and Cardinals, and even the pope, all the while excluding the allies of the right-wing who directly defied the highest echelons of Church power. Subversion was a particular concern of the Latin American Catholics, who considered their countries to be under attack by Marxists and understood their Church to be under not just a related attack but precisely the same one—the left seeking both to destroy the nation and the Church from within. Understanding priests as subversive in the same way as dissident political elements allowed the Catholic right in Latin America to link the decline of both their Church and their nation to the Second Vatican Council, and to even have this perspective shared by their secular counterparts in their national governments.

For the commentators studied here, this meant that every time they read of another priest engaging with the poor or read the latest statement from a progressive bishops' conference, they

²³⁰ The Society of St. Pius X still exists. It is mostly confined to France and never grew much after the death of Lefebvre in 1991 but its message continued to be heard throughout the world of the Church. It was also given a significant boost to its potential legitimacy by Pope Benedict XVI. Benedict famously chose to engage in dialogue with the remaining followers of Lefebvre, seeking to return them to full communion with the Church and rescinding their excommunication. These negotiations are ongoing, but their existence represents a serious engagement with a deeply critical perspective on the Second Vatican Council.

understood themselves to be witnessing the death of what they considered to be the most holy and important institution in human history. That they responded with the vitriol seen in this chapter, or that their allies would reflect this commentary with literal violence, can be no surprise. After the previous two chapters, which focused on theological questions debated by priests and professional intellectuals, this dissertation now turns to these more practical responses to the fears and anxieties expressed by right-wing Catholics over the dissolution of the Church.

Chapter Four

The Fascist Bookshelf: Argentina's Tacuara and Their Catholic Faith

A little before five in the morning on January 25th, 1963, the police and cavalry of Santa Fe, Argentina, raided a paramilitary camp located on the swampy banks of the Laguna Setúbal just north of the city. The police approached “unannounced,” allowing them to “detain all those found in the camp, their armaments notwithstanding,” despite the militants' having fortified their tent camp with fallen trees.²³¹ In addition to guns and ammunition the paramilitaries were found with “explosives, binoculars and sights, and other armaments” with which they had “trained daily” after stealing them from the Army. The only adornments in their camp were their emblem, a Maltese Cross, and a humble crucifix fashioned from the branches of nearby trees.²³²

Most of those detained by the police were minors and only two of the adults were older than 20: their leader, Juan Mario Collins, and their resident military instructor, Casimiro Wysinsky. After their arrest all the detainees were transferred to Buenos Aires to be tried in federal court, with the exception of one who as an army cadet was to be tried by the military. In his statement to the judge Wade, Collins claimed that the group was merely a “provincial movement” and not a national force—but this was a lie. In fact the national leader of the organization, Alberto Ezcurra Uriburu, had visited their prison the day before to see the detainees, who “stood at attention” and saluted when their leader entered the room.²³³

These young men belonged to a militant movement known as Tacuara. Formed in Buenos Aires in 1959, it spread from the capital to Argentina's other major cities and gained a well deserved reputation for hooliganism, petty violence, and antisemitism. Tacuaristas were known for starting small fights, for vandalizing government offices and synagogues, and for distributing pamphlets with incendiary rhetoric. The raid on the Santa Fe encampment found much such literature demanding that Tacuaristas “defend with all [their] life and death the eternal values of Christianity and Nation.”

None of these details will be particularly surprising to historians of Latin America or the global sixties, which saw explosions in youth political movements and paramilitarism—in many ways Tacuara was simply another gang of young men. Yet a close look reveals that Tacuara was more complicated than a mere street gang or nationalist youth group, as evidenced by what else the police found in their raids of the camp and the home of their local leader, Collins. In addition to arms and tents, or Nazi and nationalist paraphernalia, they found books. And not just books: these were complex, theological and political theory texts more worthy of seminaries and college classrooms than paramilitary bivouacs. They ranged from turn of the century Argentine authors such as Manuel Gálvez, to the French theologian Charles Maurras, to Catholic Church Father St. Thomas Aquinas. This selection may have been eclectic, but it wasn't random—these books came from a reading list published in Tacuara's internal newsletter, *Offensiva*, in 1962.²³⁴

This reading list's depth and difficulty shows that Tacuara was more than a gang and its members more than thugs. They were disaffected young men, relatively well-off, predominantly

²³¹ “Se Conocen Nuevas Referencias Del Allanamiento Dal Campo de Instrucción Del Movimiento Tacuara,” *El Litoral*, January 27, 1963. *El Litoral*, Jan 27th 1963.

²³² The Maltese Cross was originally a symbol of medieval Catholic religious warriors, such as the Knights Templar.

²³³ “Prestaron Declaración Ante El Juez Federal Miembros Del Grupo Tacuara,” *El Litoral*, January 30, 1963. *El Litoral* Jan 30th 1963.

²³⁴ “Lista de libros,” Archivo de La DipBA, Legajo 10411, 123. The reading list itself can be found, in full, at the conclusion of this chapter.

university or preparatory school students.²³⁵ They were fascists, nationalists, and virulently conservative Catholics, but they were also well read intellectuals who met in bookstores as well as bars to listen to academic and priestly speakers.²³⁶ Their deep attention to right-wing Catholic ideology and theology, combined with their militant activities, make them a prime example of how the Latin American right reacted to Vatican II and the wider cultural shift it represented in the international Church. Devoting a chapter to them in a dissertation about connections between secular and religious right-wing politics in Latin America reflects a transition to the second part of this thesis, which turns from the journalists and theologians which were the focus of Chapters One, Two, and Three toward historical actors who engaged directly in secular political action in the name of a deeply held Catholic faith.

Understanding Tacuara and the international network of right-wing movements of which they were a small part means going beyond sensational news of bank heists, plane hijackings, and assassinations, all of which Tacuara participated in. It means looking deeper than their transparent antisemitism and their proclaimed nationalism, and diving into the texts that motivated and sustained their virulent politics, and as such this chapter focuses on their aforementioned reading list to provide a snapshot of their ideology. Giving these texts the close reading which Tacuara demanded of its members is a window into their underlying preoccupations and concerns, revealing their commitment to religion and politics — one which they considered to be not just inseparable but identical. Closely reading these texts will make sense of Tacuara's militancy as a cataloging of their crimes never could, by drawing a connection between their ideology and their actions. Seen in the light of the theological arguments chronicled in the preceding chapters, their violence was an unfortunately expected outgrowth of the transformations in the Catholic Church during and after the Second Vatican Council.

A History and Historiography of Violence

Tacuara was founded by eight dissident university students in a popular youth bar in Buenos Aires called La Perla del Once in 1957. One principal leader was Alberto Ignacio Ezcurra Uriburu, son of the famed right-wing jurist and legal scholar Alberto Ezcurra Medrano and related to the recent dictator General Uriburu, and more distantly to Juan Manuel de Rosas, Argentina's most successful nineteenth century dictator. Tacuara's other central leader was José (aka "Joe") Baxter, the son of a recent English immigrant who, in contrast to the elite-pedigreed Ezcurra, came from the working class. While these two leaders were slightly older, most Tacuaristas were of secondary school or university age in keeping with their original cadre, which grew out of the youth organization the Unión Nacional de Estudiantes, a branch of the right-wing Alianza Libertadora.²³⁷ In their class and social composition the vast majority of Tacuaristas were somewhere in between Ezcurra and Baxter—neither the descendents of Argentina's political elites nor the working poor but the downwardly mobile middle-class. While the organization had a women's wing it was overwhelmingly male, and Tacuaristas were universally white. These factors—downward mobility, maleness, and whiteness—are precisely what one would expect of a

²³⁵ David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History, and Its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 205.

²³⁶ One such bookstore was Huemul (trans. "stag"), which still stands today and sadly remains a good place to buy right-wing literature in Buenos Aires.

²³⁷ The word "*tacuara*" refers to an improvised spear consisting of a hollowed out piece of sugar can with a knife or other blade attached to one end. It harkens back to the previously mentioned conflicts between the federalists and *caudillos*. See Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*.

small fascist organization.²³⁸ Notably, though, their education meant that Tacuaristas, especially their leadership, were literate in French, English, Italian, Portuguese, and even Latin, with Ezcurra, for example, having spent some time in Catholic seminary before participating in the group's founding.

Both in historiography and in popular understanding in Argentina Tacuara is primarily known for its political violence and stunts. For example, in the wake of the abduction of Adolf Eichman by Israel in 1960, Tacuaristas plastered Buenos Aires with black painted swastikas accompanied both by attacks on the current Frondizi government and the expected slogans of "Viva Eichman."²³⁹ This was also an opportunity for Tacuaristas to display their underlying violent antisemitism—one such message read "In the future there won't be enough furnaces for the Jews." Other pieces of Tacuara propaganda were more general, referring to perennial enemies of the wider Latin American right: the English, the Soviet Union, the legacy of the French Revolution, and the Masonic League. The latter was regularly targeted with graffiti and propaganda – Ezcurra identified Masonry as a partner of "Marxism" in whatever form it took. "Masonry," "Liberal Democratic-Socialism, Bolshevik Communism, and 'Titoism'" all sought to "DESTROY NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTIES [sic]".²⁴⁰

Other incidents involved not only rhetorical but physical violence. Tacuaristas regularly targeted other youths: left Peronists, far leftists, and Argentine Jews, as well as the rallies and offices of political opponents. In 1960 a group of Tacuaristas invaded the Student Center of the Engineering College of La Plata, the capital of Buenos Aires province, shouting slogans, breaking windows, and firing guns. In an assault on a peaceful demonstration by the Social Democratic Party in Miramar, police reported that youths in a car intercepted the march close to midnight, before which it had been "perfectly orderly." Suddenly, three men driving a large Ford sped down a side street intercepted the crowd, shouting "Viva Perón! Viva Franco! Viva Nacionalismo," and firing into the dispersing students. The car drove into the marchers, running one victim against a tree and injuring his knee.²⁴¹ Later the police determined that the men in the car were all residents of Buenos Aires and affiliated with branches of Tacuara in that city.

The previous paragraphs reflect Tacuara's place in the historiography of Argentina. Tacuara is typically depicted as a group of hooligans whose sensational behavior marked a step along the road to the Triple A and the Dirty War or as an example of urban social decay in the mid twentieth century.²⁴² Commentators can be forgiven for either of these perspectives given the years of violent thuggery listed in the last paragraph, which are only a selection of Tacuara's crimes. Former Tacuaristas ended up on both sides of the Dirty War, and were indeed violent thugs who made life in Argentina's urban areas less safe and more chaotic during the years they existed.²⁴³

²³⁸ Paxton, Robert. *What Is Fascism?: From the Anatomy of Fascism*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2018.

²³⁹ Adolf Eichman was Nazi official who escaped to Argentina after WWII, later to be captured by the Mossad and brought to face trial and execution in Jerusalem.

²⁴⁰ "Lista de libros," Archivo de La DipBA, Legajo 10411, 123.

²⁴¹ "Lista de libros," Archivo de La DipBA, Legajo 10411, 123.

²⁴² Federico Finchelstein, *The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War: Fascism, Populism, and Dictatorship in Twentieth Century Argentina* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); James P. Brennan and Mercedes Ferreyra, *Argentina's Missing Bones: Revisiting the History of the Dirty War*, Violence in Latin American History 6 (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018); Mark J. Osiel, "Constructing Subversion in Argentina's Dirty War," *Representations* 75, no. 1 (2001): 119–58; Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

²⁴³ David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History, and Its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

But their legacy is something more complicated than either of these. In particular, neither of these perspectives adequately deals with Tacuara's Catholic intellectual commitments.

Focusing on such violent acts themselves is the dominant perspective in one of the only manuscript-length accounts of Tacuara, by Argentine journalist Daniel Gutman. The book is an excellent account of events from Tacuara's foundation to the afterlives of its members in Argentine politics. Gutman's task is to account for some of Tacuara's more spectacular crimes—namely a series of political murders and the bank heist at Policlínico Bancario, which form the climax of the book's central section—and this he does well, crafting Tacuara's story into a compelling narrative.

The book's journalistic style, though, means that it is ultimately a play-by-play of Tacuara's activities rather than an attempt at explaining how and why Tacuaristas did what they did. Its subtitle, *Historia de las primeras guerras urbanas argentinas*, is telling.²⁴⁴ Gutman's story is one of thugs and bandits, street militants who began their careers in Tacuara and then ended up in the Triple A or the Montoneros. Given that this was Gutman's goal, the book must be regarded as a success, but it falls short of explaining the particular confluence of intellectualism and hooliganism that Tacuara represented. Without this corrective, Gutman's journalistic presentation of Tacuara renders them completely opaque, an inscrutable black box of youthful violence and incomprehensible hatred, a sensationalist spectacle.

This attention to Tacuara's crimes in the 1960s is understandable, as it is in this period that Tacuara gained the most national headlines and pulled off some of its most daring acts, such as commandeering a plane and diverting it to the Malvinas as a political stunt.²⁴⁵ However, such a perspective lends itself to understanding Tacuara as a merely violent set of loosely connected youth organizations, all violent and anti-Semitic but sharing little else. Alistar Hennesey for example dismisses Tacuara as a "terrorist" organization composed of "the psychopathic detritus of city life and from right wing Catholic students."²⁴⁶ This kind of description, noting the incongruities and paradoxes of Tacuara while simultaneously dismissing them, emphasizes Tacuara's thuggery and discourages attempts to understand their ideological commitments, obscuring precisely the political-religious knot which this chapter hopes to unravel. Other sources which do focus on Tacuara's beliefs nod at Tacuara's Catholicism but leave it as a curiosity rather than the locus of attention, in stark contrast to the way that the organization itself described its faith as completely central to its political activity.²⁴⁷

Focusing on Tacuara's escapades only obscures their ideological and intellectual commitments. Rather than placing Tacuara in a story of social dissolution and decay, as an almost incomprehensible and violent tangent, this chapter uses Tacuara as an example of something that *connects* the Argentine far-right of the early and late twentieth century. Tacuara's place in Argentine history is a linchpin, a key to a developing consensus on the right-wing that would see its full expression in the Dirty War, making it a throughline that helps us understand the continuity between the nineteenth-century right-wing in Latin America and Iberia and the right-wing dictatorships that would sweep Argentina and neighboring countries in the mid twentieth century.

²⁴⁴ Daniel Gutman, *Tacuara: historia de la primera guerrilla urbana argentina*, 2. ed. corregida, Investigación Periodística (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2012).

²⁴⁵ Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, 208.

²⁴⁶ Walter Laqueur, *Fascism: A Reader's Guide: Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

²⁴⁷ Humberto Cucchetti and Natacha Borgeaud-Garciandía, "Les « causes Nationalistes » : Retour Sur l'adhésion Militante à Partir de Récits Biographiques," *Critique Internationale*, no. 65 (2014): 149–69.

