

Catholic Intellectuals In 1930's Brasil: The Role Of Alceu Amoroso Lima And The Influence Of Jacques Maritain

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Abstract:

In Brazil, in the first decades of the 20th century, there is a coexistence between politics and religion both in public and private spaces, a coexistence between religious and secular discourses. This coexistence shows that the idea of a secular space as a field of reference for all citizens is still being formed and that the confessional neutrality of the State and social secularization have specific measures and rhythms. It is true that in this period, in social and institutional life, the permanence of religious bonds, specially Catholicism, is present with great force, but also changes in the forms of individual and collective consciousness in the face of politics. We could think of a process where secularization, secularism and religion coexisted in a tense and contradictory process. It was in the face of this perspective that the Catholic intellectual Alceu Amoroso Lima occupied a prominent place in Brazilian society and helped implement the interests of the Catholic Church. The consolidation of Centro Dom Vital and the magazine A Ordem were a part of this process, as well as the constitution and implementation at national level of the Catholic Electoral League, the Catholic Action and a set of other religious and educational institutions. In this article, we present part of the journey taken by Alceu Amoroso Lima in the 1930s, specially his process of conversion to catholicism by the means of his contact with the conservative intellectual Jackson de Figueiredo and his subsequent and assertive relationship with catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain.

Keywords: Brazil , Intellectuals, Alceu Amoroso Lima, Jackson de Figueiredo, Jacques Maritain , Christian Democracy.

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I. Introduction

In "Os Intelectuais", article featured in the book *Por uma história Política*, put together by René Rémond, Jean François- Sirinelli (2003) criticizes the approaches that intend to reduce the actions of intellectuals to interests and strategies and that leave no space for "the contingency, the unexpected, the fortuitous". According to Sirinelli , the actions of the intellectuals aren't necessarily reducible to meticulously planned interests with a specific purpose, although they can be considered through this thinking in many situations.

In his opinion, the intellectual field possesses *elementary structures of sociability* with complex relationships that rise from the organization "around an ideological sensitivity or common cultural heritage of more diffuse affinities, but equally decisive, that put together a will and a taste to coexist" (SIRINELLI, 2003, p.248).

We take on from these assumptions to understand the role of Alceu Amoroso Lima in Brazil from 1920 until 1940, his "conversions to catholicism and his leadership position facing an elite of catholic intellectuals, specially those linked to Centro Dom Vital and the magazine *A Ordem*."

Amoroso Lima was the leader of a Catholic intellectuals group in Brazil in the decades between 1920 and 1940. Such leadership was made possible, first trough his conversion to catholicism in 1928, a moment from which his ideals were notably inspired in conservative values, above all, after his proximity with the intellectual Jackson de Figueiredo, and through him, with the writings of Joseph de Maistre and Charles Maurras, which would influence the Catholic political culture in Brazil with conservative, nationalist, authoritarian and also anti-communist elements. There was a second 'conversion' of Amoroso Lima to Catholicism in the early 1940s, when his ideas and actions became motivated and guided by progressive values, notably due to his close association with the French philosopher Jacques Maritain.

The group of intellectuals led by Amoroso Lima was imbued with a sense of a civilizing mission and worked to achieve the goal of promoting what they considered to be the re-Christianization of Brazil. The goals of the group were relatively successful due to their "Catholic action" in politics, culture and education. Amoroso Lima acted through institutional bodies such as the magazine *A Ordem*, the Dom Vital Center, the Catholic Electoral League, Catholic Action and Catholic Colleges, and also contributed to the creation of the Christian

Democratic Party (CDP).

Amoroso Lima was a renowned intellectual within the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, having a strong relationship in various government instances and in contact with some of the most expressive Brazilian intellectuals of the period, including, for example, Mário de Andrade, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Gilberto Freyre and Gustavo Capanema. Given this circle of relationships, the group, in the 1930s and 1940s, occupied an important place and worked in areas such as law, education, literature, poetry, engineering, medicine, biology, philosophy, etc.

Some degree of information about his education and the positions he occupied throughout his life is essential for us to picture with greater clarity the impact and importance of his work in Brazilian society during the period under study.

Alceu Amoroso Lima was born in Rio de Janeiro on December 11th, 1893, the son of Manuel José Amoroso Lima and Camila da Silva Amoroso Lima. At the age of seven, he made his first trip to Europe. In 1909, he began his studies in the legal field and made a second trip to Europe, followed by another trip in December 1912. In the following year, he completed his law degree and went to Paris to attend a course given by the French philosopher Henry Bergson. In 1918, he married Maria Teresa de Faria, in the city of Petrópolis and, in the year that followed, he began his activity as a literary critic in *O Jornal*, under the pseudonym Tristão de Athayde. His communication with the intellectual Jackson de Figueiredo initiated in 1919, lasting until the end of 1928, the year of his conversion to Catholicism and the moment from which Amoroso Lima became director of A Ordem and also president of the Dom Vital Center. In 1932, Amoroso Lima contributed to the creation of the Catholic Institute of Higher Studies and, in 1933, he claimed the position of president for the Catholic Electoral League. The year 1935 marked his definition as president of the Brazilian Catholic Action and also his election to the Brazilian Academy of Letters. In 1938, he was named dean of the University of the Federal District. In 1940, he became professor of Brazilian Literature at the University of Brazil and of the Catholic University. Four years later, he founded the Publisher Agir and later, in 1947, he traveled to Montevideo to help develop a Christian democracy in Latin America and to create the CDP. Between 1951 and 1953, he served as director of the Department of Culture of the American States Organization (OEA). In 1962, he was the Brazilian representative at the opening of the Second Vatican Council. In 1967, he was elected to the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences at the Institute of France. Amoroso Lima was also an opponent of the Brazilian military dictatorship (after 1964) and fought it until August 14, 1983, when he died in the city of Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro (VILLAÇA, 1985, p.5-7).

