

SPIRITUAL REGENERATION AND ULTRA-NATIONALISM:
THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF PEDRO ALBIZU CAMPOS AND
PLÍNIO SALGADO IN 1930S PUERTO RICO AND BRAZIL

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Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Latin American Studies

May 2009

Nashville, Tennessee

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To those who have been covering
thousands of miles by my side,
with their feet and their eyes,
and who have been treasuring
what I continue calling home

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The *Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico* (PNPR) and the *Ação Integralista Brasileira* (AIB) are two of several political movements in Latin America and elsewhere during the turbulent decade of the 1930s that asserted a nationalist and revolutionary platform through military-like internal organization and recourse to violence. These parties, although their rank-and-file was always a small minority of the population, were crucial players in the political life of their respective countries, and exerted on them an influence that was broader and more significant than their size and duration could apparently reveal. The extent of this presence has surely to do with the two figures who built and energetically led the two organizations: Pedro Albizu Campos (1891-1965), who became president of the PNPR in 1930, and Plínio Salgado (1895-1975), who founded the AIB in 1932. They are peculiar characters who combined their efforts as political activists with an ambitious and refined intellectual production that provided the ideal basis on which their movements operated on the public scene. Their analysis of global and local circumstances, their values and ideals, their conceptions of the human being, society and state, their political programs, in short, their ideology, are the subject of my research. Some heuristic notions that European scholars of fascist studies developed since the 1990s, with the double purpose of providing a more focused designation of the phenomenon and of starting a broader and promising operation of comparative history, within and outside Europe, constitute the theoretical framework of

my work. Specifically, I employ the concepts of “political religion”, as it was elaborated and used by Emilio Gentile, and Roger Griffin’s formulation of “generic fascism”.

The primary sources of my work are pamphlets, speeches, articles, and books produced by Albizu and Salgado immediately before and during the period of peak of their parties’ activity, that is, between 1930 and 1937. The former year witnessed the election of Albizu as president of the PNPR, which consequently experienced a striking change in its platform, and the embryonic idea of the AIB by Salgado: significantly, at the time both figures were just back from long and intense journeys, in Latin America and Europe respectively. The latter year – 1937 – marked the dramatic end of the centrality of those two experiences, as a consequence of traumatic events in their countries: in Puerto Rico, an escalation of violence between pro-independence militants and U.S. colonial authorities led to the incarceration and conviction of Albizu and other nationalist officers in late 1936; in Brazil, the schemes that President Vargas hatched to remain in power ended, in November 1937, in a coup and the establishment of the *Estado Novo*, which banned all the political parties and, in 1939, forced Salgado to exile in Portugal. The majority of the primary sources are available in periodicals and volumes published at the time, and now preserved in libraries and archives in Puerto Rico, Brazil, and the United States. A few recent anthologies of Albizu and Salgado’s texts are still accessible, and are particularly useful to study the intellectual trajectory of the Puerto Rican leader, who, unlike his Brazilian counterpart, was not a systematic publisher of his work and did not elaborate substantial doctrinaire volumes.

The stimulus to approach these topics in a comparative fashion, in spite of the hazards involved in matching two somehow very distant realities like Puerto Rico and

Brazil, came not simply from some superficial analogies that an observer can recognize in the chronology or in the trajectory of the PNPR and the AIB. Indeed, the main impulse was an evaluation of the literature on those issues produced by historians in the last decades, and what I would dare to define a dissatisfaction with this literature.

The case of Pedro Albizu Campos and the PNPR is, in my opinion, the most ticklish. Since their experience is still considered fundamental in the struggle for Puerto Rican sovereignty, both the party and its head have received considerable attention from intellectuals who have addressed the complex problem of the colonial status of the island. Nevertheless, a celebratory and apologetic purpose clearly prevails against a passionless and methodologically correct analysis in the vast majority of the publications. Followers and relatives of Albizu had a prominent role in the building of his myth,¹ and, in spite of his centrality in the modern history of Puerto Rico, the number of rigorous studies on the subject published by independent scholars is not large.² Some interesting dissertations, theses, and academic essays were also produced, mainly in the United States, but they obviously did not have a notable impact on the general public, due to their limited

¹ By way of example, Albizu's right hand man, the poet and leader of the *Liga Socialista* Juan Antonio Corretjer, published *Albizu Campos* (Montevideo, Uruguay: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1969); another former member of the PNPR and personal friend of Albizu, Juan Rodríguez Cruz, wrote *Pedro Albizu Campos. Un asomo a su vida y su época* (San Juan, PR: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe; Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1994); Albizu's Peruvian wife, Laura Meneses, edited *Albizu Campos y la independencia de Puerto Rico*, 2nd ed. (Hato Rey, PR: Publicacione Puertorriqueñas, 2007).

² The list of noteworthy and somehow innovative studies on Albizu's nationalism could be narrowed to: Taller de Formación Política, *La cuestión nacional: el Partido Nacionalista y el movimiento obrero puertorriqueño (aspectos de las luchas económicas y políticas de la década de 1930-40)* (San Juan, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 1982); Luis Angel Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño, 1930-1939* (San Juan, PR: Editorial Cultural, 1990); Taller de Formación Política, *Pedro Albizu Campos: ¿conservador, fascista o revolucionario? (comentarios al libro de Luis A. Ferrao, Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño)* (Río Piedras, PR: Editorial Grafito, 1991); Kátia Gerab Baggio, *A questão nacional em Porto Rico: o Partido Nacionalista (1922-1954)* (São Paulo, Brasil: FAPESP, Annablume, 1998); Marisa Rosado, *Las llamas de la aurora: acercamiento a una biografía de Pedro Albizu Campos*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Editora Corripio, 1998); Isabel Gutiérrez del Arroyo, *Pedro Albizu Campos o la agonía moral. El mensaje ético de Pedro Albizu Campos* (San Juan, PR: Editora Causa Común Independentista, 2000); José Juan Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa. La nación deseada en el debate intelectual y político puertorriqueño 1920-1940* (San Juan, PR: Ediciones Callejón, 2004).

circulation. Interestingly enough, those works, in comparison with the majority of the published books, show a far deeper attention to the roots and the characteristics of Albizu's ethical and political thought.³ As Kátia Gerab Baggio acutely observed, two goals prevailed in the literature on Albizu and the PNPR: the celebrative one, and the search for the reasons of their failure in achieving Puerto Rican independence from the United States.⁴ Nevertheless, a highly controversial issue that constantly is raised in the political and historiographical debate on Albizu's nationalism is the question of its categorization and, specifically, of its similarities with European fascism. The dispute is usually summarized in every extended essay on the subject,⁵ and is intermingled with current political discussions on the status of Puerto Rico, the attitude of the pro-independence circles, and the legitimacy of violence. In short, scholars who emphasize the affinities of the PNPR with fascism and other radical right-wing experiences produce a variety of evidence: among them, a sympathetic stance toward Spanish conservatism and, to a lesser extent, with Franco's forces during the tumultuous 1930s in Spain; the organization within the party of a paramilitary youth organization, the *Cadetes de la República*, which adopted symbols and principles that resemble those of the Italian *Fasci*

³ Antonio M. Stevens Arroyo, *The Political Philosophy of Pedro Albizu Campos: Its Theory and Practice*, Ibero-American Language and Area Center, Occasional Papers, no. 13 (New York: New York University, 1974); Dolores Stockton Helffrich Austin, "Albizu Campos and the development of a Nationalist ideology, 1922-1932" (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1983); Joseph Michael Ferri, "Pedro Albizu Campos, 'El Maestro': translation and rhetorical analysis of selected speeches" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1988); Antonio M. Stevens Arroyo, *Catholicism as civilization: contemporary reflections on the political philosophy of Pedro Albizu Campos*, Caribbean Institute and Study Center for Latin America, Working Papers, no. 50 (San Germán, PR: Inter American University of Puerto Rico, 1992); Charles R. Venator Santiago, "The other nationalists: Marcus Garvey and Pedro Albizu Campos" (M.A. thesis, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1996); René Antrop-González, *'This school is my sanctuary': the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School*, Julian Samora Research Institute, Working Papers, no. 57 (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, 2003).

⁴ Baggio, *A questão nacional em Porto Rico*, 85-86.

⁵ Concise but complete presentations of the question are Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 60-74; Baggio, *A questão nacional em Porto Rico*, 85-86; Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*, 205-209.

di Combattimento and the Spanish *Falange*; the sectarian organization of the movement, with a centralization of power and a radical intolerance for internal dissidence; finally, the use of violence as a political means, and its justification.⁶ If we exclude those who simply defended Albizu's honor because of personal affection and preconceived ideas, we still find a multiplicity of refutations of the abovementioned interpretations. Two of them, both highly sophisticated, deserve consideration. Firstly, the *Taller de Formación Política*, a Marxist think tank formed in the 1980s, formulated for Albizu the definition of "revolucionario pequeño-burgués".⁷ According to this standpoint, he and his party openly faced, for the first time, the U.S. occupation and its economic consequences, but they also accepted the capitalist system and rejected the notion of class struggle: therefore, the nationalist movement was clearly distinct from the socialist ideology, but, proposing radical reforms to limit the exploitation that capitalism generated, it came close to the interest of the proletariat.⁸ Secondly, José Juan Rodríguez Vázquez numbered the radical nationalism of the 1930s among a liberal and modernizing tradition: the author emphasized its reformist economic and political project, and considered Albizu's idealization of the nation and bitter opposition to the U.S. rule as a simple "mecanismo de defensa político-cultural."⁹ Those two versions, although they were built on very different approaches, converged on a sort of "normalization" of Albizuism. In fact, they proposed to consider it as a stage in a broader process, being it, in the case of the *Taller*, the construction of a popular and socialist pro-independence movement, and, in the case

⁶ These and other arguments constitute the frame of Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, that can be considered the most equilibrated among the researches which incline to an assimilation of Albizu's PNPR to a loosely conceived category of fascism.

⁷ Taller de Formación Política, *La cuestión nacional*, 127.

⁸ Taller de Formación Política, *La cuestión nacional*, 99-206, and Taller de Formación Política, *Pedro Albizu Campos*, 27-79.

⁹ Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*, 171. See also p. 170-194.

of Rodríguez Vázquez, a progressive definition of a political Puerto Rican nationalism, that later found a more moderate and stable formulation with Luis Muñoz Marín.

The dilemma on the role that Albizu's PNPR played into the overall development of Puerto Rican modern history shows affinities with the debate on Plínio Salgado and his *Ação Integralista Brasileira*. In fact, the historiography alternately treated both movements either as extremist deviations from general patterns of their countries' history, or as phenomena that are fully comprehensible in the context of local fragilities and of a highly problematic decade like the 1930s. In the case of the AIB, until the 1960s Brazilian historians virtually ignored the topic, as a direct consequence of what was recently called "um discurso produzido pelos 'vencedores'."¹⁰ As a matter of fact, Salgado's movement not only was banished in 1937, after some years of appreciable popular consensus, but Vargas and his supporters unscrupulously abstracted and rehashed its nationalist and populist claims, eroding the rank and file of the AIB and reusing against it the same propagandistic and repressive devices which informed the anticommunist campaign conducted in the central years of the 1930s.¹¹ Integralism was accused of being deeply influenced by European fascism, in contradiction with its patriotic assertions, and that its proposed policy would have led to direct interferences by foreign regimes in the Brazilian scene. That issue became the critical question in the first wave of academic researches on the movement, in the 1970s. Indeed, the fascist nature of the AIB constitutes the central thesis of the most complete and influential work on the

¹⁰ Edgar Bruno Franke Serratto, "Estudos sobre o Integralismo e seus momentos," in *História e multidisciplinaridade: territórios e deslocamentos: anais do XXIV Simpósio Nacional de História* (São Leopoldo: Unisinos, 2007), 2 [CD-ROM].

¹¹ An innovative analysis of the intricate relationship between Vargas and the AIB, based on the reading of police records through the principles of Discourse Analysis and New Cultural History, is Giselda Brito Silva, "Uma proposta de análise interdisciplinar para os estudos do Integralismo," *Revista de História Regional* 7, no. 2 (2002), 75-98.

subject, *Integralismo: o fascismo brasileiro na década de 30*, published by Héglio Trindade in 1974.¹² This book is above all a sociological study of the movement, that was conducted through a detailed analysis of the national and international context of the time, the internal organization of the party, and the profiles of its leaders and militants, whose personal motivations and ambitions were also explored. The conclusion is that the trajectory of the AIB was the product of the worldwide totalitarian wave of the interwar period, and that its relative popular success was mainly due to the appeal of nationalist and authoritarian ideas among people coming from the middle and lower bourgeoisie, in a difficult domestic economic and political phase. Trindade's allegations stimulated other publications that rejected the validity of an interpretation of Integralism as a Brazilian variety of fascism. These authors, in spite of different methodological and ideological perspectives, centered their arguments on the observation that 1930s Brazil lacked the socio-economic structure that supposedly favored European Fascism, that is, elements such as an advanced industrialization process, a solid urban class, and the threat posed by a strong communist party. These works tried to demonstrate that Salgado's doctrine and party were simply part of the 1920s and 1930s Brazilian debates on identity, nationalism and modernization.¹³ Since the late 1980s, Brazilian historiography showed a renewed attention for Integralism, starting to focus on specific cases in the conduct of the party on the ground and, consequently, producing a shift in the goals of scholarly works on the topic. In fact, the problem of the relations between the AIB and European fascism was

¹² Héglio Trindade, *Integralismo: o fascismo brasileiro na década de 30* (São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro; Porto Alegre: UFRGS, 1974).

¹³ This thesis is shared, for instance, by a Marxist scholar, José Chasin, in his *O integralismo de Plínio Salgado: forma de regressividade no capitalismo hípertardio* (São Paulo: Livraria Editora Ciências Humanas, 1978) and by a less ideologically aligned author, Gilberto Felisberto Vasconcelos, in his *A ideologia curupira: análise do discurso integralista* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1979). See also Serratto, 3-5.

marginalized, and researchers preferred to study, for example, the diffusion of Integralism among immigrant communities,¹⁴ and its pedagogy and means of propaganda.¹⁵ As a result, our knowledge of the AIB, as a movement that was inserted in the complex Brazilian society of the 1930s and interacted with a variety of actors and institutions, was dramatically increased.

The historiography of both the PNPR and the AIB started early to engage with the question of the fascist label and its application to the targeted movements and their ideologists; nevertheless, it is undoubtedly still not univocally solved. Two reasons, in my opinion, could help to understand why this theme was always and continues to be highly controversial. First, fascism is an unwieldy term, being usually employed without a clear definition and, too often, with a pejorative and offensive acceptance: in this way, it alternatively functions, in the hands of those who disapprove a party or a doctrine, as an accusatory tool to discredit it, and, in the hands of those who defend it, as a proof of the bias or bad faith of non laudatory interpretations. Second, fascism is rarely defined as a political or historical concept, and scholars tend to refer to it as a nonspecific notion, focusing on features that in the common sense are associated with fascism, such as authoritarianism, intolerance, violence. This constitutes the rationale for applying a specific historiographical formulation of the notion of fascism to the two cases under consideration, and of focusing the attention more on the ideas and programs devised by the leaders than on the political behavior of the organizations as complex groups. In my opinion, this approach could facilitate further comparative work on the revolutionary

¹⁴ René Ernani Gertz, *O fascismo no sul do Brasil: germanismo, nazismo, integralismo* (Porto Alegre: Mercado Aberto, 1987) and João Fábio Bertonha, *O fascismo e os imigrantes italianos no Brasil* (Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS, 2001).

¹⁵ Rosa Maria Feiteiro Cavalari, *Integralismo: ideologia e organização de um partido de massa no Brasil, 1932-1937* (Bauru, SP: Editora da Universidade do Sagrado Coração, 1999).

right in interwar Latin America, and could permit the formulation of a broader picture of a phenomenon that, being grounded on extreme nationalism, scholars usually address within the borders of the nation-state.¹⁶

¹⁶ A remarkable exception is Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Las Derechas: the Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

CHAPTER II

THEORIES AND METHODS IN FASCIST STUDIES

Fascism, as a political concept and as a subject of academic study, has aroused discussions and polemics since its appearance on the Italian political scene immediately after the First World War. Many factors have made fascism a difficult notion and topic to define and analyze. To begin with, the majority of both advocates and opponents considered fascism more as a pragmatic political movement, or an institutional model for a dictatorial regime, than as a sophisticated ideology, with clearly structured theoretical principles and a clear conceptual profile. This dominant view produced a peculiar contradiction, since it allowed observers and scholars to use the fascist label rather indiscriminately to designate a broad variety of phenomena, in Europe and elsewhere, although many of them adopted different denominations: from German National Socialism to Spanish Falangism, from Romanian Iron Guard to Mexican Synarchism. This constitutes an important difference in comparison with communism, with which fascism was early associated under the broad category of totalitarianism. The system of supranational coordination established around the Socialist Internationals, and later the Comintern, and the ideological global hub of attraction constituted by the Soviet Union had no counterpart among “fascist” movements and regimes, that therefore lacked any form of stable organization outside of national borders.¹⁷ Last but not least, the rapid trajectory that historical forms of fascism experienced in less than three decades (1919-

¹⁷ Some European intellectuals elaborated the project of a sort of “Fascist International” in late 1920s, but it did not materialize. This theme is covered in Michael Arthur Ledeen, *Universal Fascism: The Theory and Practice of the Fascist International, 1928-1936* (New York: H. Fertig, 1972).

1945), from relative success and indubitable centrality during the interwar period, to disaster and marginalization at the end of the Second World War, significantly contributed to the trivialization and emptying of the category, that is still usually employed more in a polemical and accusatorial fashion than as a specific concept pertaining to political science or historiography. Even scholarly research often suffers from a mixing of political judgments with scientific interpretations: a fact that is commonly considered almost unavoidable in the face of such an extreme phenomenon.¹⁸

Nevertheless, in the last twenty years a sort of new consensus on the conceptual tools to be employed to conduct valid research on fascism and the radical right started to take shape within the academic community. Specifically, two key ideas which developed independently are gradually winning historians' approval since the early 1990s: the notion of "political religion", and a specific formulation of the "generic fascism" model.

A range of new political and cultural experiences which surfaced in the last two and an half centuries were occasionally classified as "civil religion", "secular religion", or "political religion", at least since the French Revolution. However, until recent times, these expressions were not defined in a sufficiently sophisticated and effective way. Indeed, a variety of intellectuals and opinion makers used them to refer to aspects of modernity that extended from the conceptions of citizenship and society on which the United States constructed its identity, to the extreme forms of religious language used in the modern-day political scene, for example by fundamentalist terrorism.¹⁹ An early, more precise characterization of "political religion" emerged in the 1930s, when some

¹⁸ A concise and up-to-date introduction to the main traits of Fascism and its interpretations is Tracey A. Pepper, "Fascism," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. Ed. by William A. Darity Jr., vol. 3 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008), 102-105.