Federico Finchelstein's *The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War* touches on these themes of international right-wing politics, the relationship between violence and ideology.²⁴⁸ While insightful and useful, this text presents Tacuara as part of a national story, namely the many transformations of the Peronist coalition in the interim between Perón's first terms and his return, rather than as a part of an international story of political consensus building across the right-wing. Other works by Finchelstein similarly engage with Tacuara only as a perpetrator of violence.²⁴⁹ Like many others who have commented on Tacuara, Finchelstein also focuses on its antisemitism as the center of its ideology and action. Antisemitism is certainly one of the central aspects of Tacuara's perspective, but the reading list which is the focus of this paper shows that it is not the only pillar of Tacuara's ideology. Instead this chapter will look at Tacuara's ideology as a whole, as a modern manifestation of centuries of right-wing, anti-modern Catholic thought, which motivated and informed their political activity.

The Argentine Right: A Reader's Guide

In the celebratory, one-year anniversary edition of its newsletter *Offensiva* in November of 1962, Tacuara offered a fascinating glimpse into its ideology in the form of a reading list written for the members of the organization. The list was a blueprint for the political, religious, and historic claims which underlined Tacuara as an organization and political actor. The forty two books were divided into three categories: eighteen under "Catholic Apologetics," nineteen under "National History of Argentina," and finally five under "Politics." What follows is an analysis of these works with the intention to let them speak to the ideological commitments and priorities of Tacuara, and particularly how these priorities blended a deep engagement with Catholic theology and ostensibly secular political concerns.

The section "National History of Argentina" consisted almost exclusively of "revisionist" histories of Argentina and Latin America. This should come as no surprise to students of the Argentine right—"revisionism" as an academic tradition dates back to the fall of the Argentine dictator Rosas's regime to its liberal opponents in 1852. Revisionist historians praised Rosas for his defeat of the English and French incursions in South America and his uniting of the country in the face of liberal criticism and the civil unrest that followed the battle for independence from Spain. Including these texts places Tacuara squarely in the tradition of Argentine conservatism.²⁵⁰

The one item in the reading list which is not a single book is a perfect example—the *Revista del Instituto Juan Manuel de Rosas* is a journal published by the titular Instituto, founded in 1938 by revisionist academics with Ezcurra's father as a regular participant. Though it dissolved before the foundation of Tacuara, the Instituto represented a major effort in what its members and supporters considered the rehabilitation of the image of Rosas. The *Revista's* entry in the reading

²⁴⁸ Finchelstein, Federico. *The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War : Fascism, Populism, and Dictatorship in Twentieth Century Argentina*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2014.

²⁴⁹ Federico Finchelstein, "From Holocaust Trauma to the Dirty War," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 41, no. 3 (2015): 47–58.

²⁵⁰ Goebel, Michael. *Argentina's Partisan Past : Nationalism and the Politics of History*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011. Halperin Donghi, Tulio. *El revisionismo histórico argentino como visión decadentista de la historia nacional*. Buenos Aires, República Argentina: Siglo Veintiuno Editores Argentina, 2005. ROCK, D. *AUTHORITARIAN ARGENTINA: THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, ITS HISTORY AND ITS IMPACT*. P. 320, 1993, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, BERKELEY, CA, 1993.

list is therefore both a nod to Ezcurra's pedigree and to important strains of establishment conservative thinking in Argentina.

The remainder of the "National History" section of Tacuara's reading list likewise follows the revisionist school by specifically contrasting Rosas with the most famous liberal of Argentina's nineteenth century, President Sarmiento, whose affiliation with the Masons is specifically called out in one entry by Bruno Genta, an Argentine conservative intellectual associated with the 1943 coup government known as "La Revolución Argentina." Genta's three entries on the reading list all dealt with "Masonry" and liberalism in Argentine history. *La masonería en la historia argentina* is a relatively short but extremely polemical book that is less a history than an anti-Masonic screed. Genta targeted not only Sarmiento and his allies but the entirety of Argentina's ruling class in the nineteenth century, who constitute an "invisible government" that is actually in control.²⁵¹ These unnatural, foreign influences flowed from England and the "yankis," and held up "Brother Benjamin Franklin as the moral archetype for future generations of Argentines." He complained that the Masons and their apologists even went so far as to try to claim the "Father" of the nation, General San Martín, as one of theirs rather than the perfect example of Argentine masculinity he was for Genta and the revisionist school.

This more than anything else is the central sin of the Masons—they denied local, national character in the interest of secular, international conformity. In this light what was arguably Sarmiento's most famous program, universal state education, was not a national development initiative but a destructive effort to erase Argentine national identity and its connection to the Catholic Church.²⁵² The inclusion of this issue in the reading list was an acknowledgement of one of the central political struggles in Argentina in the late nineteenth century, the move from Church-based to state-based education, a struggle that connected Argentine conservatives to their counterparts in Mexico, Brazil, France, Spain, and other predominantly Catholic countries. Attention to this struggle connected this gang of youths with the political concerns of the decades, even century-old professional intellectuals.

Other texts in the "National History" section gave nationalist interpretations of Argentina's economic and geopolitical histories, such as *Defensa y pérdida de nuestra independencia económica*, a sweeping account of Argentine political economy from the early colonial period to the twentieth century. The book's author, J.M. Rosa, both praised the Spanish Empire as a force that nurtured its other colonies and condemned it for leaving Argentina to be preyed upon by another imperial state, the British. Here Spain was Argentina's beloved but flawed parent, itself ultimately victim of the same predators that took hold of Argentina in the nineteenth century. This resulted in the liberal attempt to "de-Argentinize Argentina" in order to install that more "barbarous" civilization, the British.²⁵³

This distinction between the Spanish and British Empires was a useful gloss for much of the revisionist school's ideology. The British served as a stand-in for both direct imperialism, as in the case of the occupation of the Malvinas, and indirect imperialism through finance and capital (connecting the villainous role the British play for Tacuara with their antisemitism, typically associated in conspiratorial thinking with the power of banks and finance). Tacuara and its forebears held that this capitalistic form of empire bred weakness and complacency, and denied the natural order, which they understood to be essentially Catholic. The Spanish Empire was

²⁵¹ Jordán B. Genta, *La Masonería en la historia Argentina*. (Buenos Aires :, 1949), 4.

²⁵² Guerrero, César H. Sarmiento, maestro universal de la educación. San Juan, República Argentina: Museo Histórico y Biblioteca Sarmiento, 1975.

²⁵³ Rosa, *Defensa y pérdida de nuestra independencia económica*, 11, 76.

justified in its control of one and a half continents of colonial possessions because it brought Catholicism to the peoples of the Americas, and because it constituted what they would call an “organic” or “natural” society that acknowledged the inherent differences among people and their need for hierarchy.²⁵⁴

Apart from Argentine revisionist authors who focus primarily on nineteenth-century and colonial era history, Tacuara’s reading list also contained a few books dealing directly with the political issues of the early twentieth century, namely fascism and communism. These titles were in the “Politics” section of the reading list, and include *El mito de democracia*, a polemic against non-authoritarian states; *El crimen de nuremberg*, an antisemitic work of Holocaust denial; and *Historia de Fascismo*, translated from Italian.²⁵⁵ The latter is the work of Francesco Ercole, a political theorist who had served the Italian fascist government.²⁵⁶ These texts indicate Tacuara’s extremist position on the Argentine right, presenting Argentina as the historical victim of predatory imperial states such as the United Kingdom and the United States, while connecting Tacuara to the history of more successful fascist and right-wing movements that came before it. Their version of history was of a promising, prosperous Argentina that had its natural place in the world stolen by enemies foreign and domestic. Revisionism served the same role for Tacuara as did the anti-Semitic “stab in the back” myth that justified many of the atrocities of Nazi Germany, politically connecting internal and external rivals to legitimize political violence while explaining how their nation could be at once destined for greatness and also unusually weak.²⁵⁷

Catholic Foundations

As noted above, the explicitly “political” and “historical” materials listed above accounted for just over half of Tacuara’s reading list. The remainder was a collection of Thomist philosophy, high middle ages theology, and contemporary far right Catholic diatribes under the subheading “Catholic Apologetics.”²⁵⁸ The texts vary widely in difficulty, from Jaime Balmes’s *Religion*, written so as to be “in the reach of children,” to Hilaire Belloc’s *La Religión demostrada*, written in the form of a believer’s conversation with a potential convert and intended to model an actual conversation, to Keller’s *Y la biblia tenía razón*, a relatively innocuous entry that connects contemporary Biblical archaeology with Catholic doctrine, to the hefty multivolume *Manual de Filosofía Tomista*.

Balmes’s *Religión* is an example of the “conversation with a skeptic” genre of Christian literature and presents itself as a step-by-step argument for Catholicism as practiced in the modern

²⁵⁴ R Font Ezcurra, *La unidad nacional*.

²⁵⁵ JA Palacios, *El mito e democracia*, Veale *El crimen de nuremberg*, Ercole *Historia de fascismo*

²⁵⁶ Noether, Emiliana P. “Italian Intellectuals under Fascism.” *The Journal of Modern History* 43, no. 4 (1971): 630–48.

²⁵⁷ Vascik, George S, and Mark R Sadler. *The Stab-in-the-Back Myth and the Fall of the Weimar Republic: A History in Documents and Visual Sources*. 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016.

²⁵⁸ Thomism and its modern incarnation, Neo-Scholasticism, is an incredibly complex philosophical system which is better and more extensively covered by those focusing directly on it. See: Thomas and Mary T Clark, *An Aquinas Reader: Edited with an Introduction by Mary T. Clark*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999); RANDALL S. ROSENBERG, “Ressourcement and Neo-Thomism: A Narrative under Scrutiny, a Dialogue Renewed,” in *The Givenness of Desire, Concrete Subjectivity and the Natural Desire to See God* (University of Toronto Press, 2017), 39–62; Edward Baring, “The Struggle for Legitimacy: Neo-Scholasticism and Phenomenology,” in *Converts to the Real, Catholicism and the Making of Continental Philosophy* (Harvard University Press, 2019), 23–54; Marcia L Colish, *Studies in Scholasticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2006); Gerald A. McCool, “Twentieth-Century Scholasticism,” *The Journal of Religion* 58 (1978): S198–221.

day. Beginning as these texts often do it argued that a world so wondrous and functional as this one must have a maker. But, and importantly, it took umbrage with Protestant, deistic, or universalist versions of the “watchmaker” version of God by emphasizing the essential “mystery” of the workings of the divine, from Christ’s resurrection to the Trinity to Biblical and later miracles.²⁵⁹ This mystery lay at the heart of Balmes’s argument that Catholicism was the only reasonable Christianity, the only one which maintains humility in the face of God and the divine. Humility before the lord then naturally becomes humility before one’s superiors on Earth.

Several of the books in the “Apologetics” section concerned history, or were themselves pieces from the pre-modern era. The historical pieces included *The City of God* by St. Augustine, and *Summa Contra Gentiles* by Thomas Aquinas, two works by important Church Fathers. Together these texts made up a foundation on which the Catholic polemics of the remainder were based. The fact that nearly all of the original theological texts listed in the “Apología Católica” section were written by Church Fathers reveals another of Tacuara’s ideological commitments, one that unites it with much of the Argentine Catholic right.

Tacuara’s theology was Neo-Scholastic. Neo-Scholasticism was (and remains) a branch of conservative Catholic theology in reaction to and opposition against liberalizing and moderating influences in the Church.²⁶⁰ It was an effort to return to the origins of humanist and theological work, back to Aristotle and the Church Fathers (such as Aquinas and Augustine) rather than modern theologies that adapted to the present or acknowledged Christian theological diversity or modern science. Neo-Scholasticism originated in the early modern period in Europe alongside the modern philosophy it was a reaction to, and in most countries had largely faded to the intellectual background by the twentieth century. Its influence remained high in Argentina, however, relative to many other predominantly Catholic countries throughout the twentieth century—for example, several of the theology journals which are the source materials for Chapters One and Two of this dissertation are Thomist or Neo-Scholastic.

Including works by Church fathers wasn’t the only sign of Tacuara’s Neo-Scholasticism, however. The *Manual de Filosofía Tomista*, co-written by Enrique Collins and Mons. Cipriano Monserrat, was arguably the most difficult and scholarly of the works on Tacuara’s list and a perfect example of Neo-Scholastic theology. A two volume academic introduction to Thomist philosophy, the work was full of quotes in French and Latin and draws the reader from the origins of Thomist philosophy in Aristotle and the Greek masters to its relationship with more contemporary fields of inquiry such as sociology and psychoanalysis. The authors contended that, in the Tomasian view, “the logic of Aristotle persists”—that is, the works of Aquinas and the Greek philosophers he built on remain the proper foundation for developing one’s worldview, despite recent modern deviations, from left or right, from Hegel or Hayek.

Grounded in natural law and steeped in Christian love and mercy, Thomism offered a view of man as “imperfect” but “capable of perfection.”²⁶¹ Aquinas, they wrote, had already solved most of the most difficult questions of philosophy, from the nature of morality to the correct structure which a just society should take, that of the “natural” order in which those who have authority “constitute the unity and thus the force of the whole.”²⁶² However the authors weren’t

²⁵⁹ Jaime Luciano Balmes, *La Religión: Demostrada al Alcance Los Niños*, electronic resource, Vigésimo Novena edición (Barcelona: Imprenta Barcelonesa, 1910) .

²⁶⁰ André Azevedo Alves and J. M. Moreira, *The Salamanca School*, Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers, v. 9 (London ; New York: Continuum, 2010).

²⁶¹ Henri Collin and Cipriano Montserrat, *Manual de filosofía tomista: para los alumnos de enseñanza media y superior* (Barcelona: Luis Gili, 1942). Vol I, 212.

²⁶² Henri Collin and Cipriano Montserrat *Manual de filosofía tomista* (Barcelona: Luis Gili, 1942) Vol II 318

completely trapped in the early middle ages—while the nature of authority comes from natural law and therefore from God, the “form” of authority wasn’t fixed but rather adapted to the nature of the society it governed.

Thus the modern state, and even nationalism and patriotism had a place in what would otherwise be an entirely backwards-looking ideology. The text argued that because of the nature of present day societies, one can be patriotic while also maintaining one’s universal Christian love — something essential to Tacuara’s worldview as a far right-wing and also deeply Catholic organization. Pragmatics and the avoidance of utopian thinking demanded that modern day Thomists engage with the modern state and even declare their loyalty to it, not in spite of their Christianity but *because* of it. This was the bridge between Tacuara’s modern, nationalist politics and its apparently medieval theology, allowing Tacuaristas to engage both in Thomist study and modern street-level protest and political violence. Rather than using their centuries-old theology to hide from the world, they used it as a call to action and engagement.