Jackson de Figueiredo and Amoroso Lima: the inner conversion process to Catholicism in the 1920s

It was in the setting of the first decades of the 20th century that intellectuals such as Amoroso Lima, Jackson de Figueiredo, Leonel Franca, Dom Leme and many others went through their cultural, political and religious formation. In the early 1920s, Amoroso Lima was in conflict with those who constituted the leadership of the modernist movement in Brazil, and it was at this time that he gained notoriety as a literary critic. From then on, he articulated his means of sociability, expanding it significantly after his conversion to Catholicism in 1928.

In Brazil, between 1900 and 1920, there was a return to the philosophy of the spirit and to anti-materialism, in addition to an attempt to recover the prestige of the Catholic Church based on Neo-Thomism. It was also during this period that the militant Catholic movement managed to consolidate itself, through the defense of “national traditions” and the practical actions developed by Jackson de Figueiredo at the head of the Dom Vital Center and the magazine *A Ordem*. In a research carried out in the 1970s, historian Francisco Iglesias demonstrated Jackson de Figueiredo's relationship with the writings of Joseph de Maistre and the nationalism of Charles Maurras, both important for the foundation of the Catholic project in Brazil.

According to Iglesias:

Jackson de Figueiredo believes, as well as Joseph de Maistre, in “national dogmas”, the result of a reality, a national conscience. Without reaching the extreme of the integral nationalism of Maurras, or the aestheticizing cult of the nation, like Barrès, he believes in the idea of a nation, since it has a common past, traditions, beliefs, values and myths, figures and facts that worship. [...] Jackson de Figueiredo identifies nationalism, in Brazil, with the Catholic past, a tradition that he sees threatened by Protestantism, by the Yankee, or by what he calls “*metequismo*”, the invasion of Freemasonry and Judaism by foreign capital (IGLESIAS, 1977, p.148).

Research made by sociologist Sérgio Miceli pointed out that, in the early 1920s, the Catholic Church intensified the policy of its influence in society, particularly through the “creation of a network of organizations parallel to the ecclesiastical hierarchy and managed by lay intellectuals”. Still, according to Miceli, “the amplitude of this project resulted not only from the Vatican's directives, at the time concerned with halting the flourishing of left-wing labor movements in Europe, but also from the awareness on the part of the Brazilian episcopate of the crisis facing the oligarchic leading groups” (MICELI, 2001, p.127).

In Brazil, this process was called “Catholic reaction” or “Catholic restoration” and it was arranged

through a posture of subordination upon the Vatican and condemnation of the “errors of modernity”: rationalism, free press, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freemasonry, communism and the separation between the church and the state. When realizing the new demands of the troubled scenario of the 20th century’s beginning , the Vatican supported the project of the Catholic Church in Brazil, aimed at rapprochement with the State, within which intellectuals were considered fundamental agents. Therefore, it was in this scenery that both Jackson de Figueiredo and Amoroso Lima played central roles as recruiters of intellectual boards for the defense of Catholic interests.

Throughout the reorganization of the Catholic Church in Brazil in the first decades of the 20th century, a set of groups and institutions were created with the goal of assisting the political-religious action aimed at its “restoration”. Among such institutions, the most important one was the Dom Vital Center, founded in 1922 by Jackson de Figueiredo, under the guidance of Dom Sebastião Leme, with the aim of promoting an ecclesiastical action closer to the State and, above all, organizing the secular Catholic intellectuality.

The relationship between Jackson de Figueiredo and Amoroso Lima contributed to the construction of a sociability network with concrete actions, around which were the “pioneers of the Dom Vital Center” and a group of important intellectuals educated in the most diverse areas of knowledge. Amongst the most expressive ones, there were Perilo Gomes, Jônatas Serrano, Tasso da Silveira, Hamilton Nogueira, Heráclito Sobral Pinto, Everardo Backheuser, Gustavo Corção, Wagner Antunes Dutra, Fábio Alves Ribeiro, Murilo Mendes, Silvio Elia e Afrânio Coutinho. In general terms, the organization of the Catholic laity aimed to contribute to the Church's rapprochement with the political power and a more intense action in various sectors of Brazilian society (AZZI, 2003, p.10).

According to Iglesias, Jackson de Figueiredo's political engagement had as goal the combat to liberalism, socialism and, in greater depth, the idea of *revolution* or any type of political-social rupture. For Jackson de Figueiredo, Brazilian society was under a spiritual, political and social crisis, a product of ideas arising from the Protestant Reformation, Descartes' rationalism and the legacy of the French Revolution.

Finally, these references, added to the recent impacts of the Russian Revolution, led him to perceive a chaotic Brazil, where, on the one hand, authority would be on the path of being corrupted by freedom and equality among men and, on the other, the State (indifferent to religion) would take the risk of helping the advance of liberalism and, consequently, providing the arrival of socialism and communism (IGLESIAS, 1977, p.146-148). In Jackson de Figueiredo's view, the State should approach Catholicism and favor the defense of authority, in order to overcome freedom, liberalism and communism, all considered evils to be fought.

Therefore, these positions defended by Jackson de Figueiredo and by the authors promoted by him in Brazil (notably Maistre and Maurras) influenced Amoroso Lima in the process that led him to convert to Catholicism, although in a non-uniform way. According to Michel Winock, Charles Maurras and *Action Française* exerted a strong influence on a large part of the youth, especially in the post-First World War period, for objective reasons:

The French Action offered young people in search of an intellectual and moral order a perspective of action that there was no other example in France, except its antipode, the communist organization. In addition, it practiced, in the Catholic wings, what Jacques Maritain calls a “principality of opinion”, that extended to the ecclesiastical wings, satisfied to find in the French Action a secular arm against the laity, the Freemasons and all the enemies of the Church (WINOCK, 2000, p.239).

Still according to Winock, the great danger of Action Française resided in the fact that its Catholicism was of a “strictly political” background and aimed “to deviate Christians from the pure faith in favor of a new religion, entirely pagan, that of the Fatherland” (WINOCK, 2000 , p.241). That is why, on December 29, 1926, Rome condemned the movement and placed Maurras' works on¹ the Index. It is interesting to note that the submission “to the anathema of Rome” was essential so that two important figures of Catholic french thinking – then linked to Action Française – could continue enjoying transit in the Church: Georges Bernanos and Jacques Maritain. The first would remain faithful to Maurras until 1932, while Maritain would immediately break with the movement to the point of, in 1927, publishing *Primauté du spirituel*, a reply to Maurras' *Politique d'abord*. Thus, if politics was a priority for Charles Maurras, for Jacques Maritain the primacy should be attributed to the spiritual, because, in his view, society was going through a crisis of this nature (WINOCK, 2000, p.241-265).