¹⁹ Emilio Gentile, "Political Religion: A Concept and its Critics – A Critical Survey," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 6, no. 1 (2005), 19-25.

Christian antifascist intellectuals, such as Frederick Voigt and Luigi Sturzo, reintroduced it

to define the absolute exaltation of the party and of the state, the cult of the leader, mass fanaticism, rites and symbols of collective liturgies, which were fundamental aspects of the new totalitarian regimes. [...] For these scholars political religion was not just a residual of ancient pagan religiousness, nor a phenomenon which could be traced back to the most remote epochs [...], but it was a consequence of modernity and of secularisation. It was connected to mass society, to the decline of traditional religions, to the spreading of irrationalism and activism, to the expansion of bureaucratic power of the state, to the ‘new Machiavellianism’ of totalitarian leaders and parties, who made use of fanaticism of the mass to impose their tyranny.²⁰

After four decades in which the notion of “political religion” had not played a significant role in scholarly work on Fascism, two crucial elements of this early definition were reclaimed by the Italian historian Emilio Gentile in the late 1980s in order to mold a new interpretative tool: that is, the profound connection between “political religion” and both totalitarianism and modernity.²¹ Indeed, during the twentieth century, in particular in its first half, some movements, distributed on a broad spectrum of political positions, had “acquired the aura of sacredness up to the point of asserting, in an exclusive and complete way [...] the prerogative to define the ultimate meaning and the fundamental goal of human existence on earth.”²² This novel pretension defines the very nucleus of the idea of totalitarianism, whose meaning includes the aim not only of wielding a “total” control over institutions and people’s public life, but also of penetrating into consciences and

²⁰ Gentile, 25.

²¹ Gentile, 27-28.

²² Gentile, 29.

imposing specific worldviews and values.²³ Second, this formulation also contributes to the debate on modernity, in particular because it contradicts

the theory of secularisation intended as an irreversible process of the ‘disenchantment of the world’, accompanied by the progressive disappearance of the sacred in modern society along with the withdrawal of religion from within the private sphere. [... On the contrary, we witnessed] a ‘metamorphosis of the sacred’, that is, the rise in modern societies, even the most advanced, of new forms of sacralisation, independent from traditional religions.²⁴

Parallel to the development of the interpretational category of “political religion”, the notion of “generic fascism” was taking shape in the lively British field of fascist studies. After gathering and revising the chief theoretical contributions of several scholars, dating back at least to the pioneering studies on fascist ideology which George Mosse conducted in the 1960s,²⁵ during the last decade the British historian Roger Griffin firmly established a new consciousness of the fact that culture and ideas, not policies and outward appearance, better define fascism, especially when the complex task of identifying its applicability to doctrines and movements materialized outside Italy and Germany is at stake.²⁶ Firstly, Griffin rejects the superficial, empirical approach that consists in compiling “a discursive check-list of characteristics” to expand or reduce the label of fascism. Similarly, the British historian contests Marxist and neo-Marxist conceptions of the phenomenon as “an exhibition of capitalism’s ruthless survival

²³ Peter Baehr, “Totalitarianism,” in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. Ed. by Marianne Cline Horowitz, vol. 2 (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2005), 2342-2348.

²⁴ Gentile, 30-31.

²⁵ The crucial text in this respects is George L. Mosse, “Introduction: The Genesis of Fascism,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 1, no. 1 (1966): 14-26.

²⁶ Critics and detractors, like the Australian scholar Richard J.B. Bosworth, defined this shift “culturalism”, or “culturalist turn”, insinuating an evident, pejorative equation with “postmodernism” and the “linguistic turn”. See Richard J.B. Bosworth, *The Italian Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism* (London; New York: Arnold, 1998), 226-229.

instinct” in the face of its irreversible historical crisis.²⁷ The second step, in view of the limits shown by both too simplistic and too ideological models, lies in isolating a “fascist minimum”, a core element that could define the cultural basis on which fascism developed in its varieties, accepting the fact “that fascism is externalized itself in a wide range of specific manifestations shaped by particular conjunctures of historical forces.”²⁸ Griffin successfully identified the heart of fascism in the idea of “palingenesis”, that is the necessity, for human society, of a “rebirth”, of a radical change that primarily applies to ethics and only subsequently, as a consequence, to other spheres of public life, such as economy and politics. More specifically, Griffin molded the definition of “generic fascism” – a general category that is applicable in diverse regions and epochs – as a “palingenetic populist ultra-nationalism”. The term “ultra-nationalism” refers to the idea that the fundamental identity and sense of belonging of human beings lie in a specific national community; within the borders of this last, a charismatic leader directly appeals to the masses and constructs a personality cult – notion of “populism” – in order to achieve a deep spiritual and cultural renewal – “palingenesis” – and, through that, a “new” man and a “new” civilization. Historically, the conjuncture of those three elements started with “the widespread obsession in fin-de-siècle Europe with the degeneracy of liberal civilization and its urgent need for moral regeneration.”²⁹

In conclusion, two important aspects of these theoretical advances in the field of fascist studies should be highlighted. First, relevance and, especially, reciprocal

²⁷ Roger Griffin, “The Primacy of Culture: The Current Growth (or Manufacture) of Consensus within Fascist Studies,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 1 (2002), 22. See also p. 26-29 for Griffin’s cogent argumentation about the implicit, sometimes unconscious, acceptance of the emphasis on culture in the recent works of some important historians who are doubtful about, or critical of, this new approach.

²⁸ Roger Griffin, “Fascism,” in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. Edited by Maryanne Cline Horowitz, vol. 2 (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2005), 798.

²⁹ Griffin, “Fascism,” 795. See also p. 798 and Roger Griffin, *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (London: Arnold, 1998), 12-15.

compatibility between the concepts of “political religion” and “generic fascism” as a “palingenetic populist ultra-nationalism” were recognized by their fathers, Emilio Gentile³⁰ and Roger Griffin, respectively. The latter clearly stated that his

interpretation is fully consistent with recent theories of totalitarianism that place an emphasis on its bid to bring about an anthropological revolution, and on seeing the political religion that it institutes not as an exercise in collective brainwashing but as a means to transform society’s political and moral culture.³¹

Second, Griffin himself emphasized the fact that the concept of “generic fascism”, as he uses it in academic research, “is not a reified ‘essence’, but an ideal type with a purely heuristic function.”³² This distinction is particularly significant for my purpose, since it also entails a method and a scope that significantly differ from other uses of the label “fascism” in cases like the *Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico* and the *Ação Integralista Brasileira*, that is, when the analysis concerns figures, organizations, and ideas that one does not commonly associate with fascism. I do not intend to unveil hidden connections, or direct processes of imitation, between the movements under consideration and hypothetical European counterparts, although some historical evidence is available.³³ Neither do I try to disqualify the ideologists of the PNPR and the AIB linking them with such a discredited term like fascism. For my purpose, “political religion” and “generic

³⁰ Gentile, 28.

³¹ Griffin, “Fascism,” 800.

³² Griffin, “The Primacy of Culture,” 37.

³³ In the case of the PNPR, for example, its youth paramilitary organization, the *Cadetes de la República*, was constructed between 1931 and 1933 according to the same principles of the Italian *Avanguardisti* and *Balilla* corps, whose statute was translated into Spanish and published on the PNPR’s newspaper *La Nación* in December 1931 (see Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 311-321). The AIB, on the other hand, from January 1937 to January 1938 was secretly funded by fascist Italy through its consulate in São Paulo, with the aim of facilitating the takeover of Salgado’s faction and the institution of a friendly regime in Brazil. This experiment in subversive diplomacy is explored in Angelo Trento, “Relações entre fascismo e integralismo: o ponto-de-vista do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros Italiano,” *Ciencia e Cultura* 34, no. 12 (1982), 1601-1613; Ricardo Antônio Silva Seitenfus, “Ideology and Diplomacy: Italian Fascism and Brazil (1935-1938),” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64, no. 3 (1984), 503-534; Juri Bottura, “Un esperimento di politica estera ideologica. L’Italia fascista e le relazioni diplomatiche con il Brasile” (*Laurea* thesis, Università degli Studi di Trento, 2005), 117-138.

fascism” are conceptual tools to read and interpret the subjects of my study in a new light. I expect, in this way, to highlight the density and complexity of the ideological apparatus that substantiates 1930s Puerto Rican Nationalism and Brazilian Integralism, and to show that those are two specific varieties of a much broader cultural and political trend that involved a substantial portion of the world at that time. Thanks to the comparative approach, I will hopefully be able to show how even radical nationalist phenomena could be better understood if observed also from the outside of national borders.

CHAPTER III

PUERTO RICO AND BRAZIL IN THE LATIN AMERICAN AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE 1930S

The 1930s decade is commonly defined as an era of deep and widespread crisis that affected all the spheres of social life and produced drastic changes in both domestic and international politics. The discourses on the crisis and its solutions constitute the linchpin of Albizu and Salgado's thought, and their movements developed and enjoyed some popular approval also thanks to local consequences of the international situation. Therefore, it is advisable to briefly present the main characteristics of the turbulence and transformations that occurred during this period, starting with a general overview of world history, then outlining the overall conditions in Latin America, and finally focusing on the two cases under examination, Puerto Rico and Brazil, in order to portray and contextualize the trajectory of the PNP and the AIB over the decade.

A central event of this problematic phase undoubtedly was the so called Great Depression. The instability and frailty of the financial and economic international system appeared clear after the New York stock market crash in October 1929, with damaging and sudden effects on prices, credit, employment, production, and trade. Nevertheless, the origins of this world recession should be traced back to the policies implemented in Europe and the United States after the First World War. In the belief that the wounds provoked by the most destructive conflict in human history could have been healed through the circulation of capital and commodities, the governments of Great Britain and the United States, with the active support of London and New York bankers and

financiers, promoted a reopening of world markets, after the phase of protectionism and autarchy required by the war. During the 1920s, the recovery of the European economy was fueled by British and U.S. capital, and tariffs on imports and exports were held down. However, some elements of serious instability remained, such as the unsolved dispute between Germany and France on war reparations, and new ones emerged. In particular, the reintroduction of the gold standard by the British government, in 1925, made the pound sterling the currency of reference for the international system, although the country lacked a healthy economy to support it. Moreover, in the United States inexpensive credit led to excessively high debt levels, which coupled with the huge loans given to European countries, fueling personal, business and banks' defaults and, finally, the Wall Street crash itself.³⁴

Some political reactions to the 1929 financial collapse, that could have probably been contained, aggravated the situation, extending the crisis to the entire world economic system. The single most influential decision was the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, passed by the U.S. Congress on June 17, 1930, by which tariffs on imports were unilaterally raised with the goal to stimulate domestic production and commerce. Although the actual increases in duty rates was not large, the immediate result was the retaliation of other governments, in Europe and elsewhere, that also hiked tariffs and started a trend toward protectionist measures. The natural consequence was a rapid and substantial decrease of international trade: comparing 1932 to 1929, the value of the commercialized products in the world market dropped by 39%, the volume of exports

³⁴ Robert D. Boyce, "Why International Finance Mattered: 1919-1939," in *A Companion to International History 1900-2001*, ed. Gordon Martel (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), available from *Blackwell Reference Online*, <http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9781405125741_chunk_g978140512574115> (accessed 24 September 2008).

was reduced by 74%, and export prices fell by 52%.³⁵ Furthermore, that reversal in general attitude toward economics also entailed, over the 1930s, an expansion of state participation in economy and society, and different governmental measures to fight poverty and protect workers: that is the case, for example, of the British unemployment benefit system implemented in 1931, of French 1936 employment legislation, and of Roosevelt's New Deal in the United States. Nevertheless, state interventionism also took more authoritarian forms: the nationalist and autarchic model represented by fascist Italy, where Mussolini's regime was able, to a certain extent, to protect the country from the global crisis, excited admiration in several circles, in Europe and elsewhere. Where the severe effects of the economic depression coupled with expansionist tendencies and a widespread sense of humiliation for the defeat in the Great War and the new order established by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the idea of a strong, regulating and militaristic state found acceptance: that is obviously the case of the rise to power of Hitler's National Socialism in Germany, but also, to a lesser degree, of some dictatorships in Eastern Europe and of imperial Japan.³⁶

Another crucial destabilizing factor was the diffusion of communism. After the 1917 Russian Revolution and the consolidation of the Soviet Union in 1922, Communist parties were created all over the world and found in Lenin's Third International a strict coordinating authority that set standard programs and policies for the local branches. The threat of a socialist revolution played a capital role in the mobilization of the masses by

³⁵ Charles H. Feinstein, Peter Temin, and Gianni Toniolo, *The World Economy between the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 94.

³⁶ Antony Best and others, *International History of the Twentieth Century* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004) is a reliable overview of the surfacing of aggressive nationalisms in Asia (p. 58-79) and Europe (p. 152-184) on the eve of the Second World War. The best and most accessible picture of European varieties of fascism, with considerable attention for comparison and international connections, is Philip Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919-1945* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003).

conservative elites and nationalist bourgeoisie, contributing to the general trend toward radicalization of politics that the consequences of the financial and economic crisis aggravated.³⁷ The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), fought between Franco's Christian nationalists and a heterogeneous coalition of communists, socialists, anarchists, and liberals, was only the most prominent and intense of the internecine political struggles which broke out in numerous countries during the decade. It became a transnational emblem of the destructive power of conflicting ideologies and anticipated, in terms of brutality and complexity, the imminent Second World War.³⁸

The economic depression and the political instability of the 1930s had serious repercussions also on Latin America. During the 19th century, and particularly in its final decades, the subcontinent was increasingly integrated into the international trade and financial market. In general terms, Spanish America and Brazil produced and exported raw materials – mainly agricultural and farm produce, and mineral ores – in exchange for finished products and capital investments from developed economies, especially Great Britain and, increasingly, the United States. This dynamic surely contributed to a gradual process of modernization and economic growth in the Latin American nations, but also exposed the latter to a hazardous dependency on the trends of European and North American economy. During the years of the First World War, for example, the inevitable decrease in the volumes of international trade caused by the conflict critically damaged

³⁷ Matthew Worley, ed., *In Search of Revolution: International Communist Parties in the Third Period* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004) presents a variety of essays on the communist movements all over the world during the 1930s, including Brazil (Marco Santana, "Moscow in the Tropics: The Third Period, Brazilian Style," 360-372). The introductory chapter (Matthew Worley, "Courting Disaster? The Communist International in the Third Period," 1-17) provides an overview of the Third International's positions and policies in the face of the world depression.

³⁸ A brief but complete overview of this crucial conflict is Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). A recent work that treats the topic from a diplomatic history perspective and emphasizes its transnational significance is Michael Alpert, *A New International History of the Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

Latin American countries, which only in part capitalized on that situation promoting import substitution through domestic industrial production. Latin America participated in the liberalization wave of markets promoted after the war by the winning powers, and during the 1920s the trend toward the consolidation of the role of the United States, in commercial relations and as provider of capitals, strengthened, with the concurrent weakening of the British position. As a matter of fact, “between 1913 and 1929 U.S. imports from Latin America rose by 110.6 percent, while, Latin American imports from the United States rose by 161.2 percent.” Moreover, in 1929 the value of U.S. investments in the region was more than three times that of 1914.³⁹ Not surprisingly, due to this integration in a dependent position, Latin America was dragged into the Great Depression of the 1930s, experiencing an abrupt cut in foreign investment, a collapse in trade volumes, and a drop in the price of commodities, which in 1932 had collapsed to a 36 percent of those that were effective in 1928:⁴⁰ as a consequence, income and governmental budget contracted. The new protectionist policies implemented in the United States and in Europe evidently impaired recovery in the subcontinent, whose financial stability and economic fortunes mainly depended on exports.

The failure of the liberal exchange model prompted important political changes. In different circles, new modernizing projects were elaborated around the key ideas of industrialization with support of the state and protection from foreign competition, cooperation among classes, infrastructural investments, and a more efficient political system. Since the 1930s, several Latin American nations – and, among them, the biggest

³⁹ Victor Bulmer-Thomas, *The Economic History of Latin America since Independence* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 157 (note 17) and 158 (table 6.2).

⁴⁰ Bulmer-Thomas, *The Economic History of Latin America*, 192 (table 7.2). See the entire chapter on the 1930s, p. 189-231.

three, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico – experienced different versions of those innovative endeavors, generally categorized under the label of populism, because of the leading role of a charismatic figure in reshaping economy, society, and politics. Developments plans were generally accompanied by nationalist and anti-communist rhetoric and policies: the goal of contrasting the attraction held by socialist, internationalist ideas on the emerging urban working class, for example, explains the realization of embryonic forms of welfare and employment legislation.⁴¹

The *de facto* integration to U.S. economy of Latin American countries' productive systems was formalized in the case of Puerto Rico.⁴² After its annexation to the United States as a result of the 1898 Spanish-American War, the island experienced a new colonial rule that made it unique. The civil government created in 1900 with the Foraker Act established the institutional framework that, with some minor adjustments, characterized the administration of Puerto Rico until the late 1940s: although Puerto Ricans could elect a legislative assembly, the key position of governor was assigned by U.S. authorities, who also appointed the members of judicial power. The occupation brought economic and infrastructural advancements, but the weak productive system of the island was rapidly converted to sugar cane monoculture, under the control of big U.S. companies and completely dependent on the trends of the U.S. market. Although education benefited from more investments, English was imposed as the teaching

⁴¹ Joel Wolfe, "Populism and Developmentalism," in *A Companion to Latin American History*, ed. Thomas H. Holloway (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), available from *Blackwell Reference Online*, <http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9781405131612_chunk_g978140513161221> (accessed 24 September 2008).

⁴² A very insightful and readable portrait of Puerto Rico in the early decades under the U.S. rule is César J. Ayala and Rafael Bernabé, *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 33-135: Albizu's PNPR is discussed on p. 105-110. A more concise, but still valuable overview of the 1898-1940 period is Fernando Picó, *History of Puerto Rico: A Panorama of Its People* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2006), 231-263.

language, as well as the official administrative tongue, provoking widespread discontent. Local elites, although not close-knit, for different reasons accepted, or even supported, U.S. rule: during the first two decades of the century, what was called *nacionalismo cultural*,⁴³ or *nacionalismo moderado*,⁴⁴ prevailed. Puerto Rican intellectuals and politicians, moving with different nuances into a liberal and reformist framework, considered U.S. occupation as an opportunity for the material and cultural progress of the island, into a dynamic of benign influence by a developed, modern civilization on a backward, traditional society. The breaking of this generalized consensus only occurred in the 1930s, and the *Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico* (PNPR) led by Pedro Albizu Campos was the main agent of this change.