It should come as no surprise that among the most targeted enemies of Neo-Scholasticism was Protestantism, which was the focus of five of the books on Tacuara’s list. These, too, ranged in difficulty from popular polemics against Protestants as stand-ins for Anglo-Saxon civilization (that is, for the United States and especially the United Kingdom) to hefty historical accounts of early modern political and religious turmoil in Europe. In each of these registers the texts argued first that Western civilization was in decline, and second that this decline could be dated back to the sixteenth century and the dissolution of the unity which the Catholic Church had provided for Europe. After this unity was destroyed European powers other than Spain and Portugal embarked on their own colonial projects, which Tacuara saw as more exploitative than Spain’s.²⁶³ Later, this would result in the exploitative system of capitalism, for which the Reformation is directly blamed.²⁶⁴ Essentially, these texts were a study guide to the anxieties about Protestantism expressed by theologians in chapter one.

In one text Hilaire Belloc argued that the Reformation was “always both” a fight against the “spiritual power of the clergy and the economic power of the hierarchy, of the Pope and the system of investiture,” making it an inherently “anti-clerical” movement. This had served to promote the “isolation of the soul” and consequently the “social dissolution” which plagued the modern era itself as culture and society began to follow purely “economic” logics.²⁶⁵ The Reformation opened a still festering wound in Christian civilization, one which Tacuaristas and their counterparts on the Catholic right still hoped would be rectified when the other Christians returned to the mother Church.²⁶⁶ As explored in Chapter One, Tacuara and its ideological forebears held that Protestantism represented more than a challenge to Catholic unity or Christian civilization. It was an assault on the most sacred elements of the faith, its innumerable “variations” a testament to this theological problem – as Balmes noted in *Protestantism Compared to Catholicism*, in matters of religion “variation” is nothing but “error.”²⁶⁷ The central impulses of Protestantism, its appeal to egalitarian access to the divine, its acceptance of Bibles in languages other than Latin, its appeal to reason and rationality, caused society and the faith to lose their

²⁶³ Hilaire Belloc, *Cómo aconteció la reforma* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1945).

²⁶⁴ Hilaire Belloc, *La crisis de nuestra civilización*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1939), 187.

²⁶⁵ Hilaire Belloc, *Cómo aconteció la reforma* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1945), 285.

²⁶⁶ James H. Kroeger, ed., *The Documents of Vatican Council II* (Pasay City, Philippines: Paulines Publishing House, 2011), 45.

²⁶⁷ Jaime Luciano Balmes, *El protestantismo comparado con el catolicismo en sus relaciones con la civilización europea* (Paris: Libreria de Garnier Hermanos, 1852).

“divine aspects.”²⁶⁸ As opposed to this chaos, the Catholic Church offered “unity,” and was constantly “victorious” against its internal and external enemies as a result.

One account of such a victory featured in the reading list was the *Historia de los heterodoxos*, another multi-volume text by Menéndez y Pelayo which sought to explain how and why it came to pass that, in the author’s estimation, of all the European nations Spain and Portugal were uniquely shielded from the Reformation. This had something to do with the fact that “nothing is more hated in [the Iberian peninsula] than heresy, and of all heresies Protestantism.”²⁶⁹ But while this “noble intolerance” was laudable, overemphasizing it would serve to ignore the actions and political decisions that led to its defeat, among them the Inquisition, the persecution of Jews, and most importantly the Reconquista. Menéndez y Pelayo was careful to identify this Catholic victory as a political project, not just the outcome of a natural cultural trend. One must imagine that this presentation of Spanish history—of the country’s Catholicity needing defense from a dedicated, Catholic cadre—would be appealing to an organization like Tacuara, which saw itself as precisely such an organization responding to a call to defend its country from outside forces.

Condemnation of the variety of enemies to Catholicism noted above, heretics and Jews, Muslims and Christians, was an inherent part of the book’s project. Menéndez y Pelayo wrote that he deliberately chose the word “heterodoxy” rather than “heresy” precisely in order to emphasize their most important feature, not being Catholic. Thus the text substantively dealt with every potential challenge or alternative faced by Christians in Spain, from Roman paganism to Gnosticism, Judaism to Albagensianism, Islam to Lutheranism, and even witchcraft and demon worship. Equating Protestantism with these other beliefs mirrored Tacuara’s own extensive and undifferentiated enemies list, which as noted above contained everyone from Masons to the Boy Scouts. This was a direct expression of an unrepentantly traditional Catholicism that could tolerate no alternatives, which regarded tolerance itself as a “heretical doctrine.”²⁷⁰

Works on the reading list which covered more contemporary issues mirrored this rhetorical move by including all enemies of Catholicism in their polemics. “Amoral” atheism, erroneous Protestantism, “the destroyer,” Positivism, dilettante intellectual socialism, and Judaism each got their place on the enemies list of *Nuestra razones*, a text compiled from a series of Catholic conferences in the city of Córdoba, Argentina arguing for the need for society to return to the foundations of “truth” from which it has recently strayed.²⁷¹ Yet while all these enemies were connected, they were not conflated. The author, Rodríguez y Olmos, didn’t resort to the use of Jews or Judaism as a universal scapegoat, but rather saw each of their ideological and political enemies as distinct but related allies. The only appropriate response in the face of these foes was to return to the Church, without which, in his words, the peoples of the Americas “in this very spot” would have remained savages “drinking the still hot blood from the skulls of beasts.”²⁷² The conclusion could not be clearer—Catholicism was civilization, all else was barbarism

²⁶⁸ Balmes, 87.

²⁶⁹ Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo and Felix F Corso, *Historia de Los Heterodoxos Españoles* (Buenos Aires: Libreria Perlado, 1945).

²⁷⁰ Menéndez y Pelayo and Corso, 41.

²⁷¹ Audino Rodríguez y Olmos, *Nuestros dogmas: conferencias teológico-dogmáticas ; Dr. Audino Rodríguez y Olmos*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Difusión, 1945).

²⁷² Rodríguez y Olmos, 23.

Catholic Political Action

Yet while the Church was both the only defense of civilization and its very essence, it alone could not constitute the solution. What was needed was a society in conformity with its teachings – as one of the texts on contemporary Catholic Apologia put it, “ignorance in faith is one of the great harms to which modern society is victim.”²⁷³ The task before conservative Catholics was one of Catholic education, to be sure, but it was more than that. While the goal was the defense of the Church and its sacred doctrine, the Church was incapable of doing this alone, as evidenced by the theological, social, and political transformations examined in Chapters One through Three of this dissertation. According to Tacuara and its allies, the Church needed the protection of lay political actors.

Ultimately what these texts called for was an active cadre of united, educated, and committed Catholic traditionalists willing to risk their lives in the defense of the Church and the nation—a better gloss of Tacuara's mission would be difficult to imagine. In this light one can see Tacuara's reading list as a guide with which an intelligent, willing student could pursue a study in right-wing Catholic thought from the very beginning, with lessons from Sunday School on through advanced analyses and theological treatises, leading back to arguing for the necessity of strong national protection for Catholic belief and identity.

Tacuara's Catholicism was not ancillary to its nationalism, but rather the other way around. Catholicism was no mere feature of Argentine identity. It was the very foundation of a just state, a united people, anywhere. Argentina's enemies, and by extension Tacuara's enemies, can thus all be understood as potential harbingers of the loss of its Catholic nature. This goes far in connecting Tacuara's antisemitism to its opposition to liberalism, its attacks on the British, and its contempt for socialism, all of which were inherently anti-Catholic as Tacuara understood them. Nations must be united to be strong and pure, and without religious unity this is not possible. Keeping in mind Tacuara's deep concern with tradition, with integrity, and with maintaining internal unity in the face of external, disordering agents, one can make sense of their reading list in the context of their political action. As much emphasis is placed on opposing the Enlightenment and the Protestant Reformation as on opposing the British and capitalism, as much on Jews as Communists. These later concerns have their obvious antecedents, such as the intimate relationship between the Argentine elite and British capital, or the supposed connection between capitalism and Judaism according to antisemitic organizations such as Tacuara. But for Tacuara these connections went beyond historical or cultural contingency. National, political questions were seen in light of what Tacuaristas understood as eternal doctrinal truths.

This explains the reading list's strong emphasis on Catholic and Church issues as compared to Argentine history or questions of the nation. For an organization usually presented as part of the history of Peronism and Argentine nationalism, Tacuara's reading list—and the rest of its rhetoric—focused massively on the biggest religious, theological, and philosophical questions of the previous three to four hundred years. Tacuara saw these issues not as history but as living problems that deeply informed their contemporary political commitments and behavior. Their virulent nationalism, violence, and antisemitism stemmed from their commitment to a Catholicism so conservative that it got some of its adherents excommunicated from the Church itself.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Nicolás Marín Negueruela, *Lecciones de Apologética* (Madrid: Edit. Internacional, 1944).

²⁷⁴ Mario Virgilio Santiago Jiménez, “Julio Meinvielle, Tacuaras, los Tecos y El Yunque contra la «infiltración roja» en México y Argentina,” *Cahiers des Amériques latines*, no. 79 (December 2, 2015): 55–74.

Equating this rhetoric of unity and polemics against Jews, Protestants, and atheists with an actual concern that either group would somehow conquer Argentina or find an opportunity for mass conversion would be a mistake. Tacuaristas showed little concern for the relatively small Protestant communities in Argentina, thought atheists to be limited to academic circles, and regarded Jews as parasites incapable of growth. To make sense of these arguments, which are fundamentally about sundering an existing unity rather than worries about outsiders, we must understand their politics in the context of an emerging right-wing political and theological network, precisely that which the previous chapters of this dissertation have been examining. Rather than a mere street gang, Tacuara was just as much a part of the emerging right-wing, Catholic political world after the Second Vatican Council as any of the established theological journals or Catholic press outlets examined previously in this thesis.

Tacuara wasn't isolated. It was deeply and directly connected with similar movements and fellow-travelers around the world. The journals and books its members read tied them to centuries of intellectual development, to political struggles in Europe and elsewhere, and above all to the universal issues of Catholic doctrine. Priests whose lectures they frequented, such as Julio Meinvielle, were taught in Italy and well traveled in Europe from Spain to the United Kingdom. One of their co-founders, José Baxter, had half of his family in England. Tacuaristas closely followed international news, particularly as it concerned the creeping influence of Communism in Latin America and the rest of the world.

None of this should come as a surprise, given Tacuaristas' engagement in scholarly debates present in the texts they chose in their reading list. Despite their anxieties about Protestantism and Communism, and contrary to what most historians say about them, Tacuara's founders and members didn't understand themselves to be part of the dissolution of anything—that was what they thought of their enemies. Instead, they were part of the story of the world coming *back together*, of a reemerging consensus and universalist commitment to natural law, nationalism, and anticommunism.

This perspective was not delusional. Tacuara was indeed not alone in its politics, radical and disturbing as they were. They had and recognized allies throughout Latin America and the Northern Hemisphere, from the Non-Aligned movement to Arab nationalists to the more radical factions of Franco's government in Spain. Neo-Scholasticism wasn't a niche theological perspective in Argentina or in other conservative Catholic circles, but rather connected Tacuara to the major theology departments and seminaries in their country and many others throughout the Catholic world. Even their most vile beliefs, their antisemitism, their misogyny, their disdain for political dissidents, didn't so much set them apart from their fellow Argentines as unite them with a still growing coalition of politicians, students, intellectuals, and militants who would go on to deeply mark the latter half of the twentieth century, from the Dirty War in Argentina, to the New Right in the US, to Le Pen's Presidential ambitions in France, to attempted coups against the governments of Spain and Italy.

Seen in this light, Tacuara's story wasn't one of dissolution but cohesion—they weren't a chaotic band of youths but a dedicated, fascist organization attempting to build a new world according to their deeply informed politics. This is how scholars should understand Tacuara's reading list, as a defense of what they perceive to be Catholic tradition. Its concern with Protestantism, with the history of Catholic heterodoxy, with Scholastic Thomist philosophy, was a call to rally around the historic bases of Church doctrine and practice, to adhere all the more strongly to tradition in the face of the challenges of the new. As educated, well read, and world aware Catholics, they were obligated to guard it against potential challenges both internal and

external, and to prepare it for the assumption of greater power. Against the modern world they proposed not regression to a medieval fantasy but the construction of a new Catholic society, one founded essentially on the pillars of pre-Vatican II Catholicism.

In a world of mass literacy, international communication, and ideological conflict it would no longer be enough to merely baptize Catholics and teach them their catechism. Instead Catholics would now require a personal familiarity with the teachings of the Church and its doctrines and practices, a new elite laity firmly attached to and guided by a traditionalist clergy. This is precisely the task Tacuara set for itself, to be a political lay Catholic organization, one that brought what it considered to be the message of the Church – staunch traditionalism, religious intolerance, and the superiority of medieval philosophy – to this transformed world by a means adequate to it. Tacuaristas operated in a secular, political world they perceived as tainted and corrupt in the name of a purer, majestic Catholicism.

The situation was all the more dire due to the appearance of the enemies of the Church, secularization and modernity, within its very heart. While Tacuara's main years of activity preceded the publishing of the most transformative documents of the Second Vatican Council, the modernizing impulse which inspired the Council's decisions was on the minds of Tacuaristas as those they read. The above analysis of Tacuara's reading list shows how closely their perspective hews to the more right-wing thinkers cited in Chapters One, Two, and Three of this thesis. Additionally, Lectures given by right-wing Catholic priest Julio Meinvielle and attended by Tacuaristas on the dangers of "Progressive Christianity" during the Council show that especially the most intellectually minded of Tacuaristas had the Church's transformation in mind when they thought about their role as lay Catholics. Otherwise, the coming "alliance with the modern world" potentially brought by the Council could usher in a new "lay, liberal, socialist, [and] communist" era for both Argentina as a nation and the Catholic church as a religious institution.²⁷⁵

Understanding Tacuara and its contemporaries is impossible without constantly keeping in mind this fundamental uncertainty as to the future of the foundation of their ideology, Catholic doctrine and theology. The mere existence of the Council would have indicated to Tacuara that the very heart of the Church was in a process of self-evaluation and potential change, something which was completely alien to their ideology of integrity, unity, and eternity – in other words, it seemed as if the *Catholicism* of the Church, both in the definitional and ideological sense, was potentially being questioned. In the nineteen-sixties as much as in the sixteenth century, the Church faced a fundamental challenge to its authority and integrity.