As Olivier Compagnon (COMPAGNON, 2003a, p.58) well demonstrated, in the 1920s and most of the 1930s, there was, in Latin American countries, a complex relationship between “the necessary Catholic restoration on one hand, and the affirmation of a nationalism violently hostile to democracy and tempted by authoritarianism on the other”. Compagnon revealed that it was in Latin America, above all in Argentina and Brazil, that many Catholics took Jacques Maritain as a defender of Maurrasian ideas, therefore, as a nationalist.

¹ Maritain's commitment to political issues dates back specifically to 1934, when, together with other intellectuals, he produced texts that expressed his positions in relation to communism and fascism. (COMPAGNON, 2003a, p.85).

He warned that this was a mistaken interpretation, since Maritain had broken with Maurras' ideas in 1926 and, from 1936 onwards, with the publication of *Lettre sur l'indépendance and L'humanisme integral*, had turned a more liberal and democratic² field of politics.

Amoroso Lima's conversion process through contact with Jackson de Figueiredo took place over almost a decade, more precisely between 1921 and 1928, and was based on his productive correspondence, a total of 123 letters sent by Jackson to Amoroso Lima and 121 responses given by him to his friend from Pernambuco. In the letter of July 22nd, 1927, Jackson de Figueiredo exhorted Amoroso Lima (LIMA, 1991, p.117) to comprehend the need to "rebuild the sense of authority" or "resurrect the authority". In order to carry out this task, Figueiredo evoked the writings of Joseph de Maistre, his preferred author, with the intent of also marking his combat position towards any type of revolution.

"Joseph de Maistre used to say that the Counter-Revolution, in order to defeat the Revolution, shall have to resort to revolutionary processes. This is the fatality of the fallen humanity. It is the tribute of the *sweat of your face*, the bitter work. It is with *manly acts* that we will arrive at *human acts*." (LIMA, 1991, p.117-118).

In the course of correspondence between Amoroso Lima and Jackson de Figueiredo, another letter, also from 1927, expressed quite clearly his state of mind and also his eagerness for the meaning of his existence. This missive was the central element and demonstrated that his process of inner conversion to Catholicism was close. Let's see what he says:

I have a mother who would maybe die if I died. I have a family that surrounds me with everything I can aspire to in life. [...] I have a position of fortune... I made a small literary name. I have everything, everything, everything a normal man may wish out of life. [...] However,... I feel at a dead end. I feel wounded by death. *I feel old*. [...] I swear to you that if God exists anywhere within the universe... only one thing I ask of him: madness or death (LIMA, 1991, p.138-139).

A letter from May 1928, sent by Amoroso Lima to Jackson de Figueiredo, announced the content of the dialogues between the two about communism and the Russian Revolution. In this letter, Amoroso Lima evoked the writings of Joseph de Maistre about the French Revolution in order to demonstrate its character and spiritual impact, elements that, in his view, would be equally present in the Russian Revolution and in communism:

Just two days ago I took from the *Considerations about France* and everything it says about the R.F. applies to R.R. [...] We must look at this, from within, from the bottom, seeing the fundamental importance it has in the modern world, the way that Joseph de Maistre considered the French Revolution. And not distractedly like something far away. The South American youth is all impregnated with communism. Therefore, this factor must be taken into account. Studying it deeply, as the spiritual element that it is, and not a simple social threat of bombs, etc. And the spirit only heals with the spirit. (LIMA, 1991, p.90-91).

Amoroso Lima's inner conversion occurred after years of correspondence and a long process of confrontations, disagreements, approximations, in which the subjects of freedom, authority, hierarchy, communism, liberalism, faith and Catholicism were central elements. Amoroso Lima's inner conversion to Catholicism, which took place on August 15, 1928, had a profound impact on his personal life and was decisive for the better organization and implementation of a project that had as a goal to unite Catholic intellectuals in a group that played a fundamental role for the interests of the Catholic Church in Brazil in the first decades of the 20th century.

Dear Jackson. As I told you, yesterday I received Communion from the hands of Father Leonel Franca, who knew so well how to guide me and facilitate these last strains of the old man. Therefore, I am back in the old Church. What shall I do for her? Will I be able to do anything? There are so many on the horizon, inside me and outside of me! So much weighs on my soul! There are moments that I see everything as unsolvable. This is what I think about right now (LIMA, 1992, p.226-227).

Amoroso Lima and the Catholic political-religious project in the 1930s

The year of 1928 was marked not only by Amoroso Lima's conversion to Catholicism, but also by the tragic death, on November 4, of Jackson de Figueiredo, a personal friend and one of the main people responsible for this change. From that moment on, Amoroso Lima took over the direction of the Dom Vital Center and the magazine *A Ordem* and led the Catholic intellectuals who were already part of both. He also began to gradually defend a greater insertion of the Church in the social and political domain through the strengthening and also the creation of Catholic institutions, such as the Catholic Action group, the Catholic Electoral League, the Catholic Institute of Higher Studies, the magazine *A Ordem* and the network of Catholic schools throughout Brazil.

It is necessary to highlight that Amoroso Lima's engagement as leader of all these institutions in defense of the most diverse interests related to the Catholic Church was supported by Cardinal Dom Sebastião Leme, including the strengthening of their relationship with the official political powers. Thus, around the ending of the 1920s and the entire 1930s, the process of rapprochement between the Catholic Church and the State was strongly marked by its articulation in various social sectors, including a Catholic intellectual "elite" that played a prominent

role at the forefront of the intended "spiritual revolution".