The PNPR⁴⁵ was founded on September 17, 1922 by the fusion of three pro-independence associations under the leadership of José Coll Cuchí. The establishment of this new organization was the consequence of two main events, occurred at the beginning of the decade, that reawaken the independence cause. Firstly, in 1921 the new governor Emmet Montgomery Reilly started to openly back the process of forced “Americanization” of the island, and to demonstrate hostility toward the participation of the local political elite in the administration of the island. Secondly, in 1922 the major Puerto Rican party, the *Partido Unión*, proposed for the first time the formula of the *Estado Libre Asociado* – an autonomous state subordinate to the U.S. control – as a viable option to solve the uncertainty of the political status. Nevertheless, the PNPR was more “un club cultural semiprivado integrado básicamente por profesionales y hombres

⁴³ Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*.

⁴⁴ Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*.

⁴⁵ The best presentations of the trajectory of the PNPR are Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, and Baggio, *A questão nacional em Porto Rico*.

de letras,”⁴⁶ than a real political actor: it quietly defended the idea of Puerto Rican nationhood without investing any energy in recruitments and campaigns, and obtaining just a few hundreds of votes in the legislative elections held in 1924 and 1928.

Meanwhile, in 1924, a young, brilliant lawyer had entered the party, after a brief disappointing experience in the *Partido Unión*: Pedro Albizu Campos.⁴⁷ Born in Ponce in 1891, Albizu was the illegitimate mulatto son of a black, illiterate field hand woman and of an employee of the U.S. customs, who came from a poor landed family that had escaped from Venezuela at the time of independence.⁴⁸ Thanks to a scholarship awarded by the Masonic lodge of his hometown, in 1912 Albizu was able to start his higher education at the University of Vermont and, one year later, to transfer to Harvard University. In Boston, Albizu was in close contact with intellectuals and groups which supported Irish and Indian independence, and also volunteered in the First World War as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army (1917-1919). After his graduation in law in 1921, he decided to come back to his motherland and got involved in active politics. Considering the *Partido Unión* too moderate and connected to the colonial power, Albizu joined the PNPR in 1924, starting a career that took him, in the same year, to the vice-presidency of the organization and, between 1927 and 1930, to be the official Nationalist representative in a propaganda journey through the Caribbean and Latin America.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 40.

⁴⁷ The biographical information on Pedro Albizu Campos are in Aline Frambes-Buxeda, ed., *Huracán del Caribe: vida y obra del insigne puertorriqueño, Don Pedro Albizu Campos* (Hato Rey, PR; San Juan, PR: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, 1993), and in Juan Rodríguez Cruz, *Pedro Albizu Campos. Un asomo a su vida y su época* (San Juan, PR: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe; Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1994).

⁴⁸ In Ferrao’s opinion, Albizu’s peculiar origins represented “esa doble dimensión, a un tiempo necesaria, contradictoria y compleja, presente en la identidad nacional puertorriqueña aún en tortuoso proceso de formación.” Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 123.

⁴⁹ The details of his activities and encounters during this 30-month travel are presented in María Teresa Cortés Zavala, “Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo latinoamericano en la década de los 30s,” in

When Albizu landed in Puerto Rico, in January 1930, a conflict with the leadership of Coll Cuchí, already maturing when he was abroad, exploded, determining a dramatic shift in the role of the PNPR on the political scene. Albizu was elected president of the party in May 1930 and, with a group of loyal followers, immediately started a campaign for independence and against the United States. Forceful and virulent propaganda brought the Nationalist cause to the forefront and apparently won the support of a considerable sector of the Puerto Rican working class. Nevertheless, it also caused a decade-long hemorrhage of militants, including Coll Cuchí and other leaders, who disagreed with this new aggressive and intolerant standpoint. A number of factors induced the Nationalist leadership to further radicalization. First of all, the dramatic consequences of the collapse of the international price and demand of sugar, provoked by depression, produced a wave of popular discontent and protests, which were also excited by the authoritarian and militarist turn of the colonial administration operated by two new U.S. officers: in October 1933, Col. Francis Elisha Riggs became the head of the colonial police, and, in January 1934, Gen. Blanton Winship took office as governor. Moreover, the elections held in November 1932 were a failure for the PNPR that only won a 1.37 % of the poll. As a result of those events, Albizu and the ruling group of the party decided to boycott the 1936 elections and to accept the use violence, although not overtly, as a means of political struggle.

The movement was gradually militarized, in preparation of an insurrection, and a paramilitary youth organization, the *Cadetes de la República*, was formed, causing bloody confrontations with the police. The escalation of violence led, on February 23,

Albizu Campos y la nación puertorriqueña (San Nicolás de Hidalgo, México: Universidad Michoacana, 1992), 25-48.

1936, to the assassination of Col. Riggs by two nationalists, who were killed by the police after their arrest. Authorities considered the leadership of the PNPR responsible for the disorders, and in March Albizu and other seven leaders of the movement were formally charged with conspiracy. After a controversial trial, on July 31, they were sentenced by a jury composed in its majority by Americans, were imprisoned in San Juan and, later, transferred to Atlanta, Georgia. Initially, the arrest of the party leadership did not stop Nationalist activities: nevertheless, the seventeen pro-independence demonstrators killed by the police on March 21, 1937, in what was called the Ponce massacre, constituted a trauma that, together with the internal rivalry of the leadership and the successive outbreak of the Second World War, further undermined the Nationalist cause. Pedro Albizu Campos completed his jail sentence in 1947 and returned to Puerto Rico, already in a poor state of health. Nationalist insurrections in 1950 and 1954 caused him a new detainment with an eighty-year prison sentence. In 1956 he suffered a thrombosis that gradually rendered him mute and semi-paralyzed and, a few months after being pardoned, on April 21, 1965, passed away, having spent more than twenty-four of the last thirty years of his life jailed or in a prison hospital.

The integration into the international economic system in a dependent position also characterized a country of continental dimensions and with a consolidated independence status such as Brazil. During the four decades of the so called First Republic (1889-1930),⁵⁰ the former Portuguese colony was governed according to the federalist and presidential system that the 1891 Constitution sanctioned after the

⁵⁰ Useful summaries of the history of Brazil during the First Republic and the Vargas' years, from different perspectives, are Marshall C. Eakin, *Brazil: The Once and Future Country* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 37-46; Thomas E. Skidmore, *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 65-125; and Joseph Smith, *History of Brazil, 1500-2000: Politics, Economy, Society, Diplomacy* (London; New York: Longman, 2002), 86-194.

overthrow of the Empire. Real power was distributed according to the economic weight of the states of the union, and the agro-exporting model based on the massive production of coffee favored the emergence of the elites of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, who during the entire period shared the majority of the executive positions, beginning with the presidency. The ruling class of less powerful states, and local influential groups in general, usually exchanged their allegiance to the central government for the maintenance of status quo in the periphery, where a mixture of paternalism and violence assured order. Indeed, the vast majority of the population was excluded from suffrage, and state republican parties, although ideologically feeble and uncoordinated, easily controlled both the local and the national votes.

The oligarchic system started to show its fragility in the early 1920s, when discontent for its conservatism and lack of initiative produced both an electoral alliance of middleweight states' elites, that was defeated in the 1922 elections, and a series of military upheavals. Middle-ranking officers from the middle class and with an over the average cultural and technical formation were the protagonists of this ferment. The so called *tenentismo* advocated a progressive and modernizing platform, and a political role for the military that in Brazil, historically, had not been substantial. The insurrections that took place during the decade were always successfully repressed by the loyalist forces, but contributed to further erode the basis of the First Republic. A combination of factors, including the collapse of the price of coffee on international markets after the beginning of the crisis in 1929, and the alienation of the Minas Gerais' elite from the majority, rendered the 1930 presidential elections a turning point. The candidate from São Paulo, Júlio Prestes, won, but the opposing coalition, under the leadership of the defeated

contender, Getúlio Vargas, revolted after some months of hesitation. What became known as the 1930 Revolution lasted a month, from October 3 to November 4, and removed from national supremacy the traditional oligarchy.⁵¹ Since the sponsors of the insurrection were, to a large extent, former members of the governmental circles, as Getúlio Vargas himself, the regime change initially did not entail radical transformations, also because the heterogeneous alliance lacked a specific, alternative program. As a matter of fact, at the local level, power relations were left untouched. Nevertheless, the events of 1930 brought to power Getúlio Vargas, who, mainly thanks to his political acuity and his talents as a mediator of interest groups, was destined to remain on the Brazilian political scene for a quarter century.⁵²

During the first two years after the revolution (1931-1932), Vargas governed Brazil as provisional president, concentrating in his hands both the executive and the legislative powers: the parliament, indeed, was dissolved, and the 1891 Constitution suspended. However, a contrast emerged between two different constituents of the new ruling class: on the one hand, the inheritors of the 1920s *tenentismo*, who favored radical reforms under an authoritarian and centralizing regime; on the other hand, elements of the old oligarchies, particularly from São Paulo, that had lost its centrality and, as the other states, was now administered by an *interventor*, that is, an official appointed by the president. Although Vargas, in early 1932, decreed an electoral reform, conceding women's suffrage, and called elections for a constituent assembly, in July the opposition

⁵¹ The classical analysis of these events is Boris Fausto, *A revolução de 1930: historiografia e história* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1970).

⁵² On the figure of Getúlio Vargas, not surprisingly, an extensive bibliography exists. The most accessible biography in English is Robert M. Levine, *Father of the Poor? Vargas and His Era* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Two recent contributions are Boris Fausto, *Getúlio Vargas* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2006), and Jens R. Hentschke, ed., *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

mobilized the population of São Paulo against the government, in what was called the Constitutionalist, or *Paulista*, Revolution. A regional insurrection that also promoted separatist projects was not able to arouse sympathies from other states, and since Vargas maintained the support of the military, governmental repression was successful.⁵³

The failure of the armed struggle against the provisional structure of power that was established after the 1930 Revolution opened, in compliance with a specific design by Vargas, a new stage of cooperation among diverse interest groups in search for a compromise. This purpose was accomplished in the assembly elected in 1933 and, especially, in the 1934 Constitution. The new charter combined some elements of the liberal and republican traditions – such as the declaration of citizens rights and the federal system – with key requests coming from nationalist reformists, like an embryonic employment legislation, public education, state control over water and mineral resources, and the representation of professional categories in the congress, according to a sort of rough corporatist project. More importantly, Vargas obtained from the constituent assembly, after its transformation into the transitory national parliament, a legitimate, four-year presidential term, starting in July 1934. Through his indefatigable policy of negotiation and compromise, Getúlio Vargas achieved his main goal: to hold power, independently of the changing political balances and institutional arrangements.⁵⁴

The Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932 played a crucial role also in the life of Plínio Salgado (1895-1975) and in the formation of the Integralist movement. Plínio

⁵³ A standard study on the 1932 Constitutionalist Revolution is Stanley E. Hilton, *A guerra civil brasileira: história da Revolução Constitucionalista de 1932* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1982).

⁵⁴ Robert M. Levine, *The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-1938* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1970) constitutes a detailed analysis of this short but decisive period of Brazilian modern history.

Salgado⁵⁵ was born in 1895 to a traditional, conservative family in São Bento do Sapucaí, São Paulo. He was largely self-taught with little formal education. After his father's death in 1911, Salgado worked as school teacher and journalist. As a consequence of the sudden death of his wife, in 1918, he embraced a spiritualist Christian faith and, two years later, moved to São Paulo, where he started contributing to the *Correio Paulistano*, the official organ of the oligarchic *Partido Republicano Paulista* (PRP). His move to the state capital marked the beginning of a rather contradictory cultural and political trajectory, that lasted more than a decade. In fact, he participated in the renowned *Semana de Arte Moderna*, in 1922, that was the founding moment of Brazilian Modernism in literature and art. In 1926 he published with success his first novel, *O estrangeiro*, in which the corruption of the oligarchic system was opposed to the authenticity and the spontaneous nationalism of the rural people. In spite of his activism in nationalist and *indigenista* movements, in 1928 he took a seat in the state parliament for the PRP and supported the governmental candidate Júlio Prestes against Getúlio Vargas in the 1930 presidential elections. During that crucial year for the history of Brazil, Salgado left for a long journey through Europe and the Middle East, that he would later consider decisive for the incubation of his political project.⁵⁶ Returning to Brazil in the middle of the insurrection, Salgado initially defended the First Republic against what he considered just another version of decadent liberalism, but, after the victory of the revolutionary movement, he started cooperating with *tenentista* circles and opposing the constitutionalist faction. In 1931 he published the *Manifesto da Legião Revolucionária*,

⁵⁵ Paulo Brandi, "Salgado, Plínio," in *Dicionário Histórico-Biográfico Brasileiro, pós-1930*, ed. Alzira Alves de Abreu (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas Editora, 2001), s.v. [CD-ROM].

⁵⁶ Plínio Salgado, *Despertemos a Nação!* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1935), 15-17. This passage will be discussed at length in a later chapter.

in which he proposed the construction of an authoritarian, centralized, and nationalist state, and participated in the foundation of a newspaper, *A Razão*, that became the main mouthpiece in São Paulo for the provisional government, against the restoration of the republican oligarchy. Finally, in February 1932, Salgado constituted the *Sociedade de Estudos Políticos*, that united anti-liberal young people and intellectuals who favored the adoption by the provisional government of a political doctrine inspired by European fascism and authoritarian nationalism. On the eve of the Constitutionalist Revolution, the headquarters of the political organization were attacked and burned, and Salgado, who had already written the foundational manifesto of the *Ação Integralista Brasileira* (AIB) had to await the resolution of the conflict to launch his new movement.

The AIB⁵⁷ was eventually founded in São Paulo, on October 7, 1932, and during 1933 undertook the work of propaganda and proselytism in the entire Brazilian territory: it was, indeed, only the second party in the history of the country to present itself as a national political organization, after the establishment of the Communist Party of Brazil in 1922. In 1934 – the year of the First Integralist Congress in Vitória, Espírito Santo – the AIB acquired a more structured organization, that was inspired by hierarchical and militarist principles, prefiguring the future Integralist State. Plínio Salgado, as the *Chefe Nacional* (“National Leader”), indisputable and perpetual, was assisted by an advisory body and by secretaries of departments that were patterned on governmental ministries. Later, in 1936, other collective organisms were created, as an embryonic stage toward the construction of corporatist institutions. Again in 1934, official party magazines and

⁵⁷ Hélió Trindade is still the principal authority on Brazilian Integralism: his *Integralismo* is the most complete study of the phenomenon, and it is also the base of his “Integralismo,” in *Dicionário Histórico-Biográfico Brasileiro, pós-1930*, ed. Alzira Alves de Abreu (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas Editora, 2001), s.v. [CD-ROM]. The most accessible essay in English is Stanley E. Hilton, “Ação Integralista Brasileira. Fascism in Brazil, 1932-1938,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 9, no. 2 (1972).

newspapers started to be published, and a formal *Milícia Integralista* was created. During the demonstrations promoted by the latter, several episodes of bloody confrontation with the newly formed *Aliança Nacional Libertadora* (ANL)⁵⁸ – a motley progressive, anti-Vargas coalition of communists, socialists, Catholics, and liberals – contributed to the rising atmosphere of turmoil and violence, but also to the popular success of the AIB: in late 1935 there were over a thousand of local branches and about 400,000 militants, and the party was able to elect some state-level representatives.⁵⁹ The disastrous coup against Vargas that the ANL attempted in November 1935 strengthened the anti-communist militancy in the country, and brought to the AIB further approval. With a view to the 1938 presidential elections, in 1936 Salgado decided to prepare his candidacy with mass rallies, with an ambiguous attitude toward the incumbent government, that in some cases prohibited Integralist meetings and arrested activists. Vargas was indeed planning the extension of his presidency beyond the constitutional term accorded to him in 1934: to this end, he ably emphasized the menace posed by extremisms – especially by the left, but also by the AIB – to maintain the support of the public opinion and, more importantly, of the armed forces. A few months before the planned elections, on November 10, 1937, Vargas carried out a coup that established a new authoritarian and populist regime that was called *Estado Novo*.⁶⁰ Salgado initially accepted the new system of government, in the hope of preserving his organization, but, when in December all political parties were disbanded and his efforts to mediate with Vargas failed,

⁵⁸ Alzira Alves de Abreu, “Aliança Nacional Libertadora (ANL),” in *Dicionário Histórico-Biográfico Brasileiro, pós-1930*, ed. Alzira Alves de Abreu (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas Editora, 2001), s.v. [CD-ROM].

⁵⁹ Trindade, “Integralismo”.

⁶⁰ Aspásia Camargo, ed., *O Golpe silencioso: as origens da república corporativa* (Rio de Janeiro: Rio Fundo, 1989) is an authoritative collection of interpretative essays on the 1937 regime change.

conspiratorial plans started to be arranged. The uprising took place in May 1938, but was a complete failure, because of organizational mistakes and lack of militants. The authorities definitively dismantled the clandestine AIB and Salgado, after two brief imprisonments, in May 1939 launched an appeal to his former comrades to avoid any anti-governmental activity: eventually, in June went into exile to Lisbon. Salgado returned to Brazil in 1945, at the beginning of the redemocratization process, and founded a new party, the *Partido de Representação Popular* (PRP), in which he rehashed the original Integralist doctrine. This minor movement lasted, without significant successes, until 1965, when the newborn military dictatorship, that Salgado supported, dissolved all Brazilian parties. Salgado sat in the congress for the ARENA – the pro-dictatorship coalition – until 1974, just one year before his death, in December 1975.⁶¹

⁶¹ Brandi, “Salgado, Plínio.”

CHAPTER IV

DISCOURSES ON THE CRISIS

When comparing Pedro Albizu Campos and Plínio Salgado, the latter indubitably has the most refined philosophical and historical justification for his revolutionary and nationalist political platform. Salgado, a very prolific writer,⁶² devoted hundreds of pages to describing and analyzing what he considered a world that was falling into ruin, with a global outlook that Albizu does not show. Nevertheless, the radical criticism toward the United States that the Puerto Rican politician maintains in his speeches and articles is built on a similar apocalyptic view of the present: a present that, in both authors, is described as the result of specific dynamics of the past, and is conceived as the battlefield on which a precise idea of the future must be formulated and affirmed.

The spiritual impoverishment of the human being is the starting point of Salgado's reflections on the present condition of humanity.

O mundo está morrendo pela ausência do “espírito”.
Ausência do “espírito”...
Como é fácil e, ao mesmo tempo, difícil compreender o que seja o “espírito”! É preciso ter uma noção integral da própria criatura humana. E a Humanidade de hoje perdeu completamente o senso da personalidade, o sentido das proporções e dos limites, a percepção da harmonia das formas, a intuição dos equilíbrios exatos, o sentimento das euforias perfeitas.⁶³

This passage, among other things, demonstrates that the Brazilian intellectual did not build his discourse on a negative anthropology of man. In fact, he states that modern-

⁶² Between 1933 and 1937, Salgado published nine non-fiction books and, during the entire decade, hundreds of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers.