In this way we can understand Tacuara's appeal to high medieval theology, its concern about the Reformation, and its assertions about the fundamental truth and integrity of the whole of Catholic practice and doctrine up to that point as a claim to orthodoxy and tradition. Its vandalism and the political violence for which it is most remembered were expressions of its members' intentions to be the Catholic elite which both the Church and the nation needed to defend their integrity from all of their enemies. Their political acts, their theological commitments, and their nationalism must be understood as an effort to construct a wall that would at once keep outside forces from corrupting the Church and reinforce its boundaries, creating unity in the face of potential dissolution.

²⁷⁵ Julio Meinvielle, *En torno al progresismo cristiano* (Buenos Aires: Huemul, 1964), 10.

By the mid 60s Tacuara had splintered into various factions. The ideological and organizational boundaries among these were porous, and the factions differed from one another primarily in their degree of hostility to or acceptance of the recently ousted Juan Perón and the movements for popular justice that followed him.²⁷⁶ One faction retained the name, ideology, and print newsletter from the organization's founding; it was led by one of the founders of Tacuara and its longest serving president, Ezcurra. Another, the first to split, became a more generically conservative movement, the Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista, which repudiated the others for accepting social reform into their platforms. The third followed another original member of Tacuara, José Baxter, and shifted gradually toward a perplexing antisemitic, right-Trotskyism that flirted with more popular strains of Peronism.²⁷⁷ The afterlives of these factions were equally varied. Ezcurra himself ended up returning to and finally finishing seminary, ending his life as a parish priest in San Rafael. Many of the more conservative members of Tacuara joined other paramilitary organizations, among them the infamous Alianza Anticomunista Argentina or Triple A, one of the main participants in the Dirty War. Baxter's faction and others like it ended up on the other side of that same conflict, while Baxter himself became a globetrotting revolutionary visiting Libya, Spain, and Vietnam before dying in a plane crash in France.²⁷⁸

In that their organization split several times over and failed to last even a decade, Tacuara was a failure. None of its grander schemes, from sparking military coups to major political assassinations, were ultimately fruitful. Rather than successful campaigns or achieved goals, Tacuara's legacy was its members and their trajectories, and the ideas which they carried with them into the remainder of their political and religious lives. And as a connector between Argentina's early twentieth century right-wing and its ultimate, murderous expression in the Dirty War, Tacuara must be acknowledged as a tragic success. Their synthesis of conservative theology and right-wing politics is emblematic of a worldview that influenced political actors around the world.

Tacuara's place in Argentine history is therefore not just as a harbinger for the violence to come, but as a representative of a way of thinking that was spreading throughout the conservative Catholic world in the mid-twentieth century. From Spain to Brazil to the US, other groups and actors were embracing the same neo-medieval ideas and combining them with modern political tactics. Understanding this emerging consensus on the right, and particularly the Catholic right, requires doing more than reading astonished accounts of people living with hooligans and militants like Tacuara — it means taking the time to read what those militants have left, to search the shelves of their own libraries and letting them speak for themselves. Only then would it be possible to understand the peculiar synthesis of thuggery and theology that was Tacuara, a street gang whose members were "Catholics before all else."²⁷⁹ In this context, Tacuara becomes less an alarming aberration of a socially dissolving Argentina and instead a point of connection between the worlds of politics and theology. The next and final chapter of this dissertation continues the same line of inquiry with a contemporary of Tacuara headquartered in Brazil, the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property.

²⁷⁶ Michael Goebel, "A Movement from Right to Left in Argentine Nationalism? The Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista and Tacuara as Stages of Militancy," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 26, no. 3 (2007): 356–77.

²⁷⁷ David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History, and Its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 206.

²⁷⁸ Gutman, *Tacuara*.

²⁷⁹ Julio Meinvielle, *Concepción Católica de La Política*. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Theoría, 1961), 35.

Chapter Five

Between Religion and Politics: The Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property in Brazil and Around the World

The final chapter of this dissertation, like the previous one, will examine the connections between conservative theology and right-wing politics with a close look at a single organization. Where Chapter Four zeroed in on a relatively small, local organization which existed for only a few years and was limited to the major cities of Argentina, this chapter will look at a major, conservative, international Catholic organization with branches all over the world, and particularly in Latin America. That organization is the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property, known by the acronym TFP. The TFP sought to act on the criticism and alarm characteristic of the reactions to Vatican II that fill the first three chapters of this thesis. It is precisely this combination of religious thinking and political action that is the focus of this chapter, identifying TFP's right-wing Catholic praxis, the unity between its religious ideology and its political activity. The TFP is an embodiment of the shift in lay Catholic politics after the Second Vatican Council, an organization that sought to use the newfound and expanded power of the laity in the interests of conservative, right-wing theology and religiosity. This would motivate the organization to grow and spread internationally, and would even lead it into direct conflict with the Catholic hierarchy it claimed to support. These two themes—the TFP's internationalism and conflict with domestic and international hierarchy—are the focuses of this chapter.

The international nature of the TFP, both its organization and its appeal, means that this chapter will take a much wider geographic lens than the previous ones, looking not just at Argentina and Chile and the home country of the organization, Brazil, but also other countries which had major branches, such as Portugal, Spain, and the US. Taking this transnational perspective on an organization which was itself intentionally transnational is vital to understanding it. As the chapter will show, these right-wing Catholics organized their domestic and international politics not along lines of nationality but rather along lines of religion. This international perspective wasn't just rhetoric, but was at the heart of the TFP in all its national incarnations.

One way in which this international perspective manifested was the use of the term “iberoamericano” in place of “latinoamericano” when referring to their cultural region—examples include the article “El Iberoamericanista Cristiano” in the 13th edition of the Argentine TFP's newsletter.²⁸⁰ Using this word indicated that they understood their international community to consist of Iberia as much as other Latin American countries, something not uncommon among the upper and middle classes of Argentina, Chile, and Brazil during the mid twentieth century. Stressing their Iberian roots was an important part of their understanding of their past. The TFP, along with other conservative and right-wing Catholics in Latin America, understood the time of the Spanish and Portuguese Empires' control over the Americas as an honorable, even glorious past worthy of celebration. These were not oppressive Empires but the bringers of civilization and order to continents which had formerly been deprived of Christianity. This chapter concludes this dissertation in order to serve as a capstone connecting the threads raised in previous chapters and drawing them forward in time, up to the mid 1980s. Widening this temporal frame is combined with a wider geographic scope appropriate to the international nature of the TFP, an organization that spanned five continents and claimed adherents in the hundreds of thousands worldwide.

²⁸⁰ Editorial Board, Fábio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira,” *TFP*, no. 13 (1979): 7.

The Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property was founded in Brazil in 1960 by Plino Correa de Oliveria (PCO), a native of São Paulo and a lifelong Catholic traditionalist active through most of the twentieth century from his youth in the 1930s until his death in 1995.²⁸¹ PCO began his political career as a member of the Brazilian Congress and a Catholic political organizer, joining Congress in 1933 as its youngest ever member (a record he still holds as of 2022), as a representative of the Catholic Electoral League, an explicitly Catholic bloc essentially run by the Catholic Church.²⁸² PCO was at the time also a longstanding member of the Brazilian branch of Catholic Action, a major international Catholic organization formed in the wake of the late-nineteenth century turn to political life.²⁸³ PCO would go on to lead São Paulo's Catholic Action but was later ousted due to his extremist positions—broadly speaking, Catholic Action was a center-right organization both on a political and theological level, contrasting with PCO's developing far-right positions on the Church and the state.

After leaving this leadership role in Catholic Action, PCO entered academia. What would become the nucleus of the TFP began as a small circle of intellectuals surrounding PCO during his tenure as Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. During his time in the History Department, PCO developed an informal group of intellectuals, students and other professors, known as the PCO Circle. In 1951 this group created a magazine, *O Catolicismo*, while working with conservative priests in São Paulo. This magazine would go on to become the central organ of the Brazilian TFP. Despite his ouster from Catholic Action PCO remained extremely active as a lay Catholic throughout the 1950s, founding what would become the TFP in 1960 against the backdrop of the Second Vatican Council. A visitor to Rome during the Second Vatican Council, PCO was opposed to what he considered to be the corrupting of the Church by outside forces from socialism to Protestantism during the Council's deliberations.

Under PCO's leadership, the TFP's ideology was consistent across all its international incarnations. It believed in the words in its title, carefully chosen—tradition, family, and property. By “Tradition” the TFP meant not just traditional values or being opposed to major social changes. The group was a Catholic organization specifically founded immediately before the Second Vatican Council by a staunch traditionalist. The tradition the TFP had in mind was that of the Tridentine Mass, Scholasticism, and following what they considered to be the natural, old ways of the Church. In the main, the TFP's project was one of maintaining the pre-Vatican II Church to the greatest extent possible.²⁸⁴ “Family,” for the TFP, as it did and does for many right-wing organizations, was a way of talking about gender without using the word. The TFP shared the anxieties about feminism, female suffrage, and female ordination held by the sources cited in chapter two of this dissertation. The “Property” referenced by TFP was an indication of their staunch anticommunism, one that rather than being limited to opposition to the left required them to oppose even the most modest land or labor reforms. This also places the TFP in the history of the Cold War and the global Culture War, which they and other right-wing organizations understood as a Christian crusade against Communism. This synthesis of the focuses of the first three chapters of this thesis—the continuation of Catholic tradition, maintaining standard gender

²⁸¹ De Mattei, Roberto, *The Crusader of the twentieth Century*.

²⁸² 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.

²⁸³ Denny, Christopher D., Jeremy. Bonner, Christopher D. Denny, Mary Beth Fraser. Connolly, and Christopher D. Denny. *Empowering the People of God Catholic Action before and after Vatican II*. 1st ed. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014.

²⁸⁴ PCO, *Revolution and Counter Revolution and Guerreiros da Virgem: A Réplica da autenticidade*.

roles, and preventing the growth of the left—makes the TFP an ideal choice as the focus of this concluding chapter.

As an organization, TFP's activities differed from country to country. In some, particularly those which the TFP understood to be ruled by the left, they focused on letter writing campaigns and political manifestations, which will be outlined later in this chapter. Additionally, though, every branch of the TFP also functioned as a publishing house, and almost every TFP publication spent at least some of its pages advertising books published or written by members of the organization. These included *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*, a work critiquing the Christian Democratic Party of Chile and PCO's own many works, but these were by no means the only texts of this kind which the TFP produced. One example would be *For an Authentic Christianity*, a book by D. Antonio de Castro Mayer, the Bishop of Campos, advertised in the 13th edition of the TFP's Argentine journal in 1972:

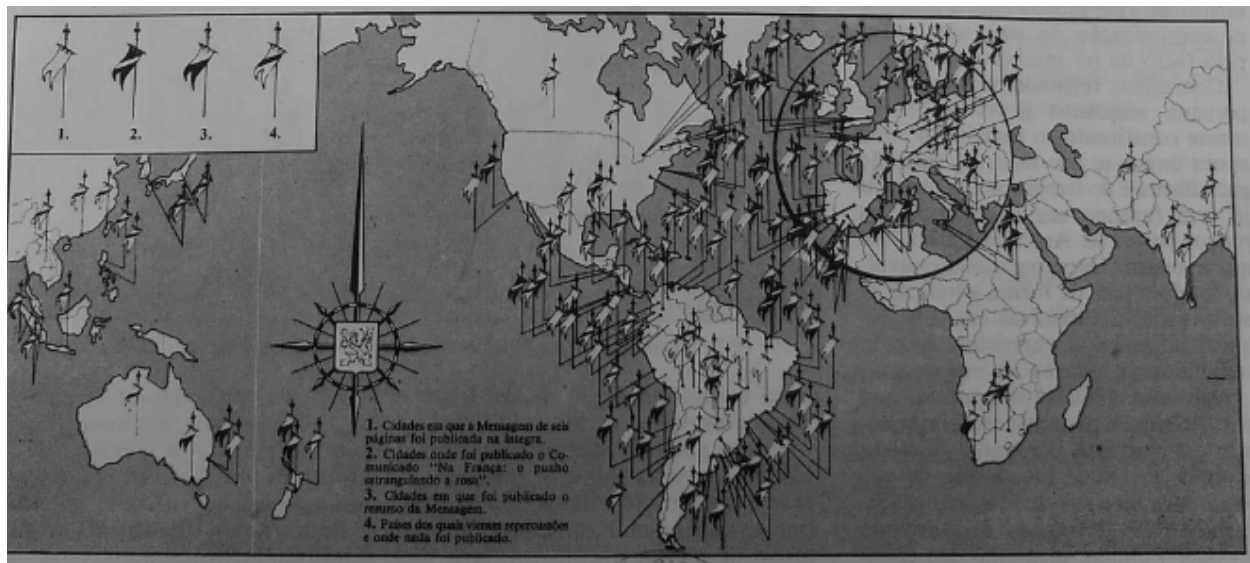


Add for a book published by TFP. *Fiducia* no. 36 (1974)

In addition to being a means of raising revenue for the TFP both nationally and internationally, the promotion and sale of these books was a key part of producing and maintaining a coherent ideological world for TFP members. Moreover, given how many of these texts were not only produced outside the countries in which they were advertised but required translation from Portuguese to Spanish or vice versa, these books are themselves an example of the international nature of the TFP's understanding of religion and politics. The TFP's selection of reading materials emphasized the international nature of their commitment to Catholic social and political practice. They considered it vital for their readers from Lisbon to Buenos Aires to read of

the dangers posed by the ascension of Allende, or the fall of the Franco regime, or the rise of the Mitterand government in France.

PCO would continue to run the Brazilian TFP until his death in 1995, at which point the group had ballooned to include dozens of branches in over 20 countries including South Africa, Canada, the US, almost all Catholic countries in Western and Southern Europe and the entirety of South America.²⁸⁵ After PCO's death these organizations would splinter into various factions, some of which engage in theological and political rivalry. However, this chapter focuses on a time decades before this splintering, the 1970s and 1980s, when the TFP network had already grown substantially but was still under the influence of PCO's message. At the height of its influence the TFP produced magazines in over a dozen countries, published and published books, staged rallies, collected signatures, and organized meetings in countries around the world. Its connections were as far ranging and influential as Jaime Guzmán, principal author of the 1980 Chilean constitution and frequent author in the Chilean journal of the TFP, US President Ronald Reagan, and Prince Bertrant of Orleans-Braganza, one of the claimants to the defunct throne of the Empire of Brazil and longtime member of that country's TFP.²⁸⁶



Map of TFP chapters, affiliated organizations, collaborators, and publishers, *TFP Luso Informa* no. 13

Although the TFP was and remains a large organization with branches throughout the world it has received little scholarly attention, not counting the TFP's in-house publications regarding its history and politics. *Guerreiros da virgem: a vida secreta na TFP*, is a book length treatment of the TFP with a focus on their activity in Brazil.²⁸⁷ While interesting and full of colorful

²⁸⁵ Mexico is the only major Latin American country that remained without a branch of the TFP through the twentieth century.