It is a fact that Amoroso Lima was in charge of this "elite" and ardently defended a worldview based on criticism of liberalism, condemnation of communism and the idea of revolution, and defense of the primacy of authority in favor of freedom. These aspects contributed to the defense of interests and to the rapprochement between the Church and the State in Brazil and resulted from the impacts generated by the conversion of Amoroso Lima. The 1930s were an important period for the development of the Catholic project within Brazilian society, during which Amoroso Lima defended objective positions on central issues such as the activities of the Catholic Electoral League, the Catholic Action movement, a model of Catholic education and the need to create Catholic institutions of higher education, in addition to taking a position on the phenomenon of communism and Nazism.

According to Miceli (1988, p.130), the goal of the Catholic Electoral League project, at the beginning of the 1930s, was:

Disseminate the Church's guidelines and positions taken by the faithful and channel the votes of Catholic voters in favor of candidates from different parties who were ready to support Catholic positions on delicate and controversial issues, such as the indissolubility of marriage, religious teaching in public schools, ecclesiastical assistance to the armed forces.

Amoroso Lima joined the board and defended his work from a practical perspective, although without direct ties to political parties. His proposals were presented in the article *The Catholics and Politics*, in which the author attributed to the league the central role of assisting in the Christianization of society under the guidance of the Church hierarchy, acting as a subordinate and limited "side body":

Subordinate, because it depends on Catholic Action, and this depends on the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Its action is strictly limited... because it presents itself only as *clarifying the Catholic conscience in electoral matters*, acting more by exclusion and *repercussion* than by direct intervention. On the other hand, because the many political matters it deals with are only of a social order in which there is an official doctrine of the Church or determination of its authority, with no freedom on the part of Catholics to express an opinion to the contrary. [...] All this puts the Catholic Electoral League in an extra partisan position (ATHAYDE, 1934, p.161-162).

In addition to acting in the political field, Amoroso Lima was at the head of the Catholic Action, which was founded in 1935 under the guidance of Cardinal Leme and with the endorsement of Pope Pius XI, the so-called Pope of the Catholic Action, as can be observed in the letter of Pius XI, from 1936, published in the magazine *A Ordem*:

Beloved Son of Ours and Venerable Brothers, Greetings and Apostolic Blessing. [...] We shall... direct Our paternal word to you and to your brothers in the Episcopate. We want to show with this once again the high concept that we have of the collaboration that the *laity can provide to the Apostolate of the Hierarchy*, not only in the defense of the truth and the Christian life... but also, so that they are in the hands of their pastors, effective instruments of ever greater religious and civil progress. [...] We are intimately convinced that Catholic Action is a great grace of Our Lord, both in relation to the faithful, whom he calls to collaborate more closely with the hierarchy, and in relation to the Bishops and Priests who, always, in order to carry out their sacred office more widely and effectively, will find in the ranks of the Catholic Action generous souls ready to cooperate decidedly. (PIO XI, 1936, p.5-6).

Amoroso Lima's project consisted of integrating the lay people in the sacramental and social activities of the Catholic Church and putting them in contact with the clergy, but always subjected to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, given that Amoroso Lima identified the suppression of hierarchy in the Church as a result of the Protestant Reformation and as definitely harmful to society, which is why the Catholic Action should play the urgent role of replacing the laity in their "true position in the body of the Church":

The duties are reciprocal. On the part of the laity, it is necessary to have the conviction, not only theoretical, but also practical, that the superior direction of Catholic Action always belongs to the *ecclesiastical hierarchy*. [...] Therefore, there is a fundamental duty of respect and obedience, which needs to be understood as the true spirit of the Church. For this reason, just as the laity has duties with the clergy, this subordination to their superior guidance, the latter also has the most serious duties towards them. (ATHAYDE, 1935, p.154-156).

In summary, for Amoroso Lima, Catholic Action had, ultimately, the strategic and technical task of consolidating the activities of the laity and the Church for the construction of a new Brazilian society, which he defined as the *New Age*, which would occur through "the use of very delicate methods of social action, by direct infiltration in every institution, instead of mass attack and in connection with the State and Politics" (LIMA, 1935, p.112-113).

Another way of implementing Amoroso Lima's Catholic project in Brazilian society was education. But, in order to understand his positions in the 1930s, it is necessary to be clear that they were also based on the metaphysical critique of modern rationalism. As a result of participating in Henri Bergson's classes at the Collège de France in 1913, Amoroso Lima borrowed from the philosopher the criticism according to which the world was

in a spiritual crisis². Therefore, Amoroso Lima put into practice the Catholic project for education in Brazil based on criticism of the modern world and the belief in the existence of a spiritual crisis. In this project, he defended expanding the Church's influence in the public and private sectors, in all levels. In greater depth, he worked to strengthen the insertion of subjects like Philosophy, Theology and Metaphysics in the teaching curriculum, because, in his opinion, they would contribute to the formation of a new society, based on Christianity and Catholicism. This defense of Catholic ideals was especially relevant in the period, since Brazil experienced, throughout the 1930s, a significant advance of Protestantism, anarchist ideals and the communist movement, considered enemies by Amoroso Lima.

Amoroso Lima and the Catholic Church's educational project obtained strength through the creation of the Catholic Institute of Higher Studies in 1932, which was responsible for training a significant part of the Catholic cadres who later worked in the defense of the Church and their interests. In the words of Amoroso Lima, his pedagogical organization was conceived in a "practical" way around a curriculum with three compulsory subjects (Sociology, Philosophy and Theology) and three optional subjects (Introduction to Law, Mathematics and Biology), the latter offered for graduation students of Law, Engineering and Medicine. The three compulsory subjects had greater weight, as Amoroso Lima considered them fundamental to think critically about concrete reality and, ultimately, to arrive at the "substantial reality" of God.

Sociology to show that we want to start from the sensitive reality, from the social reality, from the position of the man in the society of our time and of all times, where his life takes place. [...] The philosophy to show... that metaphysical studies are fundamental for the balance and soundness of thought, in any order of knowledge. [...] Theology, finally, for us to understand that thought does not lead to a vacuum and that, on the contrary, it always starts from a sensible reality to get to a substantial reality (ATHAYDE, 1932, p.424).