⁶³ Plínio Salgado, “A luz ausente [1936],” in *O pensamento revolucionário de Plínio Salgado*, 2nd ed., ed. Augusta Garcia Rocha Dorea (São Paulo: Voz do Oeste, 1988), 207.

day disequilibrium and disharmony are not a consequence of an evil nature of the human beings, but of a *perdida*, a loss that, by definition, must have took place in specific historical moments. In other words, the “ausência do ‘espírito’” is the product of identifiable historical processes that the author does not hesitate to pinpoint. The first one lies within the realm of politics and ethics, and has a precise origin: the French Revolution.

Desde a Revolução Francesa, outro não tem sido o grito da humanidade
senão aquele que atroou todos os recantos do mundo e do século:
- Liberdade! Liberdade!⁶⁴

The idea of freedom, in Salgado’s opinion, extended its ominous influence well beyond the area of political rights and institutional reforms. In the first instance, “a liberdade política transformou-se em liberdade moral e essa criou a liberdade dos instintos.”⁶⁵ This negative form of freedom that liberalism produced, constitutes a deception for the modern man, who indeed, “quando se julgou livre, estava escravo.”⁶⁶ Salgado insists on the paradox of an illusory emancipation that, through “a morte da disciplina,”⁶⁷ engenders a new, moral slavery. In fact, two traditional institutions that guaranteed the smooth functioning of both private and social life are now dismantled. Salgado writes:

Não admira que se afirme que a moral é um ponto de vista. Não admira que se dê hoje ao amor entre homem e a mulher uma finalidade puramente egoísta.[...] Nem, ainda, que se persigam as religiões em nome da liberdade. [...] Que se atente contra a afirmação integral do amor entre o homem e a mulher, em nome da liberdade do prazer.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Salgado, “Liberdade, caminho da escravidão [1934],” in *Ibid.*, 73.

⁶⁵ Salgado, “Marcha fúnebre [1931],” in *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁶ Salgado, “A luz ausente [1936],” in *Ibid.*, 208.

⁶⁷ Salgado, “Liberdade, caminho da escravidão [1934],” in *Ibid.*, 74.

⁶⁸ Salgado, “Marcha fúnebre [1931],” in *Ibid.*, 6.

Modernity cancelled out the two pillars of family and religion by means of a misunderstood conception of freedom that leads to an unrestrained pursuit of pleasures and to a proliferation of vices. As a consequence, the organization of the Integralist movement would be grounded on the imposition of a strict internal discipline that, according to the leader's intentions, should have been eventually enjoined on the whole country: indeed, Salgado conceived the party as a model and as a prefiguration of the future Brazilian society to be built. Not surprisingly, family and religion will be two constituent elements of the trinity of values that the Integralist motto proposed since the foundation of the movement: *Deus, Pátria, Família*.

The process of moral dissolution that the political ideas of the French Revolution provoked has, according to the author, another pernicious and paradoxical effect, that spreads from ethics and politics to the field of economics. As a matter of fact, in Salgado's view,

esse mesmo homem, que ergueu audaciosamente a cabeça para negar a metafísica, e substituiu a teologia pela crítica, o espiritualismo pelo materialismo, o sentimento da disciplina pela utilidade da disciplina, foi prosseguindo de tal forma que acabou por aceitar uma nova metafísica, [...] uma coisa tão vaga como o paraíso sonhado e uma humanidade mecânica.⁶⁹

This "new metaphysics," this hollow materialistic faith that is leading humanity to perdition is nothing else than the capitalist mode of production, i.e., the economic counterpart of political liberalism in force in the modern world. Nevertheless, Salgado's analysis drastically diverges from the Marxian one, and the following passage shows this substantial difference.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 4

Liberdade! clamavam os patrões e, em nome da liberdade de contrato, passaram a explorar os pobres, e o trabalho humano transformou-se em mercadoria sujeita às leis da oferta e da procura. Liberdade! clamavam, por sua vez, os proletários, os quais, assistindo ao espetáculo de luxo e paganismo de seus chefes, endureceram o coração e lançaram-se nas tremendas lutas de classe, feitas de ódio e de revolta.⁷⁰

In the author's view, modern economic inequalities and exploitation of the workforce produce a far more serious consequence than proletariat's abject living conditions: "the hardening of the heart." Once again, emphasis is placed on moral issues, and decadence, once again, is the trajectory that Salgado detects. He suggests that the "terrible class struggle" should not be explained as a reaction to injustice or oppression, but as the result of envy for masters' wealth and of "hatred." The nostalgia for a golden age of harmonic working relationships reaches its height in the description of another destructive element of the capitalist system: the submission of man to technology, and the commodification of work.

O próprio trabalho já não é um prazer, mas um triste manobrar de manivelas e de alavancas, onde toda a iniciativa do Espírito desapareceu. [...] Não amando mais o trabalho [...]; vendo a "arte" ser substituída pela "técnica"; [...] o homem moderno vai-se tornando um autômato, um boneco em carne e osso, que será possivelmente substituído por um outro boneco de aço e ferro.⁷¹

The concept is later reinforced in the same text.

A redução ao inanimado. A racionalização desracionalizante. O homem-tipo, como a máquina-tipo. O trabalho mercadoria, como o kilowatt-hora. O índice de calorías dos combustíveis. O trabalho como finalidade do trabalho. A morte total do Espírito.⁷²

The industrial revolution, Salgado says, destroyed the traditional conception of work as "art", and made machines compete with humans: the higher levels of efficiency

⁷⁰ Salgado, "Liberdade, caminho da escravidão [1934]," in *Ibid.*, 74.

⁷¹ Salgado, "O mundo que prepara a catástrofe [1931]," in *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 12.

and productivity of the former easily determines their “superioridade social sobre o homem.”⁷³ Moreover, the reduction of man to a simple worker, treated as a “commodity”, erases his personality, the spiritual component to which Salgado’s message appeals. The author condenses this vision in a tragic, literary image, using again the metaphor of “heart” to formulate it: “o observador do nosso tempo conclui que a civilização moderna arrancou o coração do Homem e o atirou aos dentes das máquinas.”⁷⁴

Salgado’s worldview then is based on an utter rejection of modernity, in its ethical, political, and economic constituents: namely, materialism, liberalism, and capitalism. His harsh criticism is formulated on the basis of an idealized, although chronologically vague, vision of the pre-modern past, in which society was supposedly harmonically organized. The project of society, state, and economy that Integralism will offer will be presented as a recovery of this betrayed tradition, but through a novel doctrine formulated by an enlightened leader for a specific national community. Therefore, the constituents of Griffin’s “generic fascism” formula – palingenesis, populism, and ultra-nationalism – are here clearly at stake.

Pedro Albizu Campos lived in a rather different context from Salgado, and this affected the elaboration of his thought. In the early 1930s, a serious economic and political instability characterized both Brazil and Puerto Rico, but the latter was subject to a peculiar condition: it was a colony of the United States. As a consequence, Albizu constructs his perspective on the crisis by means of an analytical device that is typical of anti-colonial discourses: a dualism between the dominant power and the subject people.

⁷³ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁴ Salgado, “Mapa-mundi [1934],” in Ibid., 146.

Albizu's conceptualization of the two poles in dispute marked the difference between the temperate nationalism that prevailed in the island until the 1920s,⁷⁵ and the radical one of the new PNP. Specifically, as the historian Rodríguez Vázquez clearly identifies, the options at issue concerned a qualitative evaluation of Puerto Rico as a people and as a nation.

El cambio de metrópoli [from Spain to the United States, in 1898] significó una ruptura con el pasado que nos dejaba sólo ante dos posibles representaciones del país: la de Puerto Rico como una muchedumbre huérfana no constituida como pueblo o la de la isla como una nación apta para los derechos y las obligaciones que conllevaban la mayoría de edad.⁷⁶

Albizu rejects the prevalent tendency, at the time, toward the vision of Puerto Rico as a “minor” who could have benefited from a wardship by a developed “adult” as the United States. On the contrary, he points out the adverse effects of the U.S. influence on his home country, starting his analysis, unlike Salgado, with economics and not with politics. The denunciation of the economic exploitation suffered by Puerto Rico under colonial status is the pillar of the author's argument. In his opinion, the material benefits brought to the island after 1898, such as the improvements in infrastructures and some welfare state measures, were not comparable with the profound changes produced in the economic structure of the island: indeed, the occupiers favored the concentration of land and resources by U.S. sugar corporations, and, consequently, the development of a monoculture that converted Puerto Rico into a territory fully dependent from the United States. That iniquitous economic and financial relation is clearly exemplified, according to Albizu, by the trade balance figures:

⁷⁵ I refer to the so called *nacionalismo cultural* or *moderado* that I briefly presented in Chapter 3.

⁷⁶ Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*, 158.

Puerto Rico es el quinto mercado en el mundo de la gran patria de Mister Jorge Washington. [...] El balance comercial que ha tenido Puerto Rico a su favor durante treinta y cinco años, asciende a un mil doscientos cincuenta millones en oro. [...] ¿Dónde está, señores, ese inmenso capital en oro de Puerto Rico? [...] Bien, pues los yankis le han robado todo eso al pueblo de Puerto Rico. Lo tienen allá.⁷⁷

The obvious emblem of the unfair exploitation of Puerto Rican resources by U.S. capital was the sugar industry which, after 1898, expanded dramatically and dominated the economic and social structure of the island. Albizu shows an earnest commitment to change the misguided perception that Puerto Ricans shared the profits of this production system.

Ellos dicen que la industria azucarera es puertorriqueña. Vamos a analizarlo. El sesenta por ciento de la industria azucarera es de intereses yankis: [...] Del resto, un veinte por ciento es de intereses extranjeros que no son yankis: son franceses, españoles, etc. Un veinte por ciento es de puertorriqueños, de los cuales, quizás la mitad, están irremisiblemente hipotecados y un diez por ciento están solventes.⁷⁸

The author is quite detailed in his examination of the terrible economic consequences that the monoculture of sugar have on his country. He carefully analyzes, among others, the financial and social costs caused by the imposition of the U.S. bank system with unfavorable conditions for natives, the growth of debts and fiscal imposition, and the concurrent fall of wages and rise of the unemployment rate, in a general pattern of worker exploitation.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the attention that the president of the PNPR pays to economic factors is oriented, as in Salgado's more general treatment of capitalism and

⁷⁷ Quoted with no date in Corretjer, *Albizu Campos*, 23-24. As a matter of fact, "by 1930, almost 95 percent of Puerto Rico's external trade was with the United States," as highlighted in Ayala and Bernabé, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 33.

⁷⁸ Quoted with no date in Corretjer, *Albizu Campos*, 31. According to Ayala and Bernabé (*Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 38-39), in the 1930s US investors owned about one fourth of the plants and half of the production of sugar. In Albizu arguments, evidently, accuracy of figures is less a priority than rhetorical effectiveness of the political message.

⁷⁹ Pedro Albizu Campos, "La esclavitud azucarera [n.d.]," in *República de Puerto Rico* (Montevideo: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1972), 108-110.

industrialization, at unfolding the disruption of previous tried and tested structures. In fact, the bitter opposition to the “sugar slavery” imposed by foreign investors relied, in Albizu’s reflections, not only on a generic sense of usurpation and divestment, but also on the conviction that the model of development imposed by the colonial ruler had drastically altered the economic and social equilibrium created under Spanish domination.⁸⁰ The nexus between the reference to an idealized past and the formulation of a political program for the future is, in this case, explicit: “hay que suprimir el acaparamiento de esos recursos. Tenemos que distribuirlos entre nuestro pueblo. Debe surgir de nuevo la legión de propietarios que teníamos en 1898.”⁸¹ The myth of the existence of a majority of small-scale property owners when the island was controlled by Spain would be crucial in the formulation of the economic platform of the PNP.

Similar to Salgado, Albizu closely connects the economic level to the sphere of ethics, giving to the latter, after all, a substantial preeminence in his discourse. Therefore,

⁸⁰ Albizu clearly operates within the tradition of *hispanismo* and *panlatinismo*, i.e. the widespread cultural trend that developed in the Spanish American intellectual circles since the 1890s. In that decade the United States stepped up their efforts to extend a strong political and economic influence on Latin America, through initiatives such as the first International Conference of American States (1889-1890) and the Spanish-American War (1898). The intellectual circles of the subcontinent reacted through a reevaluation of the Hispanic heritage of their countries, after decades in which Spain was mainly considered as the culprit of Latin American backwardness. A variety of unitary projects for the Spanish American nations were proposed, on the basis not only of contingent economic and political reasons, but also of a fundamental cultural distinction. These intellectuals, in fact, blamed the English-speaking countries both for their imperialist policies, and for the values and conceptions of life that they tried to impose on the rest of the world. Criticisms toward materialism, utilitarianism, and commodification were central in the elaboration of this cultural trend, that however generally remained within the liberal tradition. This is the case of two influential essays such as *Nuestra America* (1891), by the Cuban José Martí (1853-1895), and *Ariel* (1900), by the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó (1871-1917). In the late 1930s, Spanish intellectuals who escaped to Latin America during the civil war gave a contribution to the revitalization and reformulation of this school of thought. On this broad and complex subject, see Fredrick B. Pike, *Hispanismo, 1898-1936: Spanish Conservatives and Liberals and Their Relations with Spanish America* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971); Mabel Moraña, ed., *Ideologies of Hispanism* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005); Carlos A. Jáuregui, *Canibalia: canibalismo, calibanismo, antropofagia cultural y consumo en América Latina* (Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2008), 311-391.

⁸¹ Albizu Campos, “Declaraciones sobre el informe del Instituto Brookings [n.d.],” in *República de Puerto Rico*, 69.

not only does he overtly blame the colonial status, but he also rejects the humanitarian reasons and the myth of prosperity that were propagandized since 1898 by the U.S. authorities, and widely accepted by the Puerto Rican intelligentsia, as a justification for the occupation. On the contrary, “en fin, la nación asintió a su desmembramiento material y moral, anestesiada con las supuestas buenas intenciones.”⁸² In a passage of one of his inflamed speeches, Albizu overtly formulates this close connection between material and moral consequences.

En el terreno económico [the United States] nos han llevado a la ruina con su obra nefasta de penetración y desplazamiento económico. Pero no es solamente el despojo físico sino también el despojo moral tratando de postergar al nativo y de someterlo por todos los medios imaginables, creando una casta de serviles.⁸³

Just as Salgado censures, in his philosophy of history, the Industrial Revolution and the commodification of human work for the moral degradation and submission to technology that distinguish the modern era, his Puerto Rican counterpart indicates as the causes of his country’s annihilation the policies of the invaders, that are passively accepted by the majority of the people. An exemplary case of this dynamic, in which an apparently positive concrete means operates as a force of subjugation is, according to Albizu, the extension to Puerto Rico of the welfare state measures implemented by the Roosevelt administration to curb the economic depression.

Nosotros no hemos heredados aquel orgullo [of the ancestors] porque no tenemos razón para ser orgullosos; tenemos el deber de estar avergonzados porque hemos recibido una gran heredad y hoy somos mendigos, porque eso de la rehabilitación es reducirnos a todos a la mendicidad. Habéis

⁸² Ibid., 63.

⁸³ “La asamblea general nacionalista de ayer. Habla Albizu Campos [*El Mundo*, 12 de mayo de 1930],” in Pedro Albizu Campos, *Obras escogidas*, vol. 1, ed. J. Benjamín Torres (San Juan, PR: Editorial Jelofe, 1975), 83.

perdido la vergüenza cuando hacéis filas para recibir de manos de una muchacha un bollo de pan.⁸⁴

Unsurprisingly, Albizu cannot conceive of his own people accepting emergency relief from the colonizer instead of rising up and pursuing the only definitive solution for Puerto Rican problems: independence. But even more outrageous, in his view, is the fact that the United States finds local supporters on the island, and particularly in the emblematic sector of the sugar industry.

Tropezáis con hermanos que tienen intereses y que son aliados del enemigo yanqui; y esos hermanos nuestros en ningún sitio están mejor representados que en Ponce. Ponce es una zona azucarera y todo azucarero en Puerto Rico es enemigo de Puerto Rico, es enemigo de la independencia de Puerto Rico.

[...]

¿Se puede permitir la alianza con el enemigo en esa forma? No se puede permitir.⁸⁵

This prototypical “enemy of the independence of Puerto Rico”, identified with the natives who cooperate with foreign landowners and managers in the sugar industry, is apparently rather different from the paradigmatic figure that Salgado describes to reinforce its criticism toward the “modern civilization” of individualism, materialism, and capitalism, i.e., the bourgeois. The Brazilian leader resorts to his literary skills to depict him with sarcasm and disgust, rendering him a protagonist of his examination of the crisis.

Olha-se para o burguês. Está bem vestido, com o charuto na boca. Acaba de sair do Clube onde levou duas horas a almoçar numa roda de elegantes. Daqui a pouco vai ter um encontro com uma mulher que não é a sua. Esta manhã esteve na praia, seminu, dando pasto aos olhos nas arredondadas formas das frinéias familiares que, por sua vez, não perdem a missa, mas

⁸⁴ Albizu Campos, “Discurso pronunciado en Ponce en la noche del 12 de octubre de 1933 con motivo de la celebración del ‘Día de la Raza’,” in *República de Puerto Rico*, 26.

⁸⁵ Quoted with no date in Corretjer, *Albizu Campos*, 30-31.

acham natural o nudismo. O burguês tem uma renda farta. Vive à tripa forra.⁸⁶

If Albizu insists on the economic reasons that drive Puerto Ricans to accept the U.S. rule, Salgado clearly emphasizes the elements of immorality that characterize the bourgeois as the internal enemy, limiting his portrait to a generic well-off, urban professional or businessman. He conducts his luxury life paying exclusive attention to carnal pleasures, indulging in both gluttony and lust. Even more scandalous, for Salgado's idealism, is the fact that this typical personage is the stronger supporter of the corrupt political organization of society that characterizes modernity, that is, liberalism. According to the Integralist leader, the bourgeois employs this doctrine only to justify and protect his vices and his profits. "A Nação é um guarda-noturno",⁸⁷ for the current well-to-do citizen, since the state has the only task to serve his own personal interests and provide security for him, and it is limited to "os soldados que lhe vigiam a casa, os agentes de segurança e investigadores que lhe fazem o sono tranqüilo na doçura dos lençóis de cambraia."⁸⁸ As significantly, with a view to my proposed comparison, it is the fact that the same kind of distorted relation that the Brazilian leader observes in place between the depraved bourgeois and the policing forces of the state is depicted by the president of the PNPR when he criticizes the effect of U.S. colonization. He says that "Puerto Rico será otro Hawai. Los puertorriqueños seremos peones, capataces y policías, para garantizar a los invasores en el goce de nuestra riqueza frente a la oposición nuestra que puede surgir."⁸⁹ Therefore, the two political leaders share a similar revulsion at the

⁸⁶ Salgado, "As duas faces de Satanás [1935]," in *O pensamento revolucionário*, 33.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Albizu Campos, "Declaraciones sobre el informe del Instituto Brookings [n.d.]," in *República de Puerto Rico*, 69.

pretension by the ruling class – the wealthy national sectors in the case of Brazil, the foreign invaders and exploiters in the case of Puerto Rico – to profiting from a security apparatus that protects their vices and speculations. This minimalist, egoistic, and utilitarian conception of the state is at the opposite pole from the institutional projects that both Salgado and Albizu would develop. The former is the most explicit on this point. With a particularly vivid image, he discredits the parasitical figure of the bourgeois affirming: “O nédio usufrutuário da ordem é ateu, não respeita a sacralidade da família, nem liga importância à idéia da Pátria. Leva uma vida de macaco, só pensando em prazeres.”⁹⁰ As a matter of fact, this foe is literary portrayed as the perfect violator, at once, of all the fundamental values that are expressed in the Integralist trinity: *Deus, Pátria, Família*.