²⁸⁶ Stephan Ruderer, "Cruzada Contra El Comunismo: Tradición, Familia y Propiedad (TFP) En Chile y Argentina," *Sociedad y Religión* 22, no. 38 (December 2012): 0-0; "A 'Phenomenon' Called TFP," *The New York Times*, December 17, 1978, sec. Archives. Guzmán allegedly got his start in journalism at the Chilean TFP organ, *FIDUCIA*. For connections to the claimant to the Brazilian Imperial Throne: Bascom, James, "Environmental Psychosis - Interview with Prince Bertrand of Orleans-Braganza," *The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property*, October 21, 2013.

²⁸⁷ José Antônio Pedriali, *Guerreiros da virgem: a vida secreta na TFP*, 1a ed., Coleção Testemunho ; vol. 7 (São Paulo, SP: EMW Editores, 1985).

anecdotes, it takes a journalistic “exposé” approach to the organization rather than considering it as a part of an international landscape of right-wing Catholic organizations with powerful politics and connections. More useful from a scholarly perspective is Margaret Power’s chapter in *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right*, focusing on the TFP.²⁸⁸ Power notes the organization’s commitment to transnational organization and their influence on both national and international levels. TFP’s strength, she says, lay not in numbers but in connections, the perfect organization to illustrate the knot of international Catholic politics and theological arguments that are the focus of this dissertation.

Power concludes her chapter by noting the interesting connection between the TFP’s staunchly conservative politics and its modern methods and practices, pointing out that they “avail themselves of the most modern means of communication” and “embrace” modern military states. This chapter will show how the TFP, like its fellow right-wing and conservative Catholic organizations also availed itself of modern theology when and how it saw fit. Yet this is not a contradiction or hypocrisy – instead, the TFP must be understood as the culmination of long transitions and transformations on the Catholic right, and particularly among the right-wing laity, both on a theological and political level. Examining this dialectic is the goal of this chapter, revealing how the TFP used Vatican II to oppose precisely the kind of theology and future for the Church which the Council represented.

The source material for this chapter, much like those of the previous chapters, is a series of magazines and journals. In this case, however, the majority of them belong to or were published by branches of the TFP. *FIDUCIA* was the Chilean branch’s magazine, and *Covadonga* was Spain’s. The Argentine and Portuguese branches simply titled their magazines *TFP* or *TFP Informa*, while as noted above the Brazilian magazine’s name, *O Catolicismo*, was a holdover from an earlier stage of conservative Catholic organizing undertaken by PCO. As noted above, these are only some of the countries which had or have a branch of the TFP, and have been chosen both because they are some of the largest and most influential of the organization and because they are the countries which are the focus of the remainder of this dissertation. Together, along with references to the TFP and its leader from other conservative Catholic sources, the articles in these journals present a coherent and international worldview held by dedicated right-wing Catholic internationalists.

The TFP and its Leader

Understanding the TFP must begin with understanding the perspectives of its founder and long-lived leader, PCO. A prolific writer and public speaker, his influence didn’t stop at the Brazilian border or within the membership roll of the TFP—instead he was a central part of the international conservative and right-wing Catholic media world, giving interviews and publishing works throughout Latin America and Europe. His publications outside of Brazil and the TFP umbrella reveal the extent to which the TFP was embedded in the international Catholic right and his and his organization’s efforts to unite their nationalistic politics with an unyielding traditionalist Catholicism.

One example of this was the 290th issue of the Chilean journal *Política y Espíritu*, a journal of Catholic politics and social commentary. In this issue, from May 1965, the magazine’s chief editor, Jaime Castillo Velasco, penned a writeup of PCO’s works called “Las Ideas de Plinio

²⁸⁸ Martin Durham and Margaret Power, eds., *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right*, 1st ed, Palgrave Macmillan Transnational History Series (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Correa de Oliveira.”²⁸⁹ The article begins by noting PCO’s well publicized concerns over the “relation between the Church and the communist state,” which had resulted in the Church experiencing “intolerable pressure” in countries either behind the Iron Curtain or which were otherwise in the grip of Marxism.²⁹⁰ Specifically, PCO argued that the Church as a defender of the normal moral and social order must defend the right to hold private property. While the piece’s author disputed this position—*Política y Espíritu* took a third-positionist stance on anticommunism as opposed to the TFP’s more virulent opposition—he did consider PCO’s ideas important, widespread, and dangerous enough to warrant a thorough critique and response. Even so, the author conceded that while he disagreed with PCO’s politics he could find no “formal doctrinal errors” in the piece.²⁹¹

An unsurprisingly more flattering perspective on PCO’s ideas comes from the significantly more right-wing Argentine journal *Verbo*, which published PCO himself lamenting the state of the celebration of Christmas in December of 1965 in an article titled “The Glory of God in the Heavens, a Secondary Aspect of Christmas?”²⁹² His article began with a long quote from the Gospel of Luke and then went on to lament that he was hearing less and less about God and his sacrifices this Christmas season. He asked himself “why this silence” over the “Law” of God, the focus of the holiday? Lamenting that there seemed to be a dearth of “men of good character” in the modern day, he turned to admonish people to care less “for their fellow man” and more “for Him,” as in the Christian God. These citations, only a few of many, establish that PCO was a figure in Latin America, and indeed in the global right-wing.

PCO’s ideology is best understood in his own words, and his most important work, *Revolução e Contra-Revolução* (RCR) encapsulated them perfectly. Written in 1959 alongside the birth of both the Second Vatican Council and the TFP, RCR formed the foundation of the TFP’s ideology up to today. The book is divided into two parts, the first on the “Revolution,” that is the changes to Western civilization that began with the French revolution and reached their apogee in the twentieth century with the Russian Revolution.²⁹³ In contrast, the “Counter-Revolution” represented the traditional order, the “Christian Order” which the “Revolution” had dissolved or attacked. It was the obligation of “counter-revolutionaries” to advocate for and advance their Christian (that is, Catholic) ideology in light of the challenges it was facing throughout the world.²⁹⁴ The Counter-Revolution was “inevitable” and had a “supernatural life,” according to PCO, but that didn’t mean that it wasn’t dangerous or contested.²⁹⁵ Ultimately, though, the political call-to-arms in the book was not a call to politicize the Church itself—PCO was clear in saying that the Church was “something higher, greater” than Counter-Revolution, which was after all a “mere episode” in the milenia-long history of a transcendental institution like the Catholic Church.²⁹⁶ PCO’s work was one of defending something which he thought deserved to be unsullied by the vagaries of infighting and struggle which plagued the secular political world. Fighting these fights on behalf of the Church, and at times against elements within the Church, was the role PCO assigned the TFP.

²⁸⁹ “Director” is the Spanish title for Editor in Chief.

²⁹⁰ Castillo Velasco, Jaime “Las Ideas de Plinio Correa de Oliveira,” *Política y Espíritu* no. 290 (1965): 30-33.

²⁹¹ Castillo Velasco, Jaime “Las Ideas de Plinio Correa de Oliveira,” 32.

²⁹² PCO, “La gloria de dios en lo alto de los cielos,” *Verbo*, no. 57 (1965): 3-7.

²⁹³ PCO. *Revolução e contra-revolução*. Rio de Janeiro: Campos, 1959.

²⁹⁴ PCO. *Revolução e contra-revolução*, 44.

²⁹⁵ PCO. *Revolução e contra-revolução*, 45.

²⁹⁶ PCO. *Revolução e contra-revolução*, 55.

The influence of *RCR* continued long after its initial publication. An issue of *Resistencia*, a TFP journal from Spain associated with *Covadonga*, published in 1977 a long meditation on the twentieth anniversary of the publication of PCO's most famous and successful work on the occasion of an updated edition with a new, third section. The new edition of the book was otherwise much like previous ones, noting the primacy of the TFP and connecting the "three revolutions" attempting to overthrow Christianity, which *Resistencia*'s review article enumerated as "humanism, the Renaissance, and Protestantism" from the sixteenth century, "the French Revolution" and liberalism from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and "communism" beginning in the early twentieth century.²⁹⁷ All of these, in PCO's estimation, were seeking to infiltrate Christianity and overthrow it from within—much in keeping with the themes developed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

PCO's additions to the text in the later edition extended this theme to the contemporary worries of the TFP, namely the dissolution of the internal structure and function of the Church in the wake of its own "third revolution," the Second Vatican Council.²⁹⁸ PCO likened the changes brought by Vatican II to the "psychological warfare" that characterized some of the campaigns carried out by the US in Vietnam, a "displacement of universal revolutionary violence" into the heart of the Church. According to PCO "their goal" was "to reach the interior of our souls either hidden and step by step or to achieve victory, in some circumstances, through drastic and visible conquest by the most classic methods." His conflation of revolutionary violence and Church reform is rhetorically key to the text. PCO's and the TFP's goal was to connect Vatican II with communist violence both in their analysis and, vitally, in what they considered to be the necessary response.

Here, in this updated version of his book, PCO made his closest pass at a wholesale condemnation of the Church after Vatican II, making clear how dangerous he and his allies considered the Council to have been to Catholic tradition:

It pains me to say it. But the evidence of events has made clear that the Second Vatican Council was one of the greatest calamities, if not the worst, in the history of the Church. After it had penetrated the Church, in proportions inconceivable, the 'blood of the Saints' is being diluted day after day—and with the terrible force of the expansion of gasses and making a scandal in uncountable souls, the Mystic Body of Christ began the sinister process known as "self-destruction."

PCO's metaphor was one of infiltration, alteration, and loss, and argued that Vatican II was a worse episode for the Church than any other, including the Schism between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches or the Protestant Reformation. Here the Church was like a body inhaling a foreign substance that would remake it from within, and the Council was none other than the means by which this transformation was begun.

PCO argued that these changes, if brought to their conclusion, could mean "the fall of Western Civilization" in its entirety.²⁹⁹ When he originally wrote the book, in 1959 at the announcement of the Second Vatican Council, "the Church was a bastion against communism." He felt compelled to write the updated version in 1976 because that was no longer the case, as "innumerable clergy, including Bishops, act as accomplices if not collaborators with this Third

²⁹⁷ Editorial Board, "Covadonga," *Resistencia* (1977).

²⁹⁸ Editorial Board, "Covadonga."

²⁹⁹ Editorial Board, "Covadonga."

Revolution [communism].” Because of this the Catholic hierarchy in the Vatican could “cease to be the Holy Church.” As the TFP understood things, by the 1970s it was living in a postdiluvian, fallen world, and that fall was brought on by the Church itself.

PCO’s worries here were echoes of those expressed by theologians and commentators in the previous chapters, but with both a new urgency and a sense of defeat—he was lamenting changes which he argued had already taken place, infiltration which had already happened, reforms which had already been formalized and finalized within the Church and betrayed its character. As his quotes note, PCO was opposed not only to those members of the Church who actively worked with communists or the rest of the forces of the left but also those whom he considered to be only “accomplices,” those who unwittingly played into the hands of the communists through their inaction or ignorance. In his mind, this collaboration was little better than direct participation in the undermining of Catholic tradition.

In one interview between PCO and the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, PCO argued that while the TFP was inherently an apolitical organization it had found itself in an explicitly political situation regarding the dangers of creeping communism, the “grave problem of communist action in our country.”³⁰⁰ This motivated the TFP in its “more than fifteen years of public activity... to alert the nation to the often ignored communist danger.” PCO argued that it was the obligation of good Catholics and good Brazilians to protect the integrity of both their Church and their nation. He also took the opportunity to argue against the idea that the TFP was an “extreme right-wing” organization, unless the interviewer was willing to concede that that would mean that the “vast majority of Brazilians, who want exactly what we want, are of the extreme right as well,” in that they opposed communism and supported the authentic Church.

The “political opening” of the Second Vatican Council had allowed communists and the left in general to infiltrate national and religious spaces in Brazil and the world as a whole. It needed to be closed with what PCO argued was common sense—with the reestablishment and promotion of Catholic traditions, which were, according to him, beloved by all Brazilians and Catholics alike. This was the TFP’s mission, to provide an ideological home for those left behind by liberalizing changes to Church and nation. PCO intended the TFP to be a bulwark against these changes. This chapter now turns to what the TFP did to fulfill this goal.

A Traditional Catholic Politics

The 1970s and 1980s were a time of activity and growth by the TFP. In response to the Second Vatican Council’s changes to Catholic structure and function, the TFP advocated for a return to tradition. The TFP’s social and theological politics were intransigently conservative on every imaginable issue, but their particular point of contention was rapprochement with the left. This was the principal complaint PCO had with the Second Vatican Council, that it failed to take a sufficiently political stance with regards to communism. Again, in his updated version of *RCR* he argued that his attempt at “apoliticism” meant that the Church was silent not only on the most important political question of the day but on the most important religious one as well.³⁰¹ To make his point PCO made a pun, arguing that in trying to be “pastoral rather than dogmatic” the Church had succeeded only at “apoliticism and a-pastoralism [sic],” guiding no one anywhere. This was the crime of the hierarchy during and after the Council, failing or declining to provide the guidance

³⁰⁰ Pamphlet, “Presidente da TFP alerta contra tática comunista,” *Sociedade Brasileira da Defesa da Tradição, Família e Propriedade* (1978).

³⁰¹ PCO, *Revolução e Contra-Revolução*.

sorely needed by the Catholic faithful in the face of this existential threat to their beliefs and institutions.

Against such changes PCO and the rest of the TFP advocated for a major political turn on the part of Catholics the world over. This was his way of justifying and advocating for the politicizing and propagandizing done by the TFP after the Council, especially its most famous and successful method of organizing, the mass letter writing campaign. PCO lauded the recent efforts which had resulted in the delivery of “two million signatures” from South American Catholics delivered to Pope Paul VI regarding their concerns about the changes occurring in their Church in the wake of the Council.³⁰² This turn to the methods of political organizing in the name of tradition, hierarchy, and even medieval thought was justified as the only possible response to the kind of modern changes brought to the Church as a result of the Council – here the laity, the TFP, must take the Church in their own hands if they were to defend it from the whims of progressive or leftist clergy.