Amoroso Lima pressured the government of Getúlio Vargas to meet the interests and claims of the Catholic Church. In 1935, he was appointed to the Federal Council of Education, formally adhering to the government's educational policy, although he always remained in defense of his own interests and those of Catholics.

According to Otto Maria Carpeaux (1978, p.74-76), Amoroso Lima accepted the nomination "because in that role he could be useful to the claims of the Church". The president knew that Amoroso Lima had inclinations for the educational field and, when thinking about the important support of the Catholic Church to his government, appointed him, at the end of 1937, as dean of the University of the Federal District.

Amoroso Lima accepted the position, but, claiming the need for independence, he resigned in 1938 and soon founded the core of what became the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (CARPEAUX, 1978, p.77-78). In Amoroso Lima's proposal, the university's objective was to humanize professional life based on a Christian education and train elites who should be "united in spirit with the sentiments of the masses" and be "a source of cultural renewal, spiritual elevation and Christianization" of the homeland (LIMA, 1941, p.327-331). For Amoroso Lima, "Catholic does not mean confessional, but universal and true, forming spirits and not just adorning spirits; making men of character and not pedantic; uniting hearts to intelligences and not hypertrophying memory and mutilating temperaments" (LIMA, 1941, p.332).

Another important theme for Amoroso Lima's project in the 1930s was socialism/communism. During this period, his opinion was influenced by his first conversion and by the writings of Jackson de Figueiredo. Both led him to condemn communism severely. His position only changed in the early 1940s. But, in the 1930s, Amoroso Lima fought socialism/communism and associated it with what he considered to be a hypertrophy of collectivity, founded on the elaboration of a thesis that was expressed in anti-spiritualism, anti-nationalism and anti-familiarism. In his view, socialism had the following aims:

The fight against every philosophy of the Spirit, the direct or indirect denial of the immortal human soul, (incompatible with that supremacy of the mass over man) and all of that supernatural order of values. [...] The fight against the idea and love of the Fatherland, replaced by Humanity. And, finally, the suppression of the Family, as a means of asserting human freedom against the tyranny of the mass or the State, and its replacement by Class ideology (LIMA, 1936, p.73).

It seems fundamental to highlight that Amoroso Lima criticized socialism and communism in the 1930s and did the same in relation to Nazism, which he considered abominable for defending that a supposedly pure race could be "erected as a dogma" above the State. and even be highly referenced in religious language. This would be, in his opinion, a sort of "blood materialism":

This racism could only be achieved by the violent renewal of Pan-Germanism and by the establishment of a movement of 'nationalization of the masses... by blows of 'fanaticism' and 'hysteria', which are created by Hitler in civic virtues (LIMA, 1938, p. 378)..

Amoroso Lima sees the Nazi danger as early as 1938, before the start of the Second World War, as the result of the German attempt to have an "original" sense of "perfect" civilization, something considered absolutely

² There is still a lack of research that studies the influence of Henri Bergson's writings on Amoroso Lima.

reprehensible in light of Christian principles:

Nationalism takes on its most brutal aspect in Rosenberg. The State ceases to be the fruit of the family, through the Nation, to become the result of a simple military union. Christianity becomes, in this monstrous philosophy of history, the disorganizer of Germanic unity, the German Nation assumes the character of guide of humanity, in the 20th century. The State is placed at the service of the Nation (LIMA, 1938, p.379).

The influence of the philosopher Jacques Maritain over Amoroso Lima

Amoroso Lima's conservative assumptions, resulting from his first inner conversion and expressed in his political and social activities, were gradually broken in the 1940s through his second conversion. This reconversion was based on his relationship with the philosopher Jacques Maritain and led him to the development of a political-religious project of a progressive and democratic nature, oriented towards the defense of freedom in favor of authority, close to the communists and critical of Getúlio Vargas' dictatorship in Brazil. It also resulted in a part in the creation of the CDP, originating from Christian democracy inspired by Maritain's writings.

In a more precise way, the long process of Amoroso L. Se considerarmos que a relação entre católicos e não católicos sempre foi um ponto problemático para a Igreja no Brasil, poderemos compreender por que as inclinações de Maritain para o campo do pluralismo religioso não foram bem recebidas pela hierarquia da Igreja e mesmo por grande parte dos leigos, fossem eles intelectuais ou não.

ima's second conversion began with his reading of *Humanismo Integral* (1936) (Integral Humanism), in which Maritain defined freedom as one of the central characteristics of a new Christianity and as "the autonomy of people in opposition to the medieval idea of force at the service of God" (1942, p.191-213). In this work, the philosopher proposed the creation of a "fraternal community" inspired by a "profane Christian" practical action in favor of the common good. The "profane" action in this project had as its biggest foundation to support the religious pluralism of believers and non-believers in the earthly city. Maritain stated this clearly: "this common work absolutely does not demand from each one [...] the profession of Christianity" (1942, p.198-199). We can affirm that it was from 1942 onwards that Amoroso Lima reformulated his positions in favor of freedom and democracy. This moment was decisive for a second "inner conversion" or "reconversion" to Catholicism, which effectively took place in 1944 as the result of a rupture process with conservative values and positions resulting from his first "inner conversion" in 1928. In order to solidify this process, the fundamental factors were the scenario of the Second World War, the expansion of personal communication with Jacques Maritain and, notably, the readings of the following works by the French philosopher: *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle* (1942), *Christianisme et démocratie* (1943), *Principes d'une politique humaniste* (1944).

In *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle* (1942), there is a definition similar to the constitution of the fraternal community proposed by Jacques Maritain, conceived as an opposition to the regimes of force during the Second World War, but still linked to the idea of a "Christian society". The excerpt below clearly demonstrates why Jacques Maritain was the source of new readings and inspiration for Amoroso Lima and many other Catholic intellectuals around the world. Maritain proposed the:

Common good reverted to people; political authority directing free men towards this common good; intrinsic morality of the common good and political life. Personalistic, communal and pluralistic inspiration of social organization; organic connection of civil society with religion, without religious oppression or clericalism, in other words, a really, not decoratively Christian society. [...] Work inspired by the ideal of freedom and fraternity, and tending towards the establishment of a fraternal society in which human beings are freed from slavery and misery (MARITAIN, 1967, p.54).