Salgado’s obsession with dissolution and pleasures is not limited to a moralistic discourse, but plays a vital role in the construction of his political argumentation. In fact, the triumph of these bourgeois disvalues in modern times directly provoked the rise of a new, ruinous ideology, which is giving a substantial contribution to the annihilation of the humankind: Marxism. Indeed, Salgado notices a clear genetic relationship between the two apparently competing major systems of ideas, liberalism and socialism, and explicitly blames the former for the emergence of the latter.

O comunismo não é uma causa: é um sintoma. O mal não é o comunismo em si, porém as causas que geram o comunismo. [...] Onde estão as fontes do comunismo? No materialismo burguês.⁹¹

“Bourgeois materialism”, therefore, is not only a disgraceful behavior that corrupts the leisured classes, but is also the main cause of the ethical decadence of the

⁹⁰ Salgado, “As duas faces de Satanás [1935],” in *O pensamento revolucionário*, 34.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

proletariat, and of its unrest. On these grounds, Salgado's moral campaign assumes, if possible, an even more crucial position in its ideological construction. "Para combater o comunismo impõe-se combater, em primeiro lugar, o materialismo, o ateísmo, o sensualismo, a grosseria dos sentimentos, a expansão desenfreada dos instintos",⁹² the author reinforces. Salgado unites liberalism and socialism in his apocalyptic condemnation, and, pinpointing the responsibility of the former for the spiritual and material squalor which ignited revolutionary flames, firmly establishes, at the same time, their joint responsibility for the crisis, and a sort of ideological *tabula rasa* on which he pretends to elaborate and impose his original doctrine. In other words, Salgado's emphasis on ethics operates as an instrument to clear the ground from what he considered his main competitors, that is, the liberal tradition on which the Old Republic and, more recently, the *Paulista* Revolution were based, and the emerging revolutionary socialism that was incarnated, in Brazil, by the Communist Party established in 1922 and by the leftist attempt to overthrow Vargas in 1935.

In such a conflictive community, the author argues, political life had inevitably become a meaningless competition among factions that do not represent ideas or projects, but only partial interests and extemporary intrigues. Salgado provides a scornful portrait of the democratic system, choosing to put aside for a moment his philosophical argumentations and to resort to a metaphor that he draws from the popular imaginative world: soccer.

A política, para nos, não é jogo de futebol a que ficou reduzida a atividade social das nacionalidades, no transcurso do século XIX. A substituição das corporações medievais pelos partidos criou as equipes esportivas para os "matches" eleitorais e parlamentares. A organização sindical, a luta de classe, firmaram as regras fixando as posições dos "players". As massas

⁹² Ibid., 34-35.

populares transformaram-se em multidões de aficionados entregues à superexcitação das “torcidas” frenéticas. Os parlamentos eram os grandes “stadiuns” [sic] onde os jogadores se colocavam: a III Internacional na extrema esquerda, a II Internacional na meia-esquerda, os liberais democratas no centro, os conservadores na meia-direita, os reacionários na extrema-direita.⁹³

After fully discrediting Brazilian politics both for its destructive dominant ideologies – liberalism and socialism – and for its everyday sterile developments, Salgado has set the stage for his proposal of a “visão totalitária da sociedade, do mundo e das nações,”⁹⁴ i.e., for his project of a radically new civilization that will be destined for the replacement of a decadent modernity.

In Albizu’s thought, as a direct consequence of the colonial status of Puerto Rico and of the specific cultural tradition of *hispanismo* in which he operates,⁹⁵ the emphasis is placed not on broad issues of political ideas and systems, like in Salgado, but rather on the dynamics of submission that the U.S. hegemony nourish in the island, and on the spiritual resources to which the Puerto Rican people can resort in order to counter the oppression. In other words, the need to construct a relentless opposite, an “other” with which any reconciliation is simply inadmissible, and which is clearly identifiable, is far more pressing in a situation where formal independence from a colonial power is the first issue at stake. This is the reason why, as I will explore in the next chapter, Pedro Albizu Campos grounds his core ideological formulation less on the criticism toward material exploitation, and more on a culturalist opposition between two divergent civilizations that fight to impose their global superiority: the Greco-Roman tradition, in its Hispanic (American) variety, and the Anglo-Saxon culture, in its North American incarnation.

⁹³ Salgado, “Esquerdas e direitas [1937],” in *Ibid.*, 98.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ See note 79.

CHAPTER V

REVIVING THE NATION

Pedro Albizu Campos, in his efforts to establish an ideological background for his party's struggle for independence, completely reverses the prevailing opinion about the relation between the United States and Puerto Rico in his time. What the so called *nacionalismo cultural* or *moderado*⁹⁶ considered a benevolent and paternalistic colonial power that brought material advancement and a civilized tradition to the island becomes, in Albizu's thought, the last manifestation of a decadent civilization. The Puerto Rican leader inserts the conflict that his country was experiencing into a broader, global clash, assigning specific roles to the two contenders. He regards the United States as a representative of Anglo-Saxon civilization, while Puerto Rico is a continuation in the New World of Greco-Roman civilization. This classification permits him to employ, in his highly elaborated rhetoric, a rich set of references to a remote past that, in spite of being clearly fictitious, strengthens and dignifies his independence claims. The first step is the exaltation of the superiority of the classical heritage, through the construction of an imagined genealogy that links ancient Greece with modern Puerto Rico.

Nosotros, señores, recordamos al hombre que fue el instrumento de esta inmensa obra [Christopher Columbus], recordamos a la madre patria España y España, señores, es una de las pocas naciones que siempre ha sido civilizada. ¡Oídlo bien! La barbarie nunca dominó a España. La barbarie nunca dominó a Italia. La barbarie nunca dominó a Grecia. Nuestra civilización grecolatina viene de Grecia, Italia y España, de las tres penínsulas madres que tienen la civilización de Occidente. La barbarie nunca pudo establecerse en esas penínsulas [...]. En esas tres penínsulas

⁹⁶ See Chapter 3.

nunca hubo barbarie. Hubo sí, señores, ocupación transitoria de parte de sus territorios por pueblos bárbaros.⁹⁷

Albizu connects the glorious tradition of “the three mother peninsulas” that shaped “the Western civilization” with the Ibero-American world, through the emblematic figure of Christopher Columbus. Claiming that the territories in which the Greco-Roman cultures have developed never suffered long-term consequences of “barbarity”, but just a “temporary occupation”, the author establishes the basis for the second stage of his historical parallelism. “¡Qué contraste, señores! Han pasado dos mil años de la civilización romana y estamos todavía frente a la barbarie. Estamos frente a los Estados Unidos que lo primero que hace es desposeernos de nuestras tierras.”⁹⁸ Therefore, in Albizu’s philosophy of history, the United States plays toward Puerto Rico the same role that the “barbarian peoples” played toward Southern Europe at the end of classical antiquity. This premise leads to a radical reformulation of the hierarchy between the two poles: the power of the North is that of an uncivilized people that exerts a provisional control over a developed, superior nation.

Los pueblos bárbaros nada pueden aportar a esos pueblos [the “iberoamericanos”], ni siquiera las riquezas materiales. Los imperios que se lanzan sobre pueblos bárbaros terminan con embrutecerse. [...] Pero avanzar sobre un pueblo civilizado, ese es un bien definitivo. Ese es el por qué el yanqui está en Puerto Rico.⁹⁹

The assertion that the United States is the real beneficiary of the colonial status, not only economically, but also culturally, is of course an extreme challenge to the arguments in favor of a period of apprenticeship to modernity, as many Puerto Rican intellectuals and politicians theorized. Although this is not the only reason that Albizu

⁹⁷ Albizu Campos, “Discurso [...] del Día de la Raza [1933],” in *República de Puerto Rico*, 13.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

adduces in order to ground Puerto Rican independence,¹⁰⁰ that claim of cultural supremacy of the Ibero-American tradition over the Anglo-American one constitutes the backbone of the anti-colonial and nationalistic discourse of the PNP's leader. An important corollary of this doctrine concerns the issue of race. Albizu proudly emphasizes the distinction between a cultural notion of race peculiar to the Greco-Roman civilization, based on habits and values, and a biological concept of race typical of the Anglo-Saxon civilization, that discriminated against people according to their physical appearance.

En efecto, señores, la estructura nacional no es la estructura de la epidermis; no es la estructura de la piel porque por la piel se juzga al gato, se juzga al cabro, se juzga hasta a las fieras [...]. Y, señores, es de brutos levantar la división entre los hombres por la epidermis. Eso solamente se le puede ocurrir a los brutos norteamericanos. A un pueblo salvaje, ¡sí que se le ocurre eso! Pero los pueblos de la civilización, los pueblos madres, esos están viviendo siempre de la unidad emanante de los hombres, de la unidad indestructible de los hombres. Están viendo que la piel es un accidente. La raza, señores, sigue la transformación de un pueblo bajo un ideario del espíritu [...]. Por eso existe la raza iberoamericana.¹⁰¹

In this way, the author explicitly states the centrality of a sense of cultural belonging and spiritual unity for the definition of a national identity, and on this culturalist conception of race he will build his message of regeneration.

¹⁰⁰ Albizu, who studied law and worked as a lawyer, also produced a legal motivation for the illegitimacy of U.S. occupation. When the invasion occurred, in 1898, the structure of government of the Spanish colony had just been reformed. On November 25, 1897, after decades of pressures and negotiations between the Puerto Rican elites and the Spanish authorities, the Cortes had approved a *Carta Autonómica* for Puerto Rico, that conferred to the island considerable administrative autonomy and a partially elected parliament, although under a governor appointed by the colonial ruler. That assembly, specifically, had obtained the power of accepting or rejecting any international treaty concerning Puerto Rico that Spain would have negotiated with a third party. On these grounds, Albizu was able to contest the legitimacy of the Treaty of Paris, that was signed by Spain and the United States on December 10, 1898, and ratified, among other things, the cession of the island to the North American power. “[N]ingún tratado de España, negociado por España, era válido sin la ratificación del Parlamento de Puerto Rico. [...] España no podía ceder a Puerto Rico porque Puerto Rico no era *res in commercium*. Puerto Rico se convirtió en una nación soberana en virtud de la Carta Autonómica que España no podía cambiar sin el consentimiento de Puerto Rico. [...] Y Estados Unidos no podía aceptar dicha cesión porque estaba obligado a respetar la independencia de Puerto Rico.” (Quoted with no date in Corretjer, *Albizu Campos*, 25-26).

¹⁰¹ Albizu Campos, “Discurso [...] del Día de la Raza [1933],” in *República de Puerto Rico*, 10-11.

¿Que [sic] existe sangre africana? Yo también la llevo en las venas y la llevo con el supremo orgullo de la dignidad humana.
Aquí tenemos sangre india, aquí hay los arquetipos puros de sangre india. Yo también tengo sangre india y por eso me siento perfectamente americano, americano autóctono, en la verdadera acepción de la palabra.
¿Que [sic] hay sangre blanca en nosotros? Yo también la llevo en las venas. Mi padre era vizcaino [sic] y viene de la raza más pura de toda Europa.
Y ese tipo que se viene formando, o sea, de la unidad del sentimiento, de la homogeneidad de la acción cotidiana, viene formando también la unidad racial en el sentido biológico y viene restaurando al hombre a su prístina originalidad porque el hombre no empezó amarillo, blanco ni negro, sino hombre solamente, como el Divino Creador.¹⁰²

It is interesting to observe that the author mentions with pride his condition of mixed blood, although he did not avoid the use of a terminology that echoed racist discourses, for example defining the Basque as “the purest race in the entire Europe.” In addition, he refers again to a mythical past – in this case, an ancestral, biblical time of “originality” – to substantiate his argument, showing in this case a sort of cyclical conception of history. Indeed, Puerto Rico is conceived of as a melting pot of peoples that will lead humanity to a sort of edenic condition, in which it will be both spiritually and physically united and homogenized. Once again, the author employs the metaphor of “palingenesis,” of regeneration. On another level of interpretation, as Rodríguez Vázquez acutely observed, this contraposition of two different concepts and experiences of race in the Americas anticipated the categories on slavery and racialism proposed later in the 1930s and 1940s by Gilberto Freyre and Frank Tannenbaum. In particular, it contains the core of the myth of Brazil and, to some extent, Spanish America as a “racial paradise” where the transition to free labor was bloodless and unproblematic, and the living conditions of African descendants were better than those of the black people inhabiting

¹⁰² Ibid., 11-12.

North America.¹⁰³ Moreover, this formulation of the theory of race, with its appreciation of miscegenation under the homogenizing force of Hispanic culture, makes Albizu's nationalism different from the so called "black nationalism", that had a prominent role, for example, in the political discourse of the British Caribbean since the early twentieth century.¹⁰⁴ Albizu himself concluded: "Nosotros somos un pueblo predestinado en la historia, porque Puerto Rico es la primera nación del mundo donde se forma la unidad del espíritu con la unidad biológica del cuerpo."¹⁰⁵

So, the primacy of Puerto Rico is the product of a superior historical heritage, that reached the Caribbean thanks to the Spanish colonization and is responsible for all the virtuous characteristics that Albizu attributes to his homeland, in the pre-invasion period, and denies to the United States: the spiritual authority conferred by the affiliation to an age-old civilization, an equitable distribution of wealth and land,¹⁰⁶ a pacific cohabitation and integration among people of different ethnic origins. For that reason, Albizu can say:

"Puerto Rico es la nacionalidad más integrada del continente en el sentido étnico y cultural, tenemos la masa más homogénea, noble e inteligente de América. Pero también tenemos la clase directora más podrida de todo el continente."¹⁰⁷

This unequivocal distinction between the pride in Puerto Rican foundations and the scorn for those who shared administrative responsibilities with the occupying force makes what Ferrao states on Albizu's groundbreaking role not completely acceptable.

El albuzismo surgió más como rechazo a las formas políticas endebles y al estilo ambivalente de los representantes del nacionalismo cultural, y no

¹⁰³ Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*, 243-249.

¹⁰⁴ For a comparison between Albizu's thought and the ideology of the Jamaican black leader Marcus Garvey, in the context of different Caribbean colonial experiences, see Juan Manuel Carrión, "Two Variants of Caribbean Nationalism: Marcus Garvey and Pedro Albizu Campos," *Centro Journal* 17, no. 1 (2005): 26-45.

¹⁰⁵ Albizu Campos, "Discurso [...] del Día de la Raza [1933]," in *República de Puerto Rico*, 12.

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁷ Albizu Campos, "Discurso [*El Mundo*, 19 de marzo de 1930]," in *Obras escogidas*, vol. 1, 73.

tanto como negación de su contenido ideológico. En otras palabras, el albizuismo implicó una ruptura al nivel de los medios de lucha (o más bien la ausencia de ellos) y las prácticas políticas que exhibía dicho nacionalismo, pero mantuvo un perceptible hilo de continuidad con éste en cuanto a lo esencial que era la concepción de la sociedad, la idea de la identidad nacional y la óptica social que inspiraba a ambas.¹⁰⁸

Albizu's innovations in the organization of the PNPR and in the adoption of combative language and means are surely self-evident, but do not constitute his only original contribution. The changes produced in the traditional view of both Puerto Rico and the United States, in the allocation of virtues and responsibilities, and in the interpretation of their mutual historical roles are remarkable and decisive. In addition, Ferrao's statement contrasts with another conclusion that he proposes later, and that clearly emerges from the analysis of Albizu's conception and reconstruction of the past. The heart of his political philosophy is "una suerte de noción social regresiva, un deseo de vuelta-a-la-sociedad-pre-invasión-norteamericana, [combined with] la evocación y exaltación desmedida de la sociedad decimonónica."¹⁰⁹ As pointed out by Rodríguez Vázquez:

Albizu no tenía ninguna duda de la existencia de una nacionalidad puertorriqueña ya formada para 1898. Los norteamericanos encontraron "una nación hecha, mucho más adelantada que sus provincias 'estados' y comparable favorablemente con cualquiera de sus 'estados' más avanzados". Al momento de la invasión, la nación "más inteligente del nuevo mundo" era ya un cuerpo social rico y bien organizado, una "nacionalidad civilizada" que había servido de 'vanguardia en el nuevo mundo' y que como centro del primer obispado de América fue la base para "la obra cristiana" en el Continente.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 52-53.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹¹⁰ Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*, 175.

This “myth of the perfect nation”¹¹¹ undoubtedly performs the function as “an anticolonial counter myth to combat the American imperialist discourse”,¹¹² but it also constitutes a vision that substantially departs from the cautious approach shared by the vast majority of the Puerto Rican influential groups of the time. They expressed some doubts on the potentialities of the island as an autonomous entity and – an inadmissible breakdown for Albizu – willingly accepted, or at least tolerated, the paternalistic attitude of the U.S. rulers in the name of progress.¹¹³ This utilitarian acceptance of a U.S. protectorate would be the ideal base of moderate nationalism that would flourish again and prevail in Puerto Rico beginning the 1940s, with the rise of Luis Muñoz Marín and his *Partido Popular Democrático*, as rightly signaled by Rodríguez Vázquez.¹¹⁴ Albizu’s formulation of radical nationalism, with his emphasis on the idealized Hispanic historical heritage of Puerto Rico, pride in the intermixed ethnic profile of its population, and an absolute confidence in the potential of the island as an independent State, clearly constitutes an alternative tradition in the panorama of Puerto Rican political and intellectual history.

In the case of Plínio Salgado’s project to renovate the Brazilian nation, the starting point is really about the participation in the heated disputes on artistic formulae and cultural identity within the Modernist movement of the 1920s and the early 1930s, and not so much a critical perspective on the political debate of the time, as in Albizu.

¹¹¹ This appropriate expression was used by Rodríguez Vázquez in the title of the article – José Juan Rodríguez Vázquez, “El nacionalismo radical en la fase de maniobra: Pedro Albizu Campos y el mito de la nación perfecta,” *Op. Cit.* 10 (1998): 25-60 – that anticipated the analysis and the conclusions of his later book – Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*.