The TFP responded to each transition in the Church with worry, and to some with condemnation. The journal of the Brazilian TFP, *O Catolicismo*, was swift in expressing its concern over the new forms which the Mass and the catechism would take following the Second Vatican Council. Their first story in their 1971 edition focused on the “repercussions” of the “new mass” which were “still unknown.”³⁰³ The Church was undergoing a “grave process” of reorganization which could result in its end, a “religious crisis” which would potentially result in the collapse of Catholic power not just in Brazil but in the rest of Latin America or even the world. The article noted that this concern wasn’t limited to Brazil but instead was felt throughout the Catholic world, citing theologians and lay leaders from Idaho to Berlin with concern over how the new Mass might remake the Church as a “Protestant” one—the subject of the first chapter of this dissertation.³⁰⁴ Vitally, though, the article concluded not with a condemnation of the Mass or of the changes brought by Vatican II as expressed by Lefebvre, noted in chapter three. Instead, the article presented the debate as one which Brazilians should join on their own, a conversation they might participate in together with the clergy, a series of “important debates,” even a “question” of the “new liturgy of the Mass.”³⁰⁵

Here was the conservative Catholic journal of a major international lay organization which spent most of its pages lauding the traditional ways of organizing the Church, which argued for priestly authority, which was skeptical of the turn to the laity, accepting the premise of Vatican II and its transition to a more democratically organized Church by enjoining its members to engage themselves in the contest for liturgical power. This article represented a dialectical engagement with the changes brought by Vatican II—while the TFP would not accept the liberalizing, modernizing thrust of the Council and would instead pine for the ways of centuries past, it would nevertheless use the changes brought by the Council to advocate for tradition. It is no contradiction that a conservative lay organization had power in the Catholic world, but the fact that one which was so right-wing that it longed for the Church’s medieval, even theocratic past, used the empowerment of the very reforms it criticized, indicates the consequences of Vatican II on conservative and right-wing Catholic thought. This trend would ultimately cause the TFP, by its very expansiveness and fulfillment of its mission, to run afoul of the hierarchy it claimed to defend.

³⁰² PCO, *Revolução e Contra-Revolução*.

³⁰³ Gregorio Vivano Lopes, “Sobre a nova missa,” *Catolicismo* no. 242 (1971): 4-7.

³⁰⁴ Gregorio Vivano Lopes, “Sobre a nova missa,” 5.

³⁰⁵ Gregorio Vivano Lopes, “Sobre a nova missa,” 8.

The International Catholic Right

The TFP's goal was to embody the international Catholic right as a lay, politically active force. As such they took every opportunity granted to them to boast of their internationalist bona fides. In the April 1984 edition of their newsletter, the Portuguese branch of the TFP published the text of a letter which the President of the US's TFP had received from then President Ronald Reagan. The letter itself reads as boilerplate—the President congratulates the TFP for its “support” given to Reagan “on many occasions” and asks them to remain allies of all “patriotic Americans” in the continuing fight against the nation's enemies.³⁰⁶ In many ways this correspondence is unremarkable, just a politician sending a letter to his constituents thanking them for their efforts. But the republication of the letter far away from its original US context is telling, revealing how pleased the Portuguese TFP was to find that it had allies not just in its fellow TFP branches but across the right-wing political spectrum and around the world.

The TFP was fundamentally different from most of the other entities examined in this dissertation—rather than being an academic journal or the publication of a particular Catholic organization in a national or local context, it was an international organization with an international vision. This was transparent in every issue of a magazine they published, all of which regularly featured the plights of Catholics and anticommunists elsewhere. Their international nature was another manifestation of what they understood as their post-conciliar mission. If the Church wasn't going to defend itself on a global scale, they themselves would have to do it by promoting conservative Catholic values and by fighting communism.

This international sentiment was occasionally celebratory rather than tragic—for example, congratulating the establishment of a TFP branch in Paris, spearheaded by the North and South American offices—but expressions of concern over changes in the Church or the creeping power of communism were far more common.³⁰⁷ These worries about the changes brought to the Church spanned the whole world. *Covadonga*, the TFP journal in Spain, lamented Cuban priests working with Castro, Vietnamese Catholics cooperating with Ho Chi Minh, and the publication of a new Spanish translation of the Bible all in one single issue.³⁰⁸

Taiwan was another reference point for anticommunist resistance. *Covadonga* dedicated much of its front page in its April 1979 issue to the Taiwanese military and its insistence that it “will not capitulate” to Communist mainland China.³⁰⁹ They extensively quoted the President of Taiwan, Chiang Ching-kuo, who decried then US President Carter's visit to mainland China, saying that “In the end, we will win, because we have the spirit of sacrifice...” Here these Spanish Catholics, living in the first few years of Republican administration after the end of the Nationalist, Franquista government in 1977, lauded an anticommunist stance taken by political actors on the other side of the world both out of solidarity and out of a self-interested concern over the possibility of a leftist takeover in their own country. Further in the issue they lamented that mainland China had taken this opportunity to crack down on the Catholic Church, which had by their count “only fifteen bishops” in the whole of the country, “six of which are in prison” with the remaining nine “have been absolutely prohibited from worshipping.” All other “prelates, priests, and adherents have been murdered, imprisoned, or deported.” Anxiety about the political victory of the left combined

³⁰⁶ Ronald Reagan, “Letter from President Reagan,” *TFP Lusa Informa*, no. 6 (1984): 3.

³⁰⁷ Editorial Board, “Difusão dos ideais da tradição, família e propriedade na África,” *TFP Argentina*, no. 22 (1984): 1-2.

³⁰⁸ Editorial Board, “Subversión marxista en la iglesia,” *Covadonga*, no. 2 (1977).

³⁰⁹ Editorial Board, *Covadonga*, no. 20 (1979).

with their worries about the transformation of the Church to become one nightmare of their future oppression, corruption, or eradication.

This sentiment was further elaborated in edition after edition lamenting the situation in Eastern Europe—the Argentine TFP dedicated numerous magazines to the plight of Catholics and Christians in general behind the Iron Curtain, often specifically calling out the hierarchy for its failure to protect believers who found themselves in the hands of the officially atheist Soviet Union. In a piece titled “Appeal to Paul VI,” the Argentine TFP decried the Church’s ignoring the situation in the Soviet Union, particularly Lithuania, the most Catholic of the SSR’s.³¹⁰ There, they claimed, the “priests and the believers” were cooperating with the Communists to “overthrow the Church from within.” Specifically, the Lithuanian clergy was working with the Soviets for the elimination of their own ranks by stopping the development of new candidates for the clergy by agreeing to allow the government to appoint some of the new bishops in the country, which the TFP argued would gradually install “atheism” in the country’s clergy. Worse, they accused the USSR of granting “parochial committees” more power than the bishops themselves—combining the fear over the “Protestantization” of the Church with fears of state and communist control as well as the fear of the laity in general.

By the late 1970s concern over what could happen as a result of Catholic rapprochement with the left was no longer a warning but a manifest danger in the eyes of the TFP and its fellow conservative and right-wing Catholics. The editors of *Resistencia*, like the other branches of the TFP, looked abroad to their neighbors in Portugal and France as well as their spiritual and cultural neighbors in Latin America, and to leftist political candidates from Mitterand to Allende, and saw that socialists were successful in organizing and winning in predominantly Catholic countries the world over.³¹¹ Acción Católica was now in bed with the socialists, having admitted them in 1974, and unlike in the 1930s, when the Catholic Church in Spain united with fascists and the military to stop the left, the Church was now working with the left in order to promote its agenda.³¹²

But these moments of solidarity weren’t only extended to Catholics outside of Latin America. Another notable moment of solidarity demonstrated by TFP organs included a Chilean priest who was “attacked” by “Radio Moscu” and “Radio Vaticano” both, only to find himself defended by “a thousand Spanish priests” as he spoke against engagement with the left and in favor of tradition.³¹³ This story is telling both because it was one of international attention and cooperation paid by Catholics in Europe to those in Latin America, but also because it clearly identifies the twin enemies of Catholic traditionalism as being the international left, represented by Moscow, and the international Catholic progressives, represented by the Vatican itself. United, these enemies of the Catholic right-wing could only be defeated with cooperation and action that transcended national borders.

The first edition of *Covadonga* after joining the TFP, in September 1977, criticized the “Ostpolitik” of the Vatican—a reference to Western Germany’s conciliatory political stance toward East Germany, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union—in its headline, arguing that Pope Paul VI was extensively and charitably quoted by communist and other leftist sources.³¹⁴ The editors argued that this praise was earned, “though it pains us to say it, for the sympathy, if not complicity, of priests and laity of the so-called Catholic left shown to the Soviets.” Again, the TFP

³¹⁰ Editorial Board, “Clamor a Paulo VI,” *TFP Argentina* no. 24 (1975): 1-4.

³¹¹ Editorial Board, “Clamor a Paulo VI.”

³¹² Editorial Board, “Clamor a Paulo VI.”

³¹³ Editorial Board, “Noticias de la TFP’s,” *Resistencia* (1977).

³¹⁴ PCO, “La ‘Ostpolitik’ Vaticana Causa Perplejidad,” *Covadonga Informa*, no. 1 (1977).

was not afraid to demonstrate its criticism of not just the left, and not just left laity, but of the clerical left. While they stopped just short of applying this same critical lens on the pope himself, they included him in their observations about the failures.

Covadonga also published in September 1977 a telex between PCO and Paul VI regarding the infiltration of the Church by the left. In this letter PCO expressed his “perplexedness” at the “ostpolitik” of the Vatican, specifically regarding its approach to the connection between leftist groups in the developing world.³¹⁵ PCO implied that this growing connection between the Catholic Church’s message and that of Communists has even reached the Vatican itself. He noted that the Italian communist journal *L’Unita* quoted the Pope in favorable terms, and warned the pope that if he was saying something that had gotten positive attention from the communists that must mean that something was very wrong. PCO expressed his concern that so many good Catholics, including priests, were falling into “the hands of the Soviets.”

Centering the role of the clergy in the rise of the left in Latin America and Spain is a prime example of the TFP’s inability and unwillingness to separate religion and politics. For them there could be no other explanation for the rise of leftist sentiment in their deeply Catholic country than that the clergy was responsible, either by insufficiently promoting tradition or by failing their flock more gravely and falling into leftist beliefs. These “ecclesiastics... circulate the myth of detente in the Vatican Opostolic,” and in so doing they penetrated the Church with their particular understanding of the relationship between religion and politics.³¹⁶ The “ostpolitik” of the Vatican was regularly cited as a cause for both alarm and opposition on the part of “youth” throughout the Catholic world, but particularly in “the Americas,” where they rose up in the name of the ideology the “Catholic leader, PCO.”³¹⁷

The TFP was intensely proud of its international nature. The eleventh issue of *TFP Lusa informa*, the TFP organ of Portugal, ran a cover story on the event of the third major conference of “Correspondents and Sympathizers [sic]” of the TFP, held in 1984 in São Paulo.³¹⁸ The conference featured attendees from Iberia, Latin America, the US, as well as South Africa, the Philippines and Australia, with over “two thousand” attendees. This kind of international attendance and reach was always at the forefront of the TFP’s discussions of its meetings, readings, and other campaigns.

The keynote of the conference was, of course, delivered by the president of the organization, PCO, whose address was regularly “interrupted by thunderous applause.” Focusing on the rise of communism as a threat to the world order, the conference sought to resolve what the TFP considered to be a paradox—while the “world finds itself in an accelerated process of revolutionary decline,” nevertheless the TFP itself had received “growing reception” across the globe. According to PCO’s keynote address, this was because the people of the world were turning to the TFP and the traditionalist ideas which it represented in the wake of the countless disasters and revolutions which had plagued the world since “the happy times of the Middle Ages.”³¹⁹ In the wake of these disasters, people would return to the “house of the father”—that is the traditionalist Catholic movement represented by the TFP—in order to recoup the “souls of western man.”

³¹⁵ PCO, “La ‘Ostpolitik’ Vaticana Causa Perplejidad.” The “telex” was a form of telecommunication printout exchange which preceded the fax machine.

³¹⁶ PCO, “Ostpolitik Vaticana,” *Resistencia* (1976).

³¹⁷ PCO, “Ostpolitik Vaticana.”

³¹⁸ Editorial Board, “III Encontro de Correspondentes da TFP,” *TFP lusa informa*, no. 11 (1984): 1-3.

³¹⁹ Editorial Board, “III Encontro de Correspondentes da TFP,” 2.

This fight against the forces of revolution and the left was “the cause of the Church.” Here, as ever, the TFP didn’t just mix their religion with their politics or use religion to justify a political stance. Instead their political stance *was* a religious one, their opposition to the Soviet Union or to Allende’s Chile or to the Mitterand government in France stemming from the same ideological source as their adherence to the examples of the medieval Catholic patriarchs. Anticommunism was merely the most recent of these religious commitments requiring an engagement in the contemporary political world.

Branches of the TFP were extremely concerned with what they perceived to be the creeping power of socialism and its influence on the Church not just in their own countries but in their neighbors. The Argentine branch of the TFP published a long piece celebrating the coup ending the Allende government in 1973, saying that the “fall of Allende, atheist, Marxist, and Mason, was met with joy by true Catholics the world round.”³²⁰ The same issue boasted of the publication of PCO’s *Revolution and Counter Revolution* in English in the United States, and a multi-page section detailing the political perspective of Bruno Genta, an Argentine fascist ideologue from the 1940s who was deeply connected to the contemporary right-wing Catholic organization Tacuara, the focus of chapter four. A 1975 edition of the same journal in Argentina focused on the Cristero Revolt of Mexico, referred to as “the grand Cristero crusade” that pitted “two Mexicos against one another,” clearly a metaphor for the situation which the Argentine TFP considered itself to be in.³²¹ This focus on the international nature of the Catholic anticommunist movement was a key feature of TFP publications.

The same edition devoted two pages to the “betrayed, forgotten” victim of the West’s failure to confront communism: Vietnam. Laying the blame at the foot of the United States and other great powers, the Argentine TFP argued that the people of Vietnam had been counting on international aid to save them from the Communist forces and that they were abandoned—their earnest consternation and solidarity notwithstanding, the clear subtext was one of staunch anticommunists in Latin America deeply concerned that their own countries would be overrun by the left and that they would also be abandoned by the US.³²²

The civilizational mission of the TFP was not merely rhetorical nor confined to the borders of any one country or region, nor was it limited by the geographic boundaries of existing Catholic majorities or minorities. Rather, the members of the TFP considered it to be their obligation to press forward Catholic civilization in the wake of what they understood as its defeat, both from Vatican II and its reforms as well as secular political transitions such as the end of the Oliveira dictatorship in Portugal, or the Franco regime in Spain. This was equally true of decolonization, evidenced by the attention which *TFP Lusa informa* paid to the situation in Portugal’s former African colonies.