Maritain severely criticized both communism and totalitarianism, but glimpsed at a possibility of redemption and conversion in communists. In his view, communism aimed to promote the "universal redemption" of humanity and Nazism (of an "irrationalist and biological" basis) rejected such universalism and tended to impose, through force, the hegemony of a race considered superior. Jacques Maritain proposed the creation of a new world founded on the principle of personalism and integral humanism, superior to fascist totalitarianism, communism and capitalist civilization, considered decadent (MARITAIN, 1942, p.270-272).

However, in Maritain's theorization, the accomplishment of this new world would only be possible with the help of new elites, made of other working and peasant elites, but also accessible to members of the ruling class of the regime once in force (MARITAIN, 1942, p.86-92). In Brazil, a significant part of these elites idealized by Maritain was gathered around Amoroso Lima and the Catholic Church.

Based on the reading of Jacques Maritain works, his knowledge of the atrocities of the Second World War and on the perception of the contradictory nature of the permanence of the Brazil's dictatorial regime, Amoroso Lima changed his stance and began to see communism as an ally in the fight against Nazi-fascism. Maritain's writings were decisive for this change in *Christianity and Democracy*, (1943) in which the French philosopher notably changed his position regarding the communists: he began to see the possibility of conversion and redemption from "atheism and the spiritual errors of communism". Maritain believed that there was a possibility of a general restoration of the Russian people's democratic thought and action, integrating them "with

respect for the things of the soul, to the love of freedom and to the feeling dignity of a person, certainly not orthodox marxists and discipline of the Communist Party, but numerous communists of feeling and many of those who the revolt against social injustices [inclined to communism]" (1957, p.94-95).

According to Maritain, it was not in the "heights of theology", but in the depths of conscience and profane existence that Christianity acted as yeast, most often incorporating "heretical forms" and seeming to deny itself. For Maritain, the existence of the Christian spirit and democracy were threatened by " implacable enemies, fanatics of race and blood, pride, domination and hatred", so the time had come to promote the fusion between "the pieces of the key of paradise and the metals of the earth". After all, he said:

[...] it was not up to believers entirely faithful to Catholic dogma, it was up to some rationalists to proclaim in France the rights of the man and of the citizen. It fell to some Puritans in America to deliver the last blow to slavery. It was up to atheist communists to abolish the absolutism of private profit in Russia (MARITAIN, 1957, p.45-47).

Furthermore, what must be considered here is the impact on Catholics around the world of Jacques Maritain's categorical affirmation in favor of democracy, mainly quoting events such as the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution, episodes historically condemned by the Church. Undoubtedly, this assertive position by Maritain had decisive effects on Amoroso Lima's thinking and conduct, especially in relation to communism, as we observe in the 1945 text, quoted below:

Maritain in "Christianity and Democracy" says that the possible positions in relation to communism are three: wanting to exterminate communists through violence and concentration camps; let yourself be dominated by them...; and finally recognize "that communists are not communism, and that they have unequivocally acquired... the right to be present at the work of reconstruction as comrades in combat. [...] It also requires frankly accepting the cooperation of the communists and their participation in the common task, maintaining, however, complete autonomy in respect of them (LIMA, 1957, p.1945, p.167).

Amoroso Lima's second conversion to Catholicism: the presence of Maritain

Amoroso Lima defined himself by a Christian democracy in the style of Jacques Maritain and not by a liberal democracy, understood by him as the mainstay of the bourgeois world. He was aware of Maritain's positions, especially those taken from 1943 onwards, according to which the meaning of the war could not be to "just end once and for all with fascism, rationalism, militarism", but to create a new world where nationalisms would give way to the construction of an "organized international community". This community would carry the "spiritual dignity" needed as the "soul of democracy" for the collective common good (MARITAIN, 1957, p.43-44).

The text from 1944 was the first step in the reconversion process. In "Goodbye to the Youth",³ Amoroso Lima made an "invitation to meditation" by reflecting on his life trajectory and by observing what he considered to be his insignificance in the face of the Second World War tragic events. His statement, after 16 years as someone converted to Catholicism and in view of all the work developed at the front of various Catholic institutions in the 1930s, was the most absolute expression of this inner feeling:

But who can escape remorse at the time when they honestly look back to the past and see how little they have done and how much they could have done if they had really been true to their destiny? How can the insignificance of all this stop being felt, in the face of the immense events that surround us? (ATHAYDE, 1944, p.1-7).

Amoroso Lima's second conversion represented decision-making and the abandonment of conservatism, symbolizing his entry into adult life, on the path of freedom and democracy through a progressive path. This progressive path would serve as an inspiration for many intellectuals who, in the 1960s, would become a part of the Liberation Theology movement.

Another article by Amoroso Lima, also from 1944, decisively marked the break with the critique of modern world values. Entitled "Bernanos", Amoroso Lima wrote about the French writer's relationship with Brazil and also about his own change enhanced by the abandonment of vanities and personal arrogance, "opportunism and insincere decisions". For Amoroso Lima, the moment was one of openness for "all roads":

It is openness to experience, to the teaching of facts, to the lessons of the events of the last twenty years, since the fascist and communist revolutions tried to split the world into two irreducible blocs. We must return to openness, to know how to take advantage of the tragic testimony of agony, not by death, but by life, not by attachment to unsustainable and anachronistic positions, but by a healthy participation in the construction of a new world (ATHAYDE, 1944, p.507).