¹¹² Carrión, “Two Variants of Caribbean Nationalism”: 40.

¹¹³ This position is exemplified, in the intellectual field, by the influential book *Insularismo*, published in 1934 by Antonio S. Pedreira and deeply studied in Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*, 35-152. In the political domain, these ideas materialized in the fact that the other major Puerto Rican parties were not averse to cooperate with the dominator in the colonial government.

¹¹⁴ Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*, 33-34.

The future leader of the AIB had been part of the varied group of writers, artists and critics who, from 1922 on, after the pioneering event of the *Semana de Arte Moderna* in São Paulo, had radically contested the formalist and “inauthentic” tendencies of Brazilian intellectual life, and had started a search for more effective forms to express the diversity of Brazilian reality. Nevertheless, the majority of this avant-gard, in the second half of the 1920s, had followed the path opened by Oswald de Andrade toward the adoption of recent European stylistic trends, such as Futurism and Symbolism. This proposal was summarized in the 1924 manifesto *Poesia Pau Brasil*, in which Oswald de Andrade recommended that Brazilians examined original Brazilian “raw material” – i.e., the syncretistic expressions of popular culture – through the lenses of the modern artistic innovations imported from the Old World, with the aim of producing a cultural commodity that could be exported abroad. This metaphorical image of an unequal commercial exchange of cultural products was obviously molded around the economic dependency of Brazil at the time. This is also the reason for the adoption of *pau brasil*, the red dyewood exploited by the Portuguese early colonizers in the 16th century, as the symbol of the movement.¹¹⁵ Salgado rejects this new definition of the Modernist avant-garde and starts to distance himself from the group of the *Semana de Arte Moderna*. His judgment on his former fellows becomes increasingly harsh.

Muitos não compreenderam o plano de batalha. Proseguiram, no campo literario, a marcha para a dissolução completa, subordinando-se aos fenomenos exclusivamente europeus da ruina da sensibilidade e decomposição senil de após-guerra. [... C]om o espirito europeu de viajantes curiosos ou experimentalistas, perderam-se numa brasilidade artificial, que se desenvolveu guardando a linha das escolas decadentes em que se bolchevizou e destruiu a arte no Velho Mundo.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Jáuregui, 395-409.

¹¹⁶ Salgado, *Despertemos*, 7-9.

This criticism toward the internationalist and decadent drift of the *Pau Brasil* faction leads Salgado not only to refuse extreme innovations in art and literature, but also to begin formulating a broader cultural program that would set the basis for his later social and political project. The protagonist of this innovative proposal is the indigenous *tupi*, who the author raises to the rank of the authentic incarnation of the Brazilian people. According to him, the natural gifts of the natives, their intuition and mysticism, should have guided the process of revelation of the Brazilian soul, of its atavistic roots that the ruling class had ignored up to then. This choice, in Salgado's mind, permits him to discard every imported taste and tendency, and to reformulate an imaginative world around autochthonous symbols. Therefore, in addition to the *tupi*, Salgado's group chooses the tapir (*anta*), being the biggest native mammal of South America, as the new emblem of the nation. Revealingly, the title of the keynote document of this faction, published in 1929, is *Manifesto Nhegaçu Verde Amarelo da Escola da Anta*. This manifesto, by the way, explicitly refuses any hypothesis of institutional change in the Brazilian state.¹¹⁷

Salgado's conversion to radical politics, in reality, occurs in 1930, the year after the formal constitution of the *verdeamarelista* branch of the Modernist movement. In his *a posteriori* reconstruction of this period, the author describes his long journey through Europe and the Middle East as the crucial moment for his transition from literary and aesthetic interests to a more mature anxiety about the formulation of a new political doctrine, to be designed as the solution for Brazilian problems. Although it is important to remember that Salgado writes his account in 1935, under the influence of the

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 10-11; Ivan Junqueira "Modernismo: tradição e ruptura," in *Escolas literárias no Brasil*, ed. Ivan Junqueira (Rio de Janeiro: Academia Brasileira de Letras, 2004), vol. 2, 629-648; Jáuregui, 426.

succeeding events and with the purpose of demonstrating the coherence of his intellectual and political trajectory, it is worth quoting at some length.

Em 1930, segui para a Europa. O periodo que vae de 1927 a 1930 revelou-me a impossibilidade de fazer algo novo dentro dos velhos quadros partidarios e sociaes do paiz. [...] Estava eu em 30, convencido da urgencia de uma revolução do pensamento nacional, da consciencia das massas brasileiras. Meus amigos [...] perguntavam-me em que estado de espirito eu partia. “Voltarei para fazer a nossa revolução”, respondia-lhes. Depois de percorrer 14 países, como preceptor de un moço de uma familia paulista, que me abriu um credito sufficiente para as vultuosas despezas, terminei em Paris “O Esperado” [his second novel, after the publication of *O Estrangeiro* in 1926] e esbocei o manifesto que pretendia lançar ás novas gerações brasileiras. Vira a renovação politica da Turquia, o fascismo na Itália, lêra uma vasta literatura comunista que circulava em Paris, estudára a social democracia alemã, examinára a pequenina Bélgica, meditára no Egypto, sobre o imperialismo inglez, observára a anarquia dos espiritos na Hespanha e a nova ordem em Portugal, e tudo me demonstrava a morte de uma civilização, o advento de uma nova etapa humana.¹¹⁸

What is particularly relevant in this dense passage is the fact that Salgado unites the plurality of realities that he observed in the Old World under the same judgment, i.e. as evidence of “the death of a civilization, the coming of a new human age.” This additional reference to decadence – that, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is a leitmotiv in Salgado’s rhetoric – is curious because examples of both societies in ruins and new political and institutional models are blended. For instance, the case of Spain, in a state of “spiritual anarchy” and on the eve of the overthrow of the monarchical and conservative forces by the Second Republic, is on the same level with what the author considers virtuous nationalist experiments of the time: Turkey, Italy, and Portugal. At this stage, Salgado distances himself from the inclination toward imitation of foreign experiences, in both the artistic and the political realms. Crossing swords not only with the intellectual and government elite of the First Republic, but also with his previous

¹¹⁸ Salgado, *Despertemos*, 15-17.

avant-garde fellows of the *Semana de Arte Moderna*, the future leader of the AIB pursues a return to what he considers the authentic roots of the Brazilian people. In his opinion, the culture and the institutions of the old liberal and capitalist order, in its Brazilian version, have failed, because they had been patterned on the European and North American model and had led the country to moral and material corruption. Similarly, the Modernist reaction to Brazilian decadence had proved to be limited to elitist, aesthetic innovations, and, through Oswald de Andrade's sensitivity to European cultural and political trends, was heading for outrageous leftist solutions.¹¹⁹ These are the reasons why, in the years that precede the creation of the Integralist movement, Salgado emphasizes the need for a revalorization of the Brazilian pre-European indigene.

It is convenient to remember that this instrumental use of indigenous images evidently is an intellectual device in the hands of an ambitious figure in search of innovative approaches to longstanding problems in Brazilian culture and society. In particular, when the AIB is founded and becomes a protagonist of the Brazilian political life in the 1930s, neither the question of the *real* indigenous population of the country, nor the role of militants of native origin are significant for the Integralists. Indeed, the party and its ideology, participating in the post-1930 race for power, would be far more focused on the themes of the traditional political debate that were of interest to the inhabitants of urban centers and of the Europeanized rural areas. Nevertheless, Salgado

¹¹⁹ As a matter of fact, Oswald de Andrade first reformulated his aesthetic research under the trope of "anthropophagy", considering the cannibalistic incorporation and digestion of foreign cultural products as the real, national process of identity building. Then, he underwent a conversion to Marxism, adopted a heated anti-bourgeois and anti-clerical rhetoric, and in 1931 entered the Communist Party (Jáuregui, 435-437 and 446-447). The two short-lived, but very intriguing, reviews that Oswald de Andrade published at the peak of these two distinctive phases are, respectively, *Revista de Antropofagia* and *O Homem do Povo*. The complete collections of these publications were recently reprinted as *Revista de Antropofagia* [1928-1929] (São Paulo, Editora Abril, 1975) and *O Homem do Povo* [1931] (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado; Divisão de Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo, 1984).

uses his nativist rhetoric to assess one of the most burning issues of the Brazilian public debate at the time, i.e. the integration of the masses of foreign workers who had entered and were keeping entering the country.¹²⁰ In fact, Salgado goes so far as claiming that “todas as raças estrangeiras que para aqui vierem terão no tupy uma especie de denominador commum.”¹²¹ The author conceives of this homogenizing role of the native as part of a wider project for the future of the humankind.

Elle [the indigene] é, incontestavelmente, o facto preponderante na formação dessa grande raça harmoniosa do futuro, constituída de elementos de todas as raças adaptadas na America do Sul. O grande sonho imperialista desse povo irá realizar-se um dia, sem effusão de sangue, mas numa eucharistia de sangues de todas as origens. A anta abrirá carreiros para as marchas de todas as raças no grande matrimonio da humanidade.¹²²

The project of the unification of humanity in a single, intermixed race is directly inspired by the theories of the Mexican intellectual José Vasconcelos (1922-1959), who in 1925 had proposed this racial utopia in *La Raza Cósmica. Misión de la raza iberoamericana. Notas de viajes a la América del Sur*.¹²³ The natural terrain on which the “cosmic race” could effectively be forged is, of course, Latin America. Although in the case of Albizu the reference to Vasconcelos is not overt, it is evident that he and the Brazilian intellectual share a peculiar, visionary perspective on the future of the subcontinent. In their discourses, Puerto Rico and Brazil have the groundbreaking role of offering to humanity, through their cultural and racial unique cohesion, an anthropological revolution. They imagine their respective countries as laboratories in

¹²⁰ In eight decades, between 1851 and 1930, about 4,300,000 immigrants entered Brazil, and the majority of them did it after 1880. See Chiara Vangelista, *Dal vecchio al nuovo Continente. L'immigrazione in America Latina* (Torino: Paravia, 1997), 163.

¹²¹ Salgado, *Despertemos*, 38.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 40.

¹²³ Salgado explicitly mentions Vasconcelos in *ibid.*, 39.

which a new, promising future for the earth will be initiated. This destiny is an alternative to the forms of modernity – individualism, materialism, capitalism, liberal democracy – that had developed until then under the leadership of Western Europe and the United States. Therefore, the protagonists of this revolution would be historically marginalized communities that were excluded from or damaged by modernity: the Puerto Rican colonized people, and the Brazilian natives. Of course, this proposal, being framed by refined intellectuals who are also heads of radical minority movements involved in everyday politics, appears to be by far more a rhetorical device and a symbolic claim than a practical project of mass participation of the subalterns, given the limited capacity of the PNPR and the AIB to mobilize the popular sectors.

Nevertheless, this imaginative argument is the premise of a further, central step in the construction of the authors' doctrines. Significantly, investing the process of national regeneration and consolidation with a universal purpose, both Salgado and Albizu create the space for the vision of an "imperial" destiny for their home countries. In fact, Salgado defines his version of the "cosmic race" utopia as a "great, bloodless imperialist dream," that the moral superiority of the Brazilian natives and the natural resources of South America will make possible. The *tupi* "hade [sic] descer um dia do sertão [...] para a invasão das Cidades e a grande revolução do pensamento nacional [...]. Só então, será proclamada a nossa independencia mental."¹²⁴ Moreover, the revolutionary role assigned to the natives on the moral and cultural level is complemented by a trust in the bright future of Brazil as an economic power: "o Brasil será a maior nação do mundo, por dispôr de mais terras, e terras ferteis, e poder desenvolver todas as culturas, porque se

¹²⁴ Ibid., 50.

extende através de zonas as mais distintas.”¹²⁵ Despite the very different situation of Puerto Rico in comparison with Brazil, for his part Albizu explicitly asserts the leading role of his homeland, as a repository of the glorious Hispanic heritage, over the future international order.

“Nuestra América conserva el equilibrio del mundo. [...] Como latinoamericanos hemos reunido las civilizaciones indígena y cristiana. Como verdaderos americanos vemos claramente que nuestra hegemonía en el Antiguo Mundo es inevitable para el bien del género humano.”¹²⁶

This conviction of being the protagonist of a universal mission is expounded, in another of Albizu’s discourses, as a course in progressive stages that would reverse the balance of power in the western hemisphere and, as a direct consequence, in the entire world.

Tenemos un bien que infundir en América. Empecemos por asegurar a nuestra posteridad en Puerto Rico nuestra propia civilización; y por llevar, en conjunción con los pueblos de las Antillas, nuestra civilización a Norteamérica, que cubre [sic] al mundo de polo a polo y que se afirme en el planeta para siempre.

Por eso el nacionalismo postula cuatro hermosos principios: la independencia de Puerto Rico, la confederación antillana, la unión panamericana y la hegemonía de los pueblos iberoamericanos [sic] para honra de nosotros todos ante la posteridad.¹²⁷

Another crucial common characteristic of the two projects of national “palingenesis” and radical reshaping of the modern world is the relevance of religion. Catholic tradition deeply informs both the language and the content of Salgado and Albizu’s discourses. As a matter of fact, their respective versions of “ultranationalism” are framed around a constant use of a religiously infused terminology,¹²⁸ and produce a

¹²⁵ Ibid., 34.

¹²⁶ Quoted with no date in Corretjer, *Albizu Campos*, 41-42.

¹²⁷ Albizu Campos, “Discurso [...] del Día de la Raza [1933],” in *República de Puerto Rico*, 33-34.

¹²⁸ In this respect, it is interesting to notice that Salgado defines his racial utopia also as an “Eucharist of bloods of all origins” (*Despertemos*, 38), and Albizu points out that skin color is irrelevant because at the

peculiar conception of politics as a moral, sacred enterprise. This distinctive trait of Salgado's Integralism and Albizu's Nationalism deeply affects not only the very programmatic platform of the two political parties, but also their inner structure, and the conception of their leaderships. Therefore, the AIB and the PNPR would be molded as the instruments for the achievement, at the same time, of a national rebirth and of an international role in guiding an ethical and political battle that would acquire the features of a quasi-religious campaign. Consequently, this specific way of conceiving of and participating in political life deserves an extended treatment in the next chapter, in which Emilio Gentile's notion of "political religion" will prove to be a valuable analytical tool.

moment of Creation the human being was "just man, as the Divine Creator" ("Discurso [...] del Día de la Raza [1933]," in *República de Puerto Rico*, 12).

CHAPTER VI

POLITICS AS A SACRED MISSION

Historians have treated Plínio Salgado and Pedro Albizu Campos very differently with regard to the religious aspects of their political thought. In the case of the Brazilian intellectual and leader, scholars tend to overlook the issue, limiting their comments to superficial glimpses that took Salgado's adhesion to the Catholic tradition for granted. This is the case of the leading historian on Integralism, Hégio Trindade, who simply identifies the cultural origins of Integralism in a "ética [...] de inspiração cristã," a "humanismo espiritualista," and the "ideal medieval de uma sociedade harmoniosa."¹²⁹ Two of the most detailed investigations on the contents of the "spiritual revolution" proposed by the AIB do not explicitly address the issue of religion.¹³⁰ Finally, in a more recent essay, that adopts a sophisticated methodology for the intellectual history of Salgado's doctrine, Giselda Brito Silva defines this last as "um tipo de nacionalismo no qual vinculava idéias políticas com idéias religiosas."¹³¹ Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the relationship between Integralism and religion still awaits a more in-depth and focused treatment by scholars.

The literature on Albizu is fairly different on this point. Historians agree on the fact that he developed his profound faith in traditional Catholicism during his youth as a student in Boston. Before leaving Puerto Rico to study in the United States, in 1912, he had been in close contact with spiritualist and Masonic groups of his hometown. In fact,

¹²⁹ Trindade, *Integralismo*, 209.

¹³⁰ Vasconcelos, *A ideologia curupira*, and Cavalari, *Integralismo*.

¹³¹ Silva, "Uma proposta de análise interdisciplinar...", 10.

the future leader of the PNP was able to start his university career in the United States thanks to a scholarship granted by the lodge of Ponce.¹³² Nevertheless, when he returned to the island in 1921, Albizu had developed a staunch adherence to Catholicism, mainly as a consequence of his friendship with its Irish priests and his attendance at their Church in Boston. Significantly, the Irish Catholic circles of the city were active supporters of the Irish independence movement, and offered Albizu an example of political irredentism combined with strong religious beliefs. The conception of the Irish liberation struggle against the British as a conflict between Catholics and Protestants surely provided an effective framework for Albizu's polarization between an oppressed Catholic Puerto Rico and an oppressive Protestant United States.¹³³

The centrality of Catholicism in Albizu's political thought and action did not pass unnoticed to scholars, although the relevance accorded to it and the interpretation of its place in the nationalist construction has varied considerably. Albizu's right hand man of the 1930s, Juan Antonio Corretjer, is the first prominent figure to address the issue. Being one of the leaders of the 1960s leftist shift of Puerto Rican pro-independence circles, Corretjer feels the need to justify his master's Catholicism and conservative positions. His explanation refers to Albizu's vision of a "clash of civilization" taking place on the island, and the consequent necessity to reinforce the cohesive elements of Puerto Rican identity to resist and fight the invader. He writes:

Pero su [Albizu's] actividad catolizante [sic] es un acto consciente de conservación de lo que Puerto Rico ha sido, ante la política norteamericana de obligar a Puerto Rico a dejar de ser. Si el imperialismo, basado en el principio liberal de la libertad de conciencia [sic] y culto, estimula la proliferación de las iglesias protestantes, de las creencias orientalistas, de la masonería, como factores desintegrantes [sic] de la

¹³² Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 263-266.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 266-274, Baggio, *A questão nacional em Porto Rico*, 76-78.

unidad psíquica de Puerto Rico, “estimulemos al catolicismo!” – se dice Albizu Campos, para conservar lo que el invasor quiere destruir. Este es el sentido del conservadorismo esencial del albuzismo como modalidad particular del nacionalismo puertorriqueño. De ahí que Albizu diga, y se haga dogma entre sus fieles, que “un movimiento de reforma social tiene que ser forzosamente heterodoxo mientras que un movimiento indepentista [sic] tiene que ser forzosamente ortodoxo.”¹³⁴

According to this view, in the hands of Albizu Catholicism is a sort of instrument in the toolbox with which the independence project must be carried out. Corretjer seems to imply that in the case of the nationalist leader an intimate belief in the Catholic faith is irrelevant. In other words, what really matters is the effectiveness of the pro-Catholicism discourse in differentiating Puerto Rico from the enemy, and in gathering the insurgent people’s strength in order to win the battle for independence.