The front-page story of that journal in May of 1984 chronicled the experiences of a group of youth affiliated with the TFP in a trip to south Africa, where they distributed pamphlets, organized potential members, and had a photo-op in which they flew the TFP’s banner at the Cape of Good Hope.³²³ This devotional missionary trip paid off, as the TFP youth were able to secure

³²⁰ Editorial Board, “La autodemolición de la iglesia, factor de la demolición de Chile,” *TFP Argentina*, no. 18 (1973): 2-11. More on the TFP and Allende in the following section.

³²¹ “La cruzada cristera en mejico,” *Argentine TFP*, no. 27 (1975): 7-11.

³²² For more on how Argentina and other Latin American countries handed the prospect of being “abandoned” by the US in the physical struggle against communism, see Ariel Armony’s *Argentina, the United States, and the Anti-Communist Crusade in Central America*.

³²³ Editorial Board, “Difusão dos ideais da tradição, família e propriedade na África,” *TFP Argentina*, no. 22 (1984): 1-2

“letters of membership” from 28 countries on the continent. That they were able to secure such a victory in Africa was a particular point of pride for the organization, considering, in their words, “how many African countries were subjugated by communist regimes.”³²⁴

The remainder of the article consisted of selections from letters purporting to have been written by enthusiastic recipients of the TFP’s ideas during this African excursion, including the majority of South, West, and East African regions as well as the entire Mediterranean coast of the continent. Many of the letters of support for the TFP were specifically in opposition to the “socialist” influence of Mitterrand’s France.³²⁵ Two messages were singled out for specific commentary by the TFP because they were written in Portugal’s recently lost colonial possessions of Angola and Mozambique. These lamented the “shameful delivery” of those countries into the hands of “Russia”—that is, their takeover by communist anti-colonialist forces—and the subsequent decline of the religious nature of their society. This particular letter writer specified that they were worried about the loss of the influence of the “Lady of Fatima.” Multiple other letter writers said that they felt “guilt” for having had the opportunity to listen to the TFP and its founder, PCO, but failing to do so and allowing their countries and societies to fall to the atheist communists. These authors looked back on the previous decades, with the changes to the Church coinciding with decolonization to represent the end of the old, Eurocentric order, and found their present to be at once more dangerous due to the influence of communism and less holy due to the losses suffered by the Church.

Other letter writers were more positive, or at least proactive. One from South Africa asked to join the TFP (there was, and indeed still is, a TFP branch in South Africa) “to aid you in all manners I can, because I hate communism.” Another man, a “Catholic South African judge, a man of culture and fine comportment,” said that he would dedicate his time to fighting communism in the name of the TFP. Another South African couple wrote of their long trajectory, converting first to Anglicanism and then finally Catholicism due to the influence of the TFP and the message of Fatima, saying that they had “waited thirty years for something like this.”³²⁶

These letters weren’t just from the Catholic faithful but from adherents to a particular kind of Catholicism, at once conservative and international, orthodox and opposed to what it understood as the progressive influence of the Vatican, anticommunist, and committed to the inherent mixing of religious and political life. This mission to Africa and the international nature of its response belied the commitment of TFP to precisely this kind of religious and political practice—unsatisfied with advocating for Catholicism and religious primacy in politics only in their own countries, they felt an obligation to advance their cause globally. For the TFP, this meant spreading from Brazil to Europe, and then from European nations to the countries they had long standing influence over, such as Portugal’s relationship with southeast and southwest Africa.

Solidarity and Gloating: The TFP After the Fall of Allende

The most important site of Catholic anticommunist solidarity for most branches of the TFP, and especially those in Latin America, was Allende and then Pinochet’s Chile. Like most conservative, traditionalist Catholics they were incensed by Allende’s election and what they perceived to be the Church’s cooperation with his government. But they didn’t stop there—they

³²⁴ Editorial Board, “Difusão dos ideais da tradição, família e propriedade na África.”

³²⁵ Editorial Board, “Difusão dos ideais da tradição, família e propriedade na África.”

³²⁶ Editorial Board, “Difusão dos ideais da tradição, família e propriedade na África.”

engaged in international political activity with the goal of stopping the spread of socialism from Chile to the rest of Latin America and to stop the Allende government in Chile.

The 271st edition of the Brazilian TFP journal recorded a protest against the archbishop of Santiago and Cardinal Silvio Henríquez, often accused of being an ally of Allende, on the occasion of his visit to Rio de Janeiro for a meeting of bishops held in that city.³²⁷ Their protest wasn't about the presence of the clergyman in their country but about his contact and connection with the Chilean left and the socialist movement internationally. On this occasion the TFP criticized the “local Church,” the Chilean hierarchy, rather than the Catholic Church as a whole regarding its handling of the election of a socialist as the President of their country. They accused Henríquez of politicizing the Church in precisely the wrong way, working with Allende and the socialists when they should be doing precisely the opposite. These complaints over collaboration with the Allende government were persistent across TFP branches and resembled (or were documented in) the reactions to Catholic engagement with communists and other leftists in chapter three of this dissertation. Rather than retread this ground, this section looks ahead to the TFP’s coverage of the fall of Allende and the rise of the Pinochet government.

Months after the fall of the Allende government in the military coup that would lead to the Pinochet dictatorship, the Chilean TFP published a special post-mortem edition detailing what they considered to be the crimes of the Allende regime, from agrarian reform to hunger to cooperation with “totalitarian” governments in Cuba and the USSR to the nationalization of commerce to the program of “totalitarian Marxist education.”³²⁸ Much of the article repeated common perspectives on Allende, calling his “via Chilena” nothing more than “Communism in new clothes”—the implication being that the complexities of the Unidad Popular coalition which had brought Allende to power were nothing but a show and that the reality was that he was simply a Marxist.³²⁹ The fact that Chile had not fallen for this ruse was attributed to the Catholicity of the Chilean population, which remained at “80%” despite the efforts of “progressive priests” during the Frei and Allende regime. Again drawing a line between Frei and Allende, *FIDUCIA* started the saga of the Allende government with the agrarian reform begun under Frei, arguing that it naturally produced “scarcity and misery” on behalf of the Chilean people. The same, they said, was true for industrial production and average consumers.

Never missing an opportunity for self-aggrandizing, the TFP cited and commended its own activity during the Allende regime, which primarily consisted of circulating petitions and other materials among Catholics, particularly the clergy. Getting signatures from Chilean priests in opposition to “progressive” Christianity was, for them, an inherent part of their political activity against the Allende government, as for them the government of the Socialists wasn’t merely a secular, political problem but primarily a religious one. The rear side of the special issue was a rundown of the international activity of various branches of the TFP and what they had done for “for Chile” between 1970 and 1973, “when the socialist mythomaniacs strangled the country,” the TFP “fought for Chile in both Americas and in Europe.”³³⁰ The page listed the activities of TFP branches, ranging from the convening of “solemn masses asking that Chile not fall under communist dominion” in Brazil to a “caravan of the Argentine TFP” distributing literature to

³²⁷ Editorial Board, “Protesto da TFP pela visita do cardeal favorável a Allende,” *O Catolicismo* no. 271 (1973): 8.

³²⁸ Editorial Board, “Marx con su socialismo,” *Fiducia* no. 36 (1974): 1-31.

³²⁹ The “via chilena” was the name for Allende’s intention to develop a Socialist country in Latin America through electoral success rather than a violent revolution. See Allende Gossens, Salvador. *La vía chilena hacia el socialismo*.

³³⁰ Editorial Board, “Marx con su socialismo.”

“sending a message to Paul VI” from members of the Chilean TFP who were in exile. Each country listed also had its own publication and sale of PCO’s book on Frei.

The issue concluded with the TFP smugly noting the end of the Allende government came with “bloodshed” which they laid at the feet of Allende and his supporters rather than those who actually perpetrated the violence. As conservative order was restored with Allende’s assassination and the solidification of what would become the Pinochet regime, the TFP commended itself as one of the international organizations that had seen the course the Allende government would take long in advance, from the outset of Frei’s presidency and through the military coup. Their celebration and postmortem concluded by noting the other branches of the TFP which also published their article, including Argentina, the US, and France, as well as other international outlets.

The Chilean TFP wasn’t boasting idly, either—their situation was indeed the focus of many of the other branches of the organization. The TFP of the United States’s publication, *Crusade for a Christian Civilization*, printed a lengthy article alongside its Chilean counterpart celebrating the end of the regime and the international efforts that stopped it before reprinting the Chilean TFP’s article quoted above.³³¹ Here the TFP wrote that members of the TFP’s of Brazil and Argentina met with their Chilean counterparts in Santiago shortly after the coup to join onlookers curious about the destruction, ready to plant the narrative that the military’s violence was the fault of the socialist government that had come before.

³³¹ TFP Editorial Board, “The Autodemolition of the Church: Chief Factor in the Demolition of Chile,” *Crusade for a Christian Civilization*, (1974): 54-80.



International TFP delegation observes the destruction of La Moneda, the Chilean Presidential Palace, after the 1973 coup. *Crusade for a Christian Civilization*, 1974, pg 18

The Brazilian TFP also celebrated the fall of Allende from power in September 1973, in the 273rd edition of their newsletter. Noting that they weren't alone—the Argentine TFP's organ issued a similar celebration—they honored the Chilean TFP for their long fight against Allende and his predecessor, Eduardo Frei. PCO himself penned the letter of congratulations, joyful that the “Magnificat,” the Cantic of Mary, had returned to Chile with the fall of Allende at the hands of the “soldiers” who had liberated the country.³³² While PCO noted that the TFP “deplored” the violence necessary in order to make this transition, he characteristically blamed this on the socialists who had, in his understanding, set up the “true catastrophe” that had made the violence necessary. Unfortunately, this transition would not be able to touch the “leftist Clergy [sic], which had delivered the country to Allende” and who “sang together, in the Cathedral of Santiago, with rabbis, protestant priests, communists, and terrorists.” Only a struggle within the Church would be able to solve this “ecumenical” problem. Here again the TFP connected their anticommunism with their opposition to internal changes in the Church that led it toward progressivism.

PCO concluded his letter by optimistically claiming that by “expelling” communism from Chile the military had also denied this territory in the entirety of South America—and “as a friend of Chile,” he said, “this makes me happy.” And thus, he sang to himself the Magnificat in honor of Mary and Catholic tradition, noting that “Henríquez will certainly not be singing it.” This explicitly political attack on an archbishop and cardinal, issued by the leader of an international

³³² PCO, “Magnificat,” *O Catolicismo*, no. 273 (1973): 3.

lay Catholic organization, was the culmination of decades of right-wing political development in the Church, uniting the organization's internationalism and its opposition to liberalism within the Church.

Resistencia published in 1976 an extensive article on the Chilean experience with the Popular Unity government of Allende through the lens of the TFP sponsored *The Church of Silence in Chile*. The article began by listing several dozen Chilean priests who spoke in praise of the book, endorsing its anticommunist and pro-traditionalist Catholic message. The article noted that while in the past, “in the years ‘36-’39... we see a clergy which, in their great majority, closed ranks in favor with the Church and with the beloved traditions of our country” in their present “we find a divided Catholic citadel.”³³³ Importantly, though they weren’t merely focusing on the plight of the Spanish Church, which had so recently lost the powerful patronage of the Franquista state which had just collapsed—rather, they were talking about the plight of their fellow Catholics in Chile, where “Bishops [sic] and priests bring Marxism to power.” The piece’s authors hoped to “avoid an analogous tragedy in Spain.” Here these Spanish Catholics expressed both solidarity and worry about their brothers in a far-off hemisphere, manifesting the international nature of their faith, the TFP, and the Church itself.

The same issue of *Resistencia* included a long analysis of *The Church of Silence in Chile*, focusing this time on “analogies to the situation in Spain.”³³⁴ This began with a “condemnation” of Spain’s branch of Acción Católica, which the journal accused of unfairly ignoring the warning provided by the text of the possibility to “slide” into communism as they argue the Cardenal of Chile, Silvio Henríquez, already had. Arguing that “the majority of the population in the Western world is undeniably anticommunist” and that those who are most susceptible to the message of the left are merely “useful idiots” for its message, the article doubles down on claims that communist and other leftist beliefs can only be understood as an intentional manipulation of the population by “leftist priests.”

These internationalist appeals were both an expression of the TFP’s nature as an international organization and an outgrowth of their worldview, which held up the Church as a transcendental and holy force which had, in their analysis, been recently sullied by human error and assault. Their defense of the Church from leftist priests of whatever rank, from the Curia, and even at times from the Pope himself, complete the image of an organization which embodied the lay-oriented post-Conciliar world in the name of restoring the old order.

The TFP, a Radical Outsider

According to the TFP, the organization and its allies were at war with the mainstream Church due to the cumulative changes brought by both Vatican II and the rise of communism both in Latin America and in Europe. Often the nature of this conflict was rhetorical, with TFP organs criticizing their national hierarchies or the Vatican in light of ideological or theological differences. These criticisms are highlighted throughout this chapter. Sometimes, however, these disagreements became very real, and even put the TFP in direct conflict with other Catholics.

One such occasion came in 1968, when the archdiocese of Buenos Aires “deauthorized” that country’s branch of the TFP.³³⁵ This came in the wake of the TFP’s recent campaign of letter writing and pamphleting in that country, which ran afoul of the diocese’s policies for lay Catholic

³³³ Editorial Board, “Letras sobre *La iglesia del silencio en chile*,” *Resistência* (1976).

³³⁴ Editorial Board, “Letras sobre *La iglesia del silencio en chile*.”

³³⁵ Editorial Board, “Fin de una aventura,” *Criterio* no. 1558 (Oct 24 1968): 806.

organizations. Immediately thereafter the bishop of Rioja concurred, saying that “the actions of that group [the TFP] do not coincide with the wellbeing of the diocesan Church.” Other lay branches of the Catholic world also followed suit with their condemnation of the TFP, with the “senior deacon” of the law faculty of the Apostolic Catholic University of Buenos Aires declaring that the TFP had “invaded the space of the faculty and promoted disorder” there. The editorial board of *Criterio*, a leading Argentine theology journal which by the late 1960s had dropped its fascist leanings to become a much more mainstream Catholic magazine, agreed with these decisions saying that the TFP was facing comeuppance for its conduct regarding its letter writing campaign, which they accused of being nothing more than the TFP “duping” their fellow Catholics.