As a result, in 1944, Amoroso Lima's second conversion to Catholicism was made solid, this time towards a progressive Catholicism, in which freedom would occupy a central role. The impact of Maritain's philosophy on Amoroso Lima and his second conversion was expressed with decisive clarity in 1945. Besides

³ The original title of "Goodbye to the Youth" is "Adeus à Mocidade".

being lengthy, the fragment below is noteworthy for being categorical:

For twenty years I have been doing almost nothing but translating into Portuguese what I can learn from the thoughts of this admirable man of our time. For twenty years I have been following closely, by heart and understanding, the bumpy march of this spirit through the hectic archipelago of modern times and I have never regretted anything other than what I have not been able to take advantage of from his teachings. [...] The decision to love him, to defend him, to follow him, has been taken for a long time [and] I hope forever...; [...] Like every really Christian thinker, it is in dust, Christ, the source of all science and all wisdom, and not in himself, that he seeks the best that he gives us. [...] What always attracted me most in Maritain was precisely that spontaneous and profound humbleness, so different from false publicism and so suited to that authentic sense of Christianity, which saves us from the "Führen" according to the world, to take us to the only Saviour, who is not "of this world." [...] What we feel is the most intimate connection between intelligence and experience, between a rigorously intellectualist Faith, a deeply mystical vision of the relationship of man with Truth, and a very objective observation of our times (ATHAYDE, 1945, p.98-104).

Finally, it is worth noting that the importance of Jacques Maritain for the Brazilian Catholic intellectuality of the period under study was significant to the point of Amoroso Lima organizing an entire edition of the magazine *A Ordem* in honor of the philosopher. In this special edition, , the organizer himself and some of the most expressive intellectuals of Brazilian Catholicism at the time and even abroad, namely: Alfredo Lage, Afrânio Coutinho, Edgar de Godoi da Mata-Machado, Fábio Alves Ribeiro, Gustavo Corção, H. J. Hargreaves , João Camilo de Oliveira Torres, Luis Delgado, Fr. Orlando Machado, Silvio Elia, Etienne Gilson, Dom Tomaz Keller, Dom Clemente Isnard and Dom Basilio Penido wrote together.

The project of creation of the Christian Democratic Party in Brazil

According to Olivier Compagnon (2003, p.97-98), Amoroso Lima had contact with the more progressive works of Jacques Maritain only in 1939, when he would have reduced the intellectual heritage of Jackson de Figueiredo upon himself and adopted the course of democratic ideas. One of Compagnon's central theses is to demonstrate that Maritain was misread in Latin America at least until 1936, the year of his visit to Argentina. According to the historian, until 1936, most readers in this part of the American continent only had access to older works, which had a strong relationship with Maurrasian nationalism. Compagnon classifies this reception and interpretation as "*le modèle malgré lui*" (2003, p.63-74). In this way, he got to know the works of Jacques Maritain in their original versions as soon as they were published and accompanied his change to the field of politics and freedom, which began with the appearance of Integral Humanism, in 1936. However, even when he became aware of the content and of the changes proposed by Maritain in this work, Amoroso Lima received them with caution and adopted them in the course of a *long internal process of reviewing values*, internal conflicts and the abandonment of conservative ideas that were part of his worldview. This process was completed only in 1944 and not in 1939.

Therefore, the reference made by Compagnon to the relative difficulty with the French language or the reading of Maritain's original works applied, in our view, to Catholics in Latin America in general, but not to the intellectual elite linked to Amoroso Lima, to the Dom Vital Center and the magazine *A Ordem*. This elite was qualified and held ample cultural capital, and its members, Afrânio Coutinho, Silvio Elia and Fábio Alves Ribeiro, were some of its important expressions and attentive readers of Maritain.

It is worth mentioning that in 1930 Jacques Maritain did not suggest, the creation of a political party, but over the years, with the resulting events from the world war scenario and with the changes in his opinions regarding to freedom and democracy, his practical action and his political philosophy turned to this path and inspired this project. His trip to Argentina in 1936 and his visit to Brazil are indicative of this developing path.

In regards to the creation of a Catholic political party in Latin America, the historian Áureo Busetto (2002, p.25-27) studied the first measures taken for the reorganization of the movement that led to the "expansion of Christian democracy" in that region, similar to what happened in Western Europe, where Christian democracy gained space, for example in Italy, with the *Democrazia Cristiana Italiana* (DCI) party, which won the government in 1945; in France, in 1949, where the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP) was formed. Busetto showed that this process took place in Latin America after the First Congress of Christian Democracy in America that occurred in April 1947 in Montevideo, Uruguay. The Catholic militants and politicians who organized and led the event took the initiative to develop a "joint action strategy" that would make possible the dissemination of Christian democracy in Latin America. Among its leaders were the Uruguayan Dardo Regules, the Chilean Eduardo Frei Montalva, the Argentine Manuel V.Ordoñez and the Brazilian Amoroso Lima. This group wrote the *Movement's* founding document, always inspired by the most recent writings of Jacques Maritain, especially those who tried to think about the so-called *integral humanism* in its broadest dimension (BUSETTO, 2002, p.28).

However in 1945, two years before the Congress of Montevideo, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Brazil had allowed its faithful to militate in parties that were not divergent regarding "the superior demands

of the common good and of the Catholic conscience". It was at that moment that Amoroso Lima published the article "Suggestions for the program of a political party", in which he outlined the foundations of what would become the CDP in the future, under the undeniable inspiration of Maritain:

Popular, because the rise of the masses is the greatest social phenomenon of our times. Democratic, because this rise translates, politically, into a growing participation of the People in the government of nations. Christian, because this ascension of the masses and this establishment of a democracy in law, in fact, can only operate beneficially if they rest on an ethical, rational and evangelical basis (LIMA, 1945, p.105-106).

According to Busetto (2002, p. 68-70), Amoroso Lima assisted in the creation of the CDP, but did not immediately occupy an official position. He preferred to remain as secretary of the Catholic Electoral League, a political segment with the support of the Catholic Church hierarchy. Ultimately the creation of the party in July 1947 was the practical result of the re Maritain's work reception in South America and the impact of his ideas throughout the 1930s and 1940s on the Catholic intellectuality.

II. Conclusion

It has been shown, throughout this text, that there was a change in Amoroso Lima's ideas and postures between 1928 and 1946, in the course of a process that led him from conservatism to the progressive path. This process can only be understood, at first, if we consider his relationship with the Catholic intellectual Jackson de Figueiredo and, through him, with the writings of theorists such as Joseph de Maistre and Charles Maurras, furthermore, this process must be understood in the course of Amoroso Lima's distancing from conservative ideas when overcome by personal contact with the ideas and works of the French philosopher Jacques Maritain.