More recently, Ferrao had noticed the importance of religious rituals and language in the rhetoric of Albizu and in the activities of the party. For example, the demonstrations of the PNPR were generally preceded by a Catholic mass, although both the officers and the militants of the movement were far from constituting a religiously homogenous group.¹³⁵ More importantly, Ferrao underlines the relevance of religious terminology in Albizu’s speeches and writings.

El propio discurso albizuista estaba salpicado de vocablos e imágenes provenientes de la terminología religiosa y cristiana. En ocasiones se concibe a la patria como una “diosa”; el municipio de Lares era visto como “tierra sagrada”, ya que en él se “bautizó” con sangre el cuerpo de la nación en 1868; la visita anual que hacían los nacionalistas a este pueblo era considerada como un “peregrinaje” y el propio Albizu se le conceptuaba como el “apóstol” de la lucha de independencia. Dios mismo

¹³⁴ Corretjer, *Albizu Campos*, 45. No date is provided for the quotations of Albizu’s words.

¹³⁵ As a matter of fact, Ferrao points out that “el catolicismo ortodoxo de Albizu no respondía al sentir general ni era representativo de la diversidad religiosa dentro de su organización,” that included, in prominent positions, protestants, masons, spiritualists, and young leftists. The historian considers this contradiction one of the main reasons of PNPR failure. See Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 287-291.

recibió el título de “creador y protector de todas las nacionalidades” y las asambleas del partido comenzaban con una invocación a El.”¹³⁶

Indirectly, Ferrao adheres to Corretjer’s interpretation of Albizu’s Catholicism as an identity resource that, in his mind, is useful to close the ranks of the nationalist activists. Nevertheless, my thesis is that this function cannot be underestimated, but that we also need to address this issue at more in-depth level of analysis. In fact, Albizu’s religious language and rituals should be considered not as simple instrumental or rhetorical devices, but as the expression of a specific conception of politics. In reality, the core of Albizu’s reflections is a message that conveys not only a project of state and society, but also the ambition of a spiritual and ethical regeneration of the Puerto Rican people. In this project, the Christian Gospel serves the function of a paradigmatic discourse to be imitated in its basic structures. Similarly, the very experience of Jesus Christ and the early Christians constitute the pattern of behavior to be emulated by the nationalist vanguard.

The historian Isabel Gutiérrez del Arroyo is the first to deeply investigate the connection between Albizu’s personality and his ethical convictions. Having examined accounts and other sources related to his juvenile years, she concludes that in Albizu intelligence and spiritual profundity combine with a tendency to severity and dogmatism: a peculiar mixture that, according to this scholar, explains the genesis of Albizu’s dedication to the cause of independence.

Certeza moral que deriva también de su catolicismo. Por eso ejerce el magisterio. Lo ejerce espontáneamente; se ve impelido a ello por incoercible vocación redentora. Albizu es hombre de principios firmemente arraigados; es un hombre que vive de certezas. [...] Albizu es

¹³⁶ Ibid., 259-260.

afecto a estos verbos que implican un rehacerse, un renacer espiritual, que me parece delatan inclinaciones místicas.¹³⁷

Albizu's "incoercible redemptive vocation" naturally leads, in Gutiérrez del Arroyo's words, to "una sed insaciable de absolutos. Y es en la fe religiosa, en la fe católica, en la moral católica, que sacia su sed de absolutos."¹³⁸ This "thirst for absolutes" is not limited to his personal conscience, but acquires public significance when it serves as the basis of his national redemption project.

The necessary transformation of the Puerto Rican people, now weak and submissive, should pass through a proper process of conversion and absolute dedication to the independence struggle, as Albizu explicitly claims.

Hoy se forman seres amorfos que se comen unos a otros; está destruida la felicidad total de nuestros hijos; a ninguno se le predicó la verdad; el materialismo los conduce a la muerte en cuerpo y alma. Hay que salir de este estado y hacer de nuestro pueblo un pueblo de hermanos, de mártires, de santos.¹³⁹

Salgado, referring to the process that led him to publish the *Manifiesto de Outubro* and to found the AIB after the *Paulista* Revolution, in 1932, emphasizes the power of his innovative message to channel the energies and endurance of the young generations into a superior mission.

Certamente Deus queria que o manifesto surgisse das cinzas fumegantes da lucta épica, da terra embebida de sangue. Uma mocidade macerada no fogo das trincheiras, por certo me iria dar evangelizadores e batalhadores enrijecidos no soffrimento e corajosos diante da morte. Assim foi que o manifesto, escripto em maio, veiu chamar-se "de outubro". Elle era a synthese de todas as phases de um longo drama intelectual, accrescido do intenso espiritualismo que os soffrimentos inspiraram.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Gutiérrez del Arroyo, *Pedro Albizu Campos o la agonía moral*, 42. See also 35-45.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹³⁹ Albizu Campos, "Lecture given on October 10, 1935," transcribed by Isolina Rondón and quoted in *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁴⁰ Salgado, *Despertemos a Nação!*, 21.

The authors' operation is clear: their response to the perceived corruption and decadence of their communities is an appeal for collective adherence to the only available source of salvation, i.e. the ethical and political creed of the nation. Nevertheless, this faith cannot be limited to a pure celebration of collective identity. In fact, their sacralization of the nationalist campaign implies an active, militant participation, that revolves, as the use of terms such as "martyrs," "saints," and "combatants" underlines, around the idea of sacrifice.

Therefore, their message is in the first instance an appeal for the accomplishment of heroic deeds and the acceptance of their potentially tragic consequences. Albizu maintains that "[I]a Patria se funda en la emulación del heroísmo. No es de nadie. Ni aún de los patriotas. Solo es de los que la han ganado muriendo por ella. Son ellos los que la legan a la posteridad."¹⁴¹ Similarly, Salgado explains that the main purpose of his writings is "[q]ue cada um se mire nos espelhos destas paginas e tome a resolução necessaria ao cumprimento de um sagrado dever perante Deus e perante o Brasil."¹⁴² This "sacred duty" is, of course, to fight for the supreme good of the nation.

Luctar: eis a grande alegria deste movimento.
Encontrar dificuldades: eis a nossa volupia.
Seremos perseguidos: eis o motivo poematico.
Seremos incompreendidos: eis um prazer singular que nos mostra uma superioridade deliciosa.¹⁴³

In both authors it is possible to see not only a generic use of religious terms, but also, and more importantly, clear allusions to fundamental features of the early followers of Christ and the original Christian communities. In other words, the membership with the "homeland" is a privilege that can be secured only through a complete, selfless

¹⁴¹ Quoted with no date in Corretjer, *Albizu Campos*, 22.

¹⁴² Plínio Salgado, *Paginas de combate* (Rio de Janeiro: H. Antunes, 1937), 6.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 88.

dedication to its cause; a privilege that acquires a divine character and has the features of a conversion. In fact, the radical change required from the militants in their personal life is analogous to the commitment demanded of the members of a cult, who should be prepared to endure persecution. Salgado proudly asserts the condition of “persecuted” and “misunderstood,” and actively constructs a rhetoric of martyrdom. For instance, he presents the case of Caetano Spinelli, a worker from the city of Campinas who was killed in a confrontation with communist militants, reinforcing in this way both the centrality of readiness for the extreme sacrifice, and the popular character of the struggle that his party undertakes.¹⁴⁴ As quoted above, Albizu states that the “homeland” belongs “only to the people who gained it dying for it.”

Moreover, continuing the analogy with early Christianity, every activist is bound to spread the nationalist word and to conquer new followers, by means of an activity that the authors explicitly define as “apostolic”. In the aforementioned passage, the Brazilian leader calls his militants “evangelists,” and Albizu claims that “[d]e cada hombre y de cada mujer hay que hacer un apóstol.”¹⁴⁵

The prominence given to the ethics of martyrdom and apostolate, nevertheless, is the source of a controversial aspect of Albizu and Salgado’s doctrines. Like the acceptance of the Christian message, the adhesion to their moral and political programs is an act of free will, a consciousness raising and a claiming of responsibility in the face of

¹⁴⁴ Plínio Salgado, *Cartas aos “Camisas-Verdes”* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1935), 85-94. In particular, Salgado asserts that “esse humilde miliciano assumiu proporções formidáveis. Elle é um Martyr. E é diante desse Martyr que eu vos declaro que o Integralismo é uma revolução do proletariado, dos estudantes, dos humildes, dos jovens em espirito” (Ibid., 92).

¹⁴⁵ Albizu Campos, “Conferencia del 10 de Octubre de 1935,” transcribed by Isolina Rondón and quoted in Gutiérrez del Arroyo, *Pedro Albizu Campos o la agonía moral*, 8.

widespread passivity and resignation. In the Puerto Rican case, the obligation is the opposition to the colonial status.

El problema de nuestra independencia depende de nuestra voluntad. La generación presente tiene una grave responsabilidad histórica que cumplir: o prolongar la colonia o adoptar un gesto de hombres dignos. Ante todo debemos defender nuestra personalidad porque somos la nacionalidad más definida de América.¹⁴⁶

The voluntary character of this choice clashes, in Albizu's formulation, with the desire to lead a movement that incarnates the authentic will of the Puerto Rican people at large. In a passage in which the author asserts the unwillingness of the PNP to come to terms with the political forces that accept and cooperate with the colonial government, he makes a specific statement about the authentic nature of his party.

Pero nosotros hemos dado instrucciones terminantes, en consonancia con la altura moral de nuestro movimiento, que nuestro movimiento, que no es un partido político sino el movimiento patriótico que representa los derechos integrales de todos los puertorriqueños, no entre en combinaciones, en contubernios, ni alianzas, ni pactos, con ningún partido de Gobierno.¹⁴⁷

The same concept of a "patriotic movement that represents the integral rights of *all* the Puerto Ricans" is later reformulated in an even more explicit assertion: "[n]uestro Partido [...] en realidad no es un Partido, sino la Patria organizada para rescatar su soberanía, para que puedan gozar de la dignidad de ser libres hasta los mismos que hoy combaten la Independencia."¹⁴⁸ As a matter of fact, "the Homeland organized to redeem its sovereignty" became the official motto of the PNP, and usually appears on its press and pamphlets.

¹⁴⁶ M. Rivera Matos, "'Aquí se dilucidará cuales son los planes y actitud de Estado Unidos hacia los pueblos de nuestra raza', dijo Albizu Campos en el banquete en su honor [*El Mundo*, 19 de marzo de 1930]," in Albizu Campos, *Obras escogidas*, vol. 1, 74.

¹⁴⁷ Albizu Campos, "Discurso político pronunciado en Ponce, el día 31 de octubre de 1932," in *República de Puerto Rico*, 47.

¹⁴⁸ Albizu Campos, "Carta al Sr. Luis Venegas Cortes [*El Mundo*, 22 de septiembre de 1930]," in *Obras escogidas*, vol. 1, 171.

Salgado has a very similar uncompromising attitude toward the position of the AIB within the Brazilian political system of the 1930s. The following passage refers, specifically, to the ephemeral compromise between Vargas' coalition and the old liberal elites that was attained with the 1934 Constitution.

É por isso que o Integralismo Brasileiro não transaciona, não entra no jogo medíocre dos partidos, não se interessa pelas situações governamentais, não apóia, nem desapoia governos, não atrapalha os que estão administrando uma Nação Morta, não se preocupa com detalhes de leis e de regulamentos, nem se dá ao trabalho de criticar a carta constitucional votada por uma Assembléia Constituinte que foi um ajuntamento de alfaiates talhando a roupa para uma defunto.¹⁴⁹

This contemptuous position with regard to other political forces and the Vargas government is accompanied by a desire to wholly embody the Homeland, and consequently the will of all its members, that obviously reminds Albizu's position.

Nosso betume impermeabilizador é uma doutrina. Uma doutrina que gera uma mystica.
Sem mystica não se póde garantir nenhuma defesa nacional, nenhuma eficiencia da lucta.
Sabemos que ha muito patriotismo no paiz. Mas o nosso patriotismo, o dos camisas-verdes, é o patriotismo organizado. Que adeanta patriotismo disperso, sem direcção, sem technica, sem sacrificio e sem renuncia?
Nestas horas graves, é preciso que o sentimento da Patria se galvaniza numa perfeita communhão de consciencias, de espiritos identificados por um ideal supremo.
O milagre do Integralismo é exactamente esse: ter organizado o patriotismo, ter racionalizado as vontades patrioticas, ter objectivado numa realidade tangente as reservas occultas das energias nacionaes.
Fóra do Integralismo não ha salvação.
Ou o Integralismo vence, ou a Nação morre.¹⁵⁰

Integralism, therefore, is the only source of "salvation" for the Nation, being the authentic Brazilian "organized patriotism." Its "doctrine" and "mysticism," its "perfect communion of consciences" and "spirits identified with a supreme ideal" differentiate it

¹⁴⁹ Salgado, "A alma de uma Nação [1935]," in *O pensamento revolucionário*, 275.

¹⁵⁰ Salgado, *Paginas de combate*, 35-36.

from all the other political organizations. The use of this strongly religious terminology is reinforced, in the same text, by the image of Integralism as a “waterproofing bitumen.” Indeed, the passage is inserted into a broader metaphor that meaningfully proposes Salgado’s doctrine as the Noah’s Ark that will drive the Brazilian nation out of the tempests of a corrupted modernity.

É necessario, para se crear a mystica da Patria, a unidade de um Pensamento e a longa permanencia de um sacrificio.
Todas as tentativas sossombrarão no Diluvio.
O Integralismo, porém, é a Arca da Aliança.
Dentro della, nos tabernaculos sagrados dos corações, todo o Pensamento e todo o Sentimento de um Povo.
Elles se salvarão no meio das tempestades.¹⁵¹

Albizu is even more explicit in claiming that the redemptive power of his party embraces the entirety of the Puerto Rican people, in spite of the level of support for the pro-independence project expressed by the individuals. The emphasis on the inclusion of the inner enemy in the collective goal of liberation clearly recalls the universalist Christian Gospel of salvation directed toward sinners. This argument is reinforced and expanded in the following passage.

Los hombres y las mujeres que se levantan con la bandera de la independencia en un pueblo, son venerados por todos porque no piden nada para sí que al mismo tiempo no lo pidan para sus hermanos, hasta para sus hermanos que sean traidores porque no hay derecho a sentenciar, ni al traidor siquiera, a vivir en la ignominia de la esclavitud política.¹⁵²

This sentence summarizes and connects the main elements of the religiously constructed message of the author: the militants express the outrage at the “political slavery” imposed by the United States through their altruistic sacrifice, that permits the

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 39-40. It should be noted that in his argument Salgado mixes, or possibly confuses, Noah’s Ark with the Ark of the Covenant (“Arca da Aliança”).

¹⁵² Albizu Campos, “Discurso pronunciado en Ponce en la noche del 12 de octubre de 1933 con motivo de la celebración del ‘Día de la Raza’,” in *República de Puerto Rico*, 8.

inclusion of the whole nation, including present “traitors,” in the project of future redemption. Nonetheless, it also brings out the unsolved problem that also applies to Salgado’s Integralism: the contrast between a universalistic message and the exclusivist conception of its concrete incarnation, the party. It has already been signaled that Albizu’s discourse is framed around a dialectical tension between an individual will and a collective project for the nation,¹⁵³ that materializes in the very trajectory of the PNPR in the 1930s. After the appointment of Albizu as head of the party in 1930, it actually evolved into a sectarian organization, with a rising level of intolerance toward any opinion that diverged from the closed group of Albizu and his collaborators. The result was the acceleration of the vicious circle of isolation and radicalization that led to a dramatic escalation of violence in the second part of the 1930s.¹⁵⁴ Salgado did not experience a comparable level of internal dispute, and during the period of its legal existence (1932-1937) the AIB remained a cohesive and unitary movement. Nevertheless, both Albizu and Salgado had to deal with the unsolvable contradiction between their universal goals and the condition of minority of their parties. A paradox that led them to formulate a eulogy for the select, inspired vanguard that they constructed in order to head the irresponsible masses toward an harmonious future. So, in Albizu’s words, the Puerto Rican people continues to “profanar todo, hasta profanar su propia libertad; y tiene que levantarse un grupo de hombres y mujeres para decirle que debe ser libre.”¹⁵⁵ Pairing his ethics of sacrifice with a prophetic and missionary tone, the leader of the PNPR declares

¹⁵³ Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*, 210-223.

¹⁵⁴ The intricate story of PNPR internal conflicts and dissidences is reconstructed in Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 173-256.

¹⁵⁵ Albizu Campos, “Discurso pronunciado en Ponce en la noche del 12 de octubre de 1933 con motivo de la celebración del ‘Día de la Raza’,” in *República de Puerto Rico*, 24.

the legitimacy of his struggle on the basis of the commitment and self-denial of a single individual.

Si bien es cierto que las grandes causas necesitan de la multitud, es más cierto que las grandes causas necesitan menos a la multitud que de los hombres abnegados.

Una gran causa está sostenida definitivamente si un solo hombre la sostiene con el espíritu del sacrificio necesario.¹⁵⁶

The champion of this virtuous behavior in the name of the *patria* is, of course, Albizu himself, who in the course of his life endured all the consequences of his ideas and actions, including more than two decades spent in jail. In Albizu's paradigm, the party is essentially an enlightened minority, that is built around an inspired message and is immersed in a hostile environment. Therefore, an authoritarian and personalistic leadership and a strict internal discipline are vital instruments for its survival and success. In this way, Albizu attempts not only to demonstrate the spiritual superiority of Puerto Rico over the materialistic United States, through heroism and sacrifice, but also to mold in the independence struggle the future character of the emancipated nation. In fact, according to Ferrao's analysis, Albizu refounds the PNPR as "una prefiguración del futuro Estado nacional independiente,"¹⁵⁷ i.e. as a formative experience for the ruling class of the state-to-be.

Salgado's spiritual revolution involves a similar imposition of discipline and vow of obedience to the undisputed leader. As was pointed out, the author attempts in several texts to counter the tendency toward a personality cult within his party, affirming that the strength of the Integralist doctrine renders an authoritative personal leadership

¹⁵⁶ Albizu Campos, "Oración pronunciada en Ponce el día 16 de octubre 1932, en los funerales de Don Ramón Mayoral Barnés," in *ibid.*, 51.