Criterio went on to cast doubt over the legitimacy of the letter writing campaign in its entirety, consisting as it did of the circulation and petitioning for signatures on a letter condemning the “infiltration of the Church” by communist agents. To *Criterio* this letter, meant to be sent to the “Summa Pontifica” and signed primarily out of ignorance rather than interest, represented less agreement with the agenda of the TFP and more “the propensity of people to sign what is put in front of them without reading or examining it.”³³⁶ Further doubt was cast by suggesting that some of these signatures, which purported to be from bishops and priests, were forged or similarly didn’t represent agreement with the TFP’s claims of communist infiltration but rather a more general interest in the kind of rhetoric they were spouting about the authentic Church, or anticommunism in general. In this instance the TFP’s radical position made it an outsider on the Catholic right-wing, with an establishment journal in Argentina—arguably the Latin American country with the most consistently conservative hierarchy—noting its condemnation by the local Church. Here the TFP was formally censured by the very Church they sought to protect.

As an international organization opposing the rise of communism, the TFP was far from alone. It joined many other similar groups, most of them more explicitly political than Catholic, in their struggles. One such organization was the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), which persists to the present as the World League for Freedom and Democracy.³³⁷ The WACL began as a network of anticommunist forces in Asia opposing the rise of the Chinese Communist party and its victory over the Kuomintang in the Chinese Civil War, but soon grew to a larger organization with a global scope, eventually including not just Asian but European, African, and Latin American members (as well as developing connections with the New Right in the United States).

However, the TFP had a complex relationship with the WACL, as evidenced by a letter included in the Archivo del Terror in Asunción, Paraguay. This letter, written by the leader of the WACL, Ku Cheng-Kang, a prominent Chinese nationalist and anticommunist in exile in Taiwan, was directed to Javier Aguilar, a Mexican national and the leader of the youth wing of the WACL. This letter was a push by Ku for the inclusion of the TFP in the WACL, to end its exclusion from the organization, which by the letter’s writing in 1974 was longstanding.

Ku wrote the letter specifically in response to a resolution adopted by the 5th World Youth Ant-Communist League, the youth wing of the WACL, “condemning the TFP.”³³⁸ Ku argued that this was not in keeping with the mission of the WACL, which was to unite “all the anti-Communist organizations” of the world, and represented political infighting, particularly in Latin America. He

³³⁶ Editorial Board, “Fin de una aventura.”

³³⁷ Anderson, Scott, and Jon Lee. Anderson. *Inside the League : the Shocking Expose of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League*. 1st ed. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1986.

³³⁸ Ku Cheng-kang, “WACL letter to Aguilar July 1, 1974,” Archivo del Terror, Asunción Paraguay no. 00108F 1854.

therefore requested that “the WYACL resolution opposing TFP [would] not be officially entered into permanent record,” adding that he was “making this suggestion with the interest of all those concerned at heart.” These pleas fell on deaf ears, however, and the TFP remained excluded from the WACL.

This infighting among conservative Catholic organizations shows the political nature of the TFP’s struggles for power in the lay Catholic universe. This was an organization that was willing to do whatever it took to defend what it understood as Catholic tradition, even if that meant running afoul not just of other lay Catholics but of the hierarchy itself. Here, again, the TFP showed itself to have made of the supposedly apolitical, traditional Catholicism it espoused an intensely political program for international advocacy and expansion. As an organization, both nationally and internationally, the TFP’s goal was to preserve and protect what they considered to be the heart of Catholic tradition at all possible cost.

From the outside one might say that the TFP bridged the worlds of religion and politics and thought internationally rather than nationally, but the truth is more complex. One might also call them a politicized lay organization that used its power to put pressure on the clergy, but again the truth is something more complicated. Neither a political Catholic organization nor a Catholic political organization, the TFP would have considered all such categorization to be baseless. For the TFP, to be Catholic was to be political, to be political was to be Catholic, to be Catholic was to think and act beyond national borders. As lay Catholics, the TFP used the theological changes brought by the Second Vatican Council—the very same changes which brought about the fears of “Protestantization” raised by them and their allies examined in chapter one and the cries of priestly subversion in chapter three—in order to organize and advocate for a Church and a politics that was to their traditionalist liking.

The tension between their modern lay behavior and their right-wing theology and politics isn’t contradictory but dialectical. They cannot be modern Catholics outside of the political world, nor can they be secular citizens who practice their religion in private. Instead, the TFP’s Catholicity and politics form a unity, transforming the narrative of Cold War politics and anticommunism into one of a Catholic Crusade *and* advocacy against Catholic priests into the fight against the encroachment of the left. Here is the culmination of the transitions brought to the Church by the Council, not in the left or Liberation Theology but in these changes being taken up by their opponents.

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined conservative Catholic Latin American reactions to the Second Vatican Council, reactions from theological and cultural journals, from the state police and from fascist thugs, from bishops and from dissident lay organizations. Seen separately they are curiosities, but together they represent a coherent worldview of conservative and right-wing Catholicism that emerged in response to the Second Vatican Council, developing a modern politics of lay Catholic engagement with the world in the name of the maintenance or restoration of lost tradition. Gathering and analyzing these sources together achieved one of the principal goals of this thesis, adding these discourses to historians' understanding of the mid-twentieth century and to Latin American history. Outlining this conservative and right-wing worldview and the actors who created and promoted it has shown how Vatican II transformed Catholic politics and practice on the right in Latin America and throughout the world.

These influences have continued, of course, as the Catholic intellectual and political world surveyed in this dissertation did not freeze in the 1980s. It continued on through the democratization of the countries studied here and into the present day, with several of the same organizations and journals adapting to different times while others collapsed. The TFP, for example, continued to grow and expand throughout the 1980s with the revival of Cold War anti-communism, gaining chapters in the US and the UK alongside those in Latin America and Europe. While these chapters remained small relative to their counterparts, their existence underscores the international nature of these organizations. It wasn't until 1995 that de Oliveira, TFP's founder, died, leaving the organization to splinter into various factions on the basis of their fealty to his particular brand of Carlism, and in the Brazilian case specifically their relationship to the last vestiges of the Brazilian monarchy. Some TFP branches have rebranded to emphasize their connection with the Virgin of Fatima, and are now called "[country] Needs Fatima."

Most of the major theological journals surveyed here continue their publication. *Criterio* remains the leading theological journal in Argentina, as does the *Anales* in Chile. While they are no longer run by actual fascists or fascist sympathizers, that history continues to be a part of their archival material, not emphasized but not hidden either. Academic journals such as those coming out of the theology departments in the major Catholic universities of Argentina and Chile have also continued publication to the present day.

The afterlives of the authors featured in these journals also tell of the continued influence of this cadre of right-wing Catholic intellectuals. Jaime Guzmán, featured regularly in Chile's TFP journals and several others, went on to be one of the principal authors of Chile's 1980 constitution, which was only recently overturned in a 2020 referendum.³³⁹ Until his assassination in 1991 by leftist militants, one of their only truly successful violent operations, he was a professor at the Law Faculty of Chile's leading Catholic University and a regular on political commentary shows. His Gremialismo movement, in its form a student government, was in control of the University's campus government for several decades — off campus, he continued to be a sought after political commentator and influential speaker. The Instituto Jaime Guzmán, founded in his memory and one of the sources I used in conducting research for this dissertation, continues to provide money in Chilean political campaigns and organizations.

³³⁹ Carlos Huneeus, "Technocrats and Politicians in an Authoritarian Regime. The 'ODEPLAN Boys' and the 'Gremialists' in Pinochet's Chile," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32, no. 2 (2000): 461–501.

Alberto Ezcurra Uriburu, founder of Tacuara, returned to seminary after the group dissolved into innumerable Peronist and antiPeronist factions. Eventually he was ordained, and was sent to the relatively remote city of San Rafael to be a parish priest. Even there, though, he continued his political work by giving pro-government and pro-coup homilies throughout the Proceso period, and his leadership at the Seminario del Verbo Encarnado was instrumental in its developing an international reputation as a bastion of right-wing power.³⁴⁰ Years after his death in 1993, the seminary was permanently closed due to this reputation. Other members of Tacuara went on to have successful, if somewhat less influential political and theological careers.

Religion and Politics

One of the central claims of this dissertation, that religiosity and religious thinking deeply informed right-wing politics in Latin America in the twentieth century, directly contradicts the idea that the modern era is an increasingly secular one. This is not to say only that right-wing figures spoke in religious terms, or that they *used* religion to justify their politics, but that their politics and their religion were identical. The “secularization” thesis is well-trod ground, and has its roots in early modern and nineteenth-century European philosophies which emphasized that increasing urbanization and changes in the social order were leading to the transformation, or even the end, of the traditional connection between religion and public life.

Secularity studies has become a discipline in and of itself. Originating from critiques of orientalism and non-Christian perspectives on the nature of Western society, critiques of secularism essentially argue that the very concept of the secular is itself an outgrowth of western, and therefore ultimately Christian, perspectives on the separation between the religious and the “material” or everyday world. Not only is this conceptual separation not a natural or necessary outgrowth of modernity — there have been many modernities without it — but it is an incomplete, or even false dichotomy, masking the continued presence of religious thinking and religious perspectives within the ostensibly secular world.

Arguably the most influential book on secularism is Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*, which argues first that secularity is the assumed state in the modern west and seeks to understand what secularity is from there, whether the secular consists in belief, or in the changed relationship between religion and the public sphere, or the elimination of explicitly religious ideologies from governance.³⁴¹ He argues that part of secularity, the part that pertains to the turn to rational, at least positivistic if not actually scientific thought, reflects a loss of the “immediate certainty” given by religious forms of knowledge. Taylor specifically concerns himself with the so-called Western world, by which he means the “North Atlantic world,” which would presumably therefore not include the Latin American or even Iberian countries that are the focus of this thesis. And there are other aspects of his theory that make it not the most applicable to the groups studied here, not only because these are self-avowedly religious organizations which participated in secularization as opposition. There have also been a number of critiques of Taylor’s work noting its shifting definition of “religion.”³⁴²

³⁴⁰ There are no print sources on this institution as of yet. For the organization’s internal perspective, see: <https://ive.org/>

³⁴¹ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Gifford Lectures 1999 (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

³⁴² William Schweiker et al. “Grappling with Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*” in *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (July 2010): 367-400.

José Casanova argues that secularism can be defined as the separation between political and religious authority, clearly something that would be anathema to most of the organizations studied in this dissertation.³⁴³ However the situation is clearly more complicated than that — given the relationship which an organization like the TFP has not just to the ostensibly secular state but to what would be the undisputed authorities of the Church if they were to get their way. Rather than a situation in which the religious authorities lead the people and thereby the state, groups like the TFP or the religious-political journals examined in this dissertation took up the promise of the Second Vatican Council and seek to have the laity lead the clergy *and* the state, together, uniting religion and politics from the grassroots rather than from the pulpit.

The definitions of “religion” and “religiosity” are themselves contested, both academically and in common discourse. Taylor described religion as a relationship held with a “transcendent” entity, be it a god or gods, spirits, or some other entity somehow both above and beyond humanity.³⁴⁴ Talal Asad points out that most Western common sense understandings of what religion is — a set of beliefs about the supernatural, “meanings linked to ideas of general order” with “universal functions” — comes from the Reformation era in Christianity.³⁴⁵ This might lead certain “religious identities” to be understood to have no place in the public sphere even as various “religious practices” are tolerated. One might recall the anxieties about Protestants and Protestantization examined in the second chapter of this dissertation for an example of both these concerns.

Asad notes that in the wake of the Second Vatican Council the “conservatives,” broadly those concerned in this dissertation, opposed what they considered to be the secularization of the Church and its concern with “the world” — while this is true, it is important to move past the apparent contradiction here to understand the underlying logic of their position as they understood it. Far too many explanations of the relationship between the right-wing’s politics and its religiosity fall in the pitfall of “instrumentalism” — any depiction of the right-wing as if it were merely using its religious rhetoric to justify motives that one is to assume it somehow came by through secular means.

Instead, this dissertation has aimed to illustrate the unity and coherence of the interactions between their earnest religiosity and their right-wing politics. Beginning with their faith rather than their voting patterns or party politics, has led to an analysis of their motives that is much more coherent and consistent with their own self-understanding. As a scholar it is my sincere hope that this thesis will be part of a trend toward taking the political right seriously and examining it on its own terms, and toward reevaluating our understanding of the relationship between politics and religion in the modern world.

³⁴³ José Casanova, “The Secular and Secularisms,” in *Social Research*, WINTER 2009, Vol. 76, No. 4, The Religious-Secular Divide: The U.S. Case (WINTER 2009): 1049-1066.

³⁴⁴ Taylor *A Secular Age*, 20.

³⁴⁵ TALAL ASAD, “Introduction,” in *Secular Translations*, Nation-State, Modern Self, and Calculative Reason (Columbia University Press, 2018): 1–12.

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Appendix

APOLOGETICA CATOLICA

1. Lecciones de Apologética - Martín Noguera
2. Nuestras Razones - Rodríguez y Olmos
3. Nuestros Dogmas - Rodríguez y Olmos
4. La Religión demostrada - Hilaire Belloc
5. Carta a un escéptico - Balme
6. Vida de Cristo - G Papini
7. Cristianismo y Brahmanismo - R Pruneda
8. La crisis del mundo moderno - L Franca
9. La crisis de nuestra civilización - Hilaire Belloc
10. Como aconteció la reforma - H Belloc
11. Defensa de la Hispanidad - R de Maeztu
12. El protestantismo comparado del catolicismo - Balme
13. Historia de las Variaciones - Bossuet
14. Y la biblia tenía razón - Keller
15. Historia de los Heterodoxos - Menéndez y Pelayo
16. La Ciudad de Dios - San Agustín
17. Manual de Filosofía Tomista - Collins
18. Suma contra Gentiles - Santo Tomás

HISTORIA NACIONAL DE ARGENTINA

1. Historia de la Argentina - E Palacio
2. Nos el representantes del pueblo - JM Rosa
3. La Unidad nacional - R Font Ezcurra
4. Vida de Rosas - M Gálvez
5. Vida de Sarmiento
6. Vida de García Moreno
7. La Época de Rosas - E Quesada
8. Rosas y Theirs - C Peroyra
9. Facundo - P de Paoli X
10. Defensa y pérdida de nuestra independencia económica - JM Rosa
11. la caída de rosas - JM Rosas
12. Solano López y la guerra en Paraguay - C Peroyra
13. La intervención anglofrancesa en el río de la plata - G puentes
14. el pronunciamiento del mayo - Marfany
15. Año X - Hugo Wast
16. REVistas del Instituto del Juan Manuel de Rosas
17. Correspondencia entre Martín y rosas - JB Genta
18. Sarmiento y masonería - JB Genta
19. la masonería en la historia argentina - JB Genta

POLITICA

1. El Estado comunitario - JM de Mahieu
2. El mito de democracia - JA Palacios
3. El crimen de nuremberg - Vealo
4. Historia de Fascismo - Ercole X
5. El Estado de Servil - H Belloc