Maritain represented a new voice of neo-Thomism within the Catholic Church in the 20th century, with greater ascent from the 1930s onwards, from when he sought to break with the reductionist criticism of the modern world, until then made by him due to his relationship with the *Action Française* movement. Maritain began to accept the contributions of the "modern world" as valid, but always based on the premise that such contributions should be resized in order to benefit the construction of a new society, which he conceived as, at the same time, unitary and pluralistic. In his project, this new society would be constituted by a plurality of faiths and political opinions and would admit non-Catholic political positions.

According to Olivier Compagnon (2003), Maritain's ideas influenced Catholic intellectuals in Brazil during most of the 20th century, especially the laity, through the movement called Catholic Action. This observation was also made in Brazilian historiography, notably by Riolando Azzi (2003), who advanced by showing that there was, in Brazil from the 1920s to the 1940s, a strong resistance on part of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church to the Maritainian writings, especially those aimed at defending democratic principles that weren't very desirable by Church cadres..

Amoroso Lima was an intellectual with authentically formulated ideas, and they were consolidated throughout his life, in a way that the theorizations and positions of Maritain, in France, often seemed to him as drastic ruptures facing scenarios and events of the historical context being experienced in Brazil. That being so, it is correct to say that Amoroso Lima responded to the French philosopher's positions through changes that operated in a gradual, complex way, involving conflicts with himself and with positions of the Catholic Church's hierarchy in Brazil. Each new positioning by Maritain represented a rupture for himself and the same applied for his Brazilian disciple Amoroso Lima.

Between the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1940s, the context of the authoritarian government of Getúlio Vargas and Nazi-fascism were at the forefront of analysis for Amoroso Lima. After his conversion to Catholicism in 1928, his postures and positions were based on the following elements: the defense of authority, order, hierarchy, restriction of freedom, his postures facing the "1930 revolution", his defense of Catholic Action, the Catholic Electoral League, a Catholic education, and ultimately, his criticism of communism. All of this makes it possible to explain Amoroso Lima's difficulty in taking a prompt position alongside Maritain, in the face of scenarios and movements such as communism, Nazi-fascism, the Spanish Civil War, etc.

But his difficulty was also the result of the complexity of Jacques Maritain's work, which was changing in the face of the European scene. The path that Jacques Maritain took in leaving *Action Française* and moving towards democracy was important for the process of conversion and change for many Catholics around the world, but some more quickly than others.

In another view, it is observed that Maritain's work acquired, over the years, a clearer formulation of how Christians and non-Christians could live together in a democratic and pluralistic society. This issue recurred in his works after the break with *Action Française* and was consolidated in the 1930s and 1940s. O problema da igualdade jurídica de direitos, proposta por Maritain em relação a outras confissões e mesmo aos comunistas, foi formulado do ponto de vista teórico e obviamente ainda não havia sido vivenciado na prática. Mas essa foi uma questão que Maritain esteve disposto a enfrentar, o que o colocou em situação difícil no meio católico e o tornou alvo de muitas críticas.

The problem of legal equality of rights, proposed by Maritain concerning other confessions and even to

communists, was formulated from a theoretical point of view and obviously had not yet been experienced practically. But this was an issue that Maritain was willing to face, which put him in a difficult place in the Catholic circles and made him the target of many critiques. The innovation proposal based on the Maritainian idea of "legal equality of rights" helped some critics to accuse him of being a defender of religious liberalism and a friend of the communists.

On the other hand, the innovative character of his propositions in the face of both the European and Brazilian prospect contributed to a cautious appropriation of his work, like the reading made by Amoroso Lima, who needed time to "digest" the democratic and pluralistic ideas postulated by the author as they were in conflict with the entire conservative base of his thinking, inherited from his relationship with Jackson de Figueiredo

As a result, the influence of Jacques Maritain over Amoroso Lima, or, as you wish, the latter's appropriation of Maritain's ideas, constituted a long process throughout the 1930s and 1940s and was expressed in Amoroso Lima's writing fragmented Lima's greatest difficulty was understanding, accepting and putting into practice Jacques Maritain's call regarding the need to build a society where Christians and non-Christians could live together in broad conditions of equal rights. The acceptance and adoption of a more progressive and democratic posture by Amoroso Lima only occurred at the end of 1942.

In order for the Catholic Brazilian intellectual to reach the democratic question proposed by Maritain, it was necessary to overcome a complex, difficult relationship of inner conflict. In reality, the Catholic Church in Brazil needed a militant Catholic intelligentsia on a daily basis and Amoroso Lima, as a Catholic leader, needed to provide immediate answers to the needs of the Church and take on positions that, often times, could not be presented in a way that was distant from that desired by the hierarchy or that represented a rupture. That was at least until around 1942. However, as the years went by, having better accepted Jacques Maritain's formulations and revised his own conceptions, values and postures in the face of the national and international conjuncture, Amoroso Lima started to defend more progressive positions in favor of freedom, as well as democratic and autonomous in terms concerning the Church. His new postures were expressed in a practical way, through the condemnation of the Estado Novo, of totalitarianism and the defense of freedom and popular sovereignty.

It was in the course of a wide spectrum of social, political, religious and cultural changes, that took place in Brazil in the first decades of the 20th century, that the intellectual Amoroso Lima acted decisively in favor of a project of organization and systematization of the political forces around the Catholic church. Within this project, the Dom Vital Center, the magazine *A Ordem*, the Catholic Action and the Catholic Electoral League played a fundamental role, alongside a network of Catholic educational institutions and, later, with the founding of the CDP.

Finally, if it was in 1928 that Amoroso Lima converted to Catholicism through his contact with Jackson de Figueiredo and moved towards conservative and authoritarian thinking, we can say that it was around 1946 that he made a new conversion, made possible by his relationship with another intellectual, the philosopher Jacques Maritain, but now towards a new openness, progressive and in favor of freedom and democracy.

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