¹⁵⁷ Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 135.

superfluous.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the passages in which Salgado diminishes his role as the guide of the movement appear to be essentially a proof of false modesty, and a rhetorical device to further exalt his all-embracing, allegedly original ideas. In fact, the political history of the AIB attests that Salgado consistently was its central character. Moreover, a closer reading of his writings permits us to underscore the leading role that he assigns to himself. His prophetic and messianic tone is evident in the following piece:

E se lestes ou ouvistes estas minhas palavras, o vosso crime é dobrado, pois não podereis alegar ao supremo Julgador das vossas ações que não apareceu alguém que vos lançasse, por vos amar, e muito, estas verdades ao vosso rosto.
Satanás apoderou-se de vós, burgueses, como se apoderou de muitos proletários. [...]
Urge que vos transformeis, homens do meu tempo, ricos e pobres.¹⁵⁹

Here Salgado raises himself to the role of a divine herald, who brings to humanity a universal message that would permit everyone to overcome class differences and struggles. If an individual has the fortune to be exposed to his enlightened “truths” and still ignores them, the author says, this person commits a sinful “crime” against God. In other words, the refusal to enter the sectarian group of the Integralists – or at least to support it – is an immoral act, a sin against the Salgado’s divinely inspired mission to restore the harmony in the declining modern society. Moreover, he claims, “a nossa hora deve ser qualquer coisa de maravilhoso e de imprevisto, e só o Chefe deverá saber, no instante supremo em que o Destino dos Povos lhe falar aos ouvidos.”¹⁶⁰ So, Salgado is not only the inspired disseminator of the message; he is also the exclusive repository of

¹⁵⁸ Salgado especially develops this point in “Messianismos”, in Plínio Salgado, *Páginas de combate* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria H. Antunes, 1937), 135-143). This issue is discussed in Ricardo Benzaquen de Araújo, *Totalitarismo e revolução: o Integralismo de Plínio Salgado* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1987), 72-76.

¹⁵⁹ Salgado, “As duas faces de Satanás [1935],” in *O pensamento revolucionário*, 36-37.

¹⁶⁰ Salgado, *Páginas de combate*, 89.

the privilege to accomplish “the Destiny of the Peoples,” in an indeterminate moment that has the profile of a sacred mystery.

This concise analysis of Albizu and Salgado’s extensive use of Christian terminology and themes in the construction of their respective political doctrines is interesting for the numerous, and sometimes almost literal, analogies between the two formulations. Nevertheless, the comparison also permits us to highlight the value of Emilio Gentile’s notion of “political religion” for the study of radical forms of nationalism and political mobilization. According to the Italian historian, ideologies or parties are examples of the peculiar process the he calls “sacralisation of politics”

when they: (a) define the meaning of life and ultimate ends of human existence; (b) formalise the commandments of a public ethic to which all members of these movement [sic] must adhere; and (c) give utter importance to a mythical and symbolic dramatisation in their interpretation of history and reality, thus creating their own ‘sacred history’, embodied in the nation, the state or the party, and tied to the existence of a ‘chosen people’, which were glorified as the regenerating force of all mankind.¹⁶¹

The main elements of this definition are easy to track in both authors’ discourses: the revelation of the final destiny of humankind; a rigorous code of behavior for the militants; a tragic reading of recent history and contemporary society; the nation as a sacred body to be revived through the relentless efforts of a selected community of inspired activists. Gentile also formulates a corollary to illustrate the view of the “political entity” of reference that this kind of phenomena elaborate, and it is even more precise in bringing to the surface the core of Albizu and Salgado’s thought. In fact, the nation acquires

the characteristics of a sacred entity, that is, of a supreme power, indisputable and untouchable, which becomes the object of faith, of

¹⁶¹ Gentile, 29.

reverence, of cult, of fidelity, of devotion from the side of the citizens, up to and including the sacrifice of life; and as such it lies in the centre of the constellation of beliefs, of myths, of values, of commandments, of rites and of symbols.¹⁶²

A significant difference between Gentile's interpretative model and the cases considered here concerns the crucial point of the relations between these innovative forms of sacral nationalism and historical faith, i.e. Catholicism. Indeed, another common feature that the Italian scholar detects in political religion is

a hostile attitude toward traditional institutionalised religions, seeking to eliminate them, or seeking to establish with them a relationship of symbiotic coexistence, in the sense that the political religion seeks to incorporate traditional religion within its own system of beliefs and myths, assigning it a subordinate and auxiliary role.¹⁶³

This statement is clearly not applicable to either Albizu or Salgado, who on the contrary showed deference to orthodox Catholicism, and pursued a different path of identification and coexistence with it. Of course, Gentile has in mind the specific case of Italian fascism that inherited from the history of the peninsula a peculiar, conflicting relationship with the Catholic Church.

In spite of this important distinction, the employment of Gentile's concept, in association with Griffin's ideal type of "generic fascism," to situate in a comparative and supranational perspective the cases of Pedro Albizu Campos and Plínio Salgado allows to draw some overall conclusions not only on these specific examples, but also on the potential of novel approaches to studying the radical and revolutionary right in Latin America.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 30.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

In my research, I have tried to demonstrate the usefulness of a rigorously conceived notion of fascism for the political and intellectual history of Latin America. To this end, I chose two cases from the 1930s that scholars rarely address in a comparative fashion, but frequently associate with a vague label of fascism. For sure, the PNPR and the AIB experiences are not completely comparable because of the enormous differences between the two countries, Brazil and Puerto Rico, and the apparently distinctive immediate goals of the two parties. Nevertheless, in my opinion, this dissimilarity renders the results of the comparison even more significant for the study of the revolutionary right in Latin America.

The decision to employ Roger Griffin's "generic fascism" ideal type and Emilio Gentile's definition of "political religion" stemmed from a dissatisfaction with the prevailing uncritical appropriation of the term "fascism," that, in addition, is generally employed to discredit the political movements and their leaders. This dismissive attitude was particularly frequent in the case of the PNPR and Albizu, as their groundbreaking project for Puerto Rican independence still highly controversial in current debates on the political status of the island. The recent methodological developments of the European school of fascist studies, of which Griffin and Gentile are major figures, permit us to use the concept of fascism as an analytical tool, cleansing it of the vagueness and polemical character that generally are its trademarks. Fascism, as any other concept, will always

maintain a high degree of arbitrariness and controversy, but scholars should work to counter the shortcuts often taken in the public debate when the term is introduced. If the goal is to give fascism a role in both academic research and political debate, its definition cannot be limited to any generic form of aggressive and intolerant public message or mobilization. A broad variety of violent and racist discourses and practices are surely crucial in historical and current fascist manifestations, but a closer attention to ideas, values, and worldviews can produce a more precise and insightful analysis of these phenomena. This is the direction that the study of fascism has taken since the 1960s, through the so called “culturalist turn,” when even the researches on the most long-lasting, and temporally successful, fascist experiences in Italy and Germany started to explore the ideals that lay behind those regimes. This approach is particularly suitable for the study of doctrines and movements that never seized power, such as the two under examination here, since their unsuccessful struggle against the establishment enhanced their speculative and utopian components.

The conjuncture in which Albizu and Salgado constructed their political projects unquestionably favored a hypercritical perspective on the general trends taking place in their respective countries, and in the global scene as a whole. In the early 1930s, the industrialized world, and the broad areas on which the United States and Europe exerted their colonial or neo-colonial control, such as Latin America, experienced a dramatic financial and economic crisis, that produced severe social consequences. From the standpoint of nations placed in a subaltern position within the international system, the apparent failure of capitalism, and the fragilities of the political ideology and institutional framework that had sustained it – liberalism – opened a novel space that could be filled

with radically new projects of nation, society, and state. In Latin America, the socialist option, in its many varieties, appealed to significant sectors of the population, including both the intellectual circles and the working classes, and notoriously constituted a noteworthy and durable current of thought and political activism. Nonetheless, an alternative and divergent tradition took shape in the same period, and, although it lacked the relative supranational cohesion and the common intellectual authorities of its leftist counterpart, its national varieties show some shared, fundamental features. The affinities among these radical right-wing experiences are particularly evident and intriguing if one observes how the ideologues articulated their political discourses around specific images of the past, interpretations of the present, propositions for the future, and identifiable languages. Indeed, my experimental comparison of the thought of two different figures such as Pedro Albizu Campos and Plínio Salgado, who lived and operated in two of the most dissimilar countries of the continent – Puerto Rico and Brazil – revealed a core of very similar, if not shared, visions and values.

To begin with, both authors ground their political doctrines on a critical analysis of the foundations of modern society, and they identify in the economic system the origin of the decadence of humanity that culminated in the 1930s global crisis. With different tones, Albizu and Salgado blame capitalism as the major cause of their countries' decay. In the Puerto Rican case, the sugar industry appears as the most outstanding example of the exploitative modes of production, not only imposed, but also directly controlled by a foreign power. On the other hand, the Brazilian intellectual points at the economic and political elite who accumulated wealth and power through the proceeds of the embryonic agro-industrial apparatus of his country. The prototypical foes that they outline – the

autochthonous collaborator of the US-controlled sugar business, for Albizu, and the Brazilian urban bourgeoisie, for Salgado – has the characteristics of the internal enemy: he is the traitor who cooperates with an invading and illegitimate authority, or who imports and adopts foreign habits and principles. This enemy is responsible for the destruction of the idealized pre-modern society that, in the authors' discourse, is associated with fairer employment conditions for people and a general notion of harmony. What is even more central in Albizu and Salgado's reflections is the fact that in modern times the working classes, whose labor is treated as a marketable commodity and benefits foreigners and a parasitical minority, are subjected to a process of spiritual impoverishment. It is important to highlight the fact that both leaders show a deep concern about the problems of the lower strata of the population. Contradicting the misconception that associates the sensitivity to the "social question" with the left, this innovative right-wing trends share at least an intuition about the rising role of the masses on the public scene. In this sense, both the PNPR and the AIB are constructed with the aim of competing on the same ground that the socialist and communist parties are trying to occupy. In fact, Albizu and Salgado consider the material poverty and the moral decadence that they disgustedly observe as the direct causes, on the one hand, of the passivity of the population in the face of injustices and marginalization; on the other hand, of illusory promises of participation and affluence. If Albizu is particularly fearful of the attraction of the Puerto Ricans for the individualistic and materialistic way of life in the United States, Salgado turns his attention to the ominous diffusion of communism in Brazil. The authors consider both threats as disruptive systems of values that undermine the cohesion of their countries, and as direct products of bourgeois, liberal

society. Significantly, Salgado puts the blame on the well-off for providing a negative behaviour pattern for the lower classes, and for helping the formulation and dissemination of radical leftist ideologies. Modernity, through capitalism and liberal democracy, reduced the masses to a condition of physical and moral brutalization, and left them completely defenseless in the face of the pernicious influences of its misleading messages. Therefore, the mission of Albizu and Salgado, in their different contexts, becomes the formulation of an authentic proposal of salvation that tightly connects together the key elements of what they consider the only horizon toward which humanity should project itself: the nation.

Albizu and Salgado's discourses on the crisis laid the foundations for the formulation of the palingenetic message that, according to Griffin's proposal, characterizes the core of ideal-typical fascism. Only the perception and the propagation of an apocalyptic vision of the present, in fact, permits the authors to construct doctrines that clamor for rebirth and redemption. However, the second element that the British scholar stresses in his definition – ultranationalism – is equally important, and constitutes the setting for the political appeal of the two political leaders. Both authors produce a provocative reversal of the traditionally accepted hierarchies of nations, redefining crucial concepts such as “development” and “civilization”. For Salgado, Europe is the main element of comparison, both because it was the center of attraction for Brazilian intellectual and artistic circles, and as a consequence of his long foundational journey through the Old World in 1930. He observes a region that is in an irreversible state of ruin, and radically divided on the paths to be taken, both in the realm of culture and the economic and political sphere. Albizu naturally builds his polarization between the

United States and Puerto Rico, adopting the consolidated *hispanista* standpoint that opposes *civilización* and *barbarie*. Therefore, the colonial occupying power becomes a country of profound ignorance and inequality, whose pillar is greed.

The two authors, having defined the general structure of their scale of values, resort to the same discursive resource in order to identify the borders of their specific national communities and, at the same time, to project their political proposal toward the broader world: the issue of race. In fact, both of them combine a strong culturalist and spiritualist approach to race with a discourse on “blood,” obtaining a utopian message that announces a pacific and harmonious future. While the Puerto Rican underscores the successful blending of European, African, and Native American blood on his island, under the beneficial aegis of the superior Greco-Roman tradition, the Brazilian identifies the indigenous *tupi*, the atavistic inhabitant of the continent, as the repository of authenticity, and as the common denominator of a forthcoming intermixed “perfect” race. In this way, Albizu and Salgado, using the different identity markers that they find in their respective countries’ pasts, link their idealized picture of pre-modern times with their political project, through the promise of a restored harmony. In other words, their paligenetic effort constitutes an attempt to synchronize the past with the future, in order to overcome a dispiriting present that is deceiving humanity and to place their respective countries in the center of the global scene. Therefore, the authors’ philosophy of history alters the positivistic vision of human experience as a linear and progressive development, which both liberal and socialist traditions accepted and transformed in the ideological foundation of modernity. Moreover, this trust in racial mixture as the

supposedly tried and tested solution to the social problems of Puerto Rico and Brazil permits the authors to forecast a sort of “imperialist task” for their homelands.

Cultural and spiritual resources, and not the military or economic power, are obviously the instruments of this dream of globally reversing the process of human decadence. The explicit ambition of proposing themselves as the holders of a moral leadership, that should embrace Latin America as a whole and, in the long term, the world, undermines one of the most recurring arguments against the use of the category of fascism in the study of Salgado and Albizu. Indeed, especially in the examination of the latter, scholars tend to reject the term because of its close association with expansionism and imperialism.¹⁶⁴ The bitter criticism toward intrusions by extraneous forces into nations that are struggling to establish themselves in their “authenticity” is thus taken to its logical extreme: the pretension to incarnate an alternative model that should be gradually adopted as a universal solution to the evils of modernity, well beyond the national borders.

The discursive strength of Albizu and Salgado’s utopian arguments comes from their relationship with the semantic field of religion, that constitutes the last, crucial element of my comparative analysis. A close reading of the authors’ writings and speeches reveals the centrality of the Catholic tradition as a repertoire of terminology, images, symbols, and models for the construction of their thought, organizations, and leadership. In the examination of this project the third component of Griffin’s “generic fascism” – populism – and the potential of Gentile’s “political religion” are at stake. In fact, the charismatic guidance that both Albizu and Salgado exercise on their respective

¹⁶⁴ This is the case in Rodríguez Vázquez, *El sueño que no cesa*, 204-209, and in the works of the Taller de Formación Política, *La cuestión nacional* and *Pedro Albizu Campos*.

parties is modeled on the paradigm of the enlightened prophet who leads a select few of apostles toward the accomplishment of the only, exclusive “authentic” plan for collective redemption. The Nation is of course the space in which the militants, imitating the leader, show their complete dedication to the cause, their commitment to the apostolate, and their acceptance of isolation, persecution, and, as necessary, martyrdom. Incidentally, this scheme is clearly consistent with Michel Foucault’s notion of “pastoral power,” that in fact the French philosopher closely connects with the Jewish-Christian tradition.¹⁶⁵ Nonetheless, this peculiar conception of political activity proves problematic. In the first instance, it entails the construction of a rigidly hierarchical and authoritarian organization, in which the preponderance of the values of discipline and loyalty cripples any possibility of internal criticisms toward and dissent from the official party line. Second, and more importantly, the pretension to incarnate the “organized Homeland” (in Albizu’s words), or the “organized patriotism” (according to Salgado), and thus to represent and serve the entire national community, clashes with the very sectarianism of those movements.

This unresolved contradiction between, on the one hand, the universalistic ideals and goals of the PNPR and the AIB, and, on the other hand, their exclusivist and elitist configuration is probably the key reason of their failure. In fact, both parties, after failing to mobilize a substantial sector of the population, not only progressively fell into a spiral of violent, conspiratorial, and subversive activities that produced repression, but also had their revolutionary message weakened and plundered. Indeed, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil and Luís Muñoz Marín in Puerto Rico, of course in different ways and with different

¹⁶⁵ Michel Foucault, *Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Criticism of ‘Political Reason’*, lecture delivered at Stanford University on October 10 and 16, 1979., available from *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, <<http://www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/documents/foucault81.pdf>> (accessed 9 October 2008).

nuances, were able to hijack the populist core of Salgado and Albizu's messages. After cleansing the latter of their radicalism, and in particular of their moralistic and quasi-religious content, the two dominant figures of mid-20th century Brazilian and Puerto Rican politics had success in using the widespread dissatisfaction with modernity (i.e., for the vast majority of the population, with deteriorated socio-economic conditions), the new demands for mass participation in the construction of the state, and the process of formulation of a national ideology that also inspired Salgado and Albizu. The fact that the extremist political doctrines that the AIB and the PNPR defended in the 1930s has always remained confined to minority circles, and were finally overcome by more pragmatic and moderate settlements, does not mean they are irrelevant.

I believe that it is time to tackle the historical study of the Latin American revolutionary right with new lenses. First of all, it is necessary to discard the well-established conviction that movements such as the two I examined in this research are just exceptionally crude manifestations of mere conservatism and reaction, and the products of the visionary speculations of some insane, ambitious figures.¹⁶⁶ Choosing and analyzing two apparently disparate cases such as the PNPR and the AIB, I was able to pinpoint not only some specific similarities between the two movements' ideologies, but also the level of refinement of the political projects that they proposed, distancing themselves from a generic preservation of the existing conditions. Moreover, in the light

¹⁶⁶ A revealing example of this contemptuous attitude can be found in the preface that the renowned sociologist Florestan Fernandes wrote for an intellectual history of Integralism published in 1979. The historical context of his assertions is, of course, that of the Brazilian military regime. "Hoje – Fernandes writes – está na moda dizer-se que se deve estudar o integralismo. Não compartilho dessa opinião. Nem mesmo devemos nos preocupar com destruí-lo. Os integralistas desempenharam o papel histórico de cavalheiros de triste figura no seio do pensamento conservador e dentro da burguesia. Se merecem atenção não é tanto por eles próprios, quanto pelo fato de que o pensamento conservador e a burguesia dependente da periferia do mundo capitalista tenham precisado deles (e de outras modalidades igualmente equivocadas da defesa do *status quo*). O que nos coube, na 'virada fascista' da história recente, merece mais a novela picaresca que a investigação sociológica séria." (Vasconcelos, *A ideologia curupira*, 11).

of the results of this experimental comparison, I would hypothesize that in the Latin America of the 1930s, even in very different contexts, similar political discourses were articulated, even without direct contacts and influences. This observation should open the doors to a transnational study of nationalism, even in its more radical and visionary formulations, addressing the most important questions and responses that intellectuals and political leaders throughout the subcontinent articulated around key issues such as identity, race, religion, and the formation of the nation state. In order to better comprehend and interpret these phenomena, I dared to use a specific definition of fascism because of the level of sophistication and accuracy that, in my opinion, the European school of fascist studies has recently attained, both theoretically and methodologically. Concepts such as “generic fascism” and “political religion” help to approach the topic of the revolutionary right in a less ideologically oriented fashion, and to avoid simplistic statements of contempt and insignificance. In this way, even Albizu and Salgado’s failed utopias can be properly studied in their problematic nature, and as political doctrines that directly and indirectly contributed to shape the public debate on the crucial dilemma about nation and nationalism in modern Latin America.

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