

INTELLECTUAL IN FLUX:  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERAL CATHOLIC THOUGHT  
IN ALCEU AMOROSO LIMA

By

Laura E. Delgado

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 2010

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Professor Marshall C. Eakin

Professor W. Frank Robinson

A um país que aprendi a amar.

E aos orientadores que acreditaram em mim.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION .....	ii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. ALCEU’S TRANSFORMATION & CATHOLIC UNDERPINNINGS .....	17
III. LIBERTY, JUSTICE, AND PEACE.....	34
IV. DEBATE OVER CHURCH INTERVENTION .....	53
V. EDUCATION AND THE MASSES .....	70
VI. ALCEU IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT .....	87
VII. EPILOGUE .....	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	107

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Alceu Amoroso Lima was one of the most important Brazilian Catholic intellectuals from his conversion in 1928 until his death in 1983. He was widely renowned later in life as a Catholic liberal whose open denunciation of the censorship and repression of the Brazilian military dictatorship transformed him into a moral voice for liberty read by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Like many of his generation, Alceu was raised in a Catholic household but as a young adult pronounced himself an affirmed agnostic until he reconverted to Catholicism in 1928. A well-known literary critic before this turning point, a few months after his conversion the death of his close friend and mentor Jackson de Figueiredo pushed Alceu Amoroso Lima into a leadership position on the national Catholic scene where he would remain for the rest of his life. It was a huge responsibility to assume and in those tumultuous times, still hesitant in his faith and his ability to be a good Catholic, he followed closely in the footsteps of his predecessor de Figueiredo who was a militant authoritarian. Yet by the 1950s from this conservative mindset he had traversed far to the other side of the spectrum to the liberal left and by the mid 1960s was considered one of the leading liberal Catholic intellectuals in Brazil.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The historiography on Alceu Amoroso Lima is still somewhat limited. The lack of biographies on him is noted by Scott Mainwaring (262). The most notable source would be Marcelo Timotheo da Costa's *Um Itinerário no Século: Mudança, Disciplina e Ação em Alceu Amoroso Lima*. The historiography primarily

His views and influence as a leading liberal in the 1960s and 1970s are largely the focus of much of the historiography on Alceu Amoroso Lima. His intellectual and spiritual trajectory in the 1920s and the 1930s, once his re-conversion to Catholicism is covered, are often summed up in a few short paragraphs, emphasizing his position as leader of the majority of the important Catholic groups and then moving on. But these years do merit closer attention. At the time of his conversion Alceu was better known as a literary critic by the pseudonym Tristão de Ataíde, and was already a prolific writer. The 1930s and early 1940s are overlooked in the long trajectory of his personal intellectual growth, and yet these years are critical because despite his public presence as a conservative, inwardly his liberal predisposition remained in his works we can see the rudiments of the liberal he would become.<sup>2</sup> The constant themes of his writings in this decade would eventually develop into the core of his beliefs as a liberal. By the early 1940s Alceu Amoroso Lima was ten years ahead of his Brazilian counterparts, on the cutting edge of Catholic thought. He was truly a visionary, whose open mind and tolerant character pushed him to follow the development of Catholic thought abroad, and

---

focuses role as leader of the Centro Dom Vital in the 1930s, and then on his accomplishments as a Catholic liberal in the 1960s, whereas in the general history of the Brazilian Catholic Church he is barely mentioned. The tribute by Otto Maria Carpeaux is brief, but the best source remains his memoirs recorded in *Memórias Improvisadas*. The three works in Portuguese that best represent general conceptions of Alceu are by da Costa, and the more general works by João Alfredo de Sousa Montenegro and Antonio Carlos Villaça. The two critical works in English on the Church in Brazil are by Scott Mainwaring and Thomas Bruneau, both of whom barely mention Alceu.

<sup>2</sup> For example, a typical discussion of Alceu's roles in these years would briefly mention his role as leader of the laity working with Cardinal Leme demonstrated with Bruneau: "after Jackson's death the most important layman of this century in Brazil, who took over the direction of the Centro" (44). That would sum up the mention of Alceu's role in the 1930s. The historiography on this decade in general is lacking, and in one of the few works, a dissertation by Margaret Todaro, she highlights Alceu's role as "under Alceu's editorship *A Ordem* became the voice of a Catholic intellectual generation, rather than the mouthpiece of Jackson" (187). Again, however, this would be the maximum credit afforded to Alceu. A common opinion of him, for example, is "em vão tentou adaptar o tomismo, fruto de um recuado periódico histórico, aos tempos contemporâneos" (Montenegro, 179). In general this decade is characterized as Alceu under the overwhelming influence of Jackson's authoritarianism, culminating in a marked change back to liberalism in the late 1930s, as seen in Medeiros Lima's comments and Candido Mendes's work *Dr. Alceu: da persona a pessoa*.

then introduce these ideas to Brazil. His greatest legacies as an intellectual were to help bring Brazilian Catholic intellectuals into contact with current thought, and to show a generation that one could be both an intellectual and a Catholic.

Currently, Antonio Carlos Villaça and João Alfredo de Sousa Montenegro are two of the most highly regarded authorities Catholic thought in Brazil. These two emphasize the great literary influence of Alceu, but do not make clear his true impact on Catholic thought of his era.<sup>3</sup> His lifelong emphasis on liberty is noted as the most profound and constant feature of his writings.<sup>4</sup> He is also noted to have transformed into one of the most important leaders of liberal Catholic thought in the 1950s, but his influence in earlier decades is unexamined, or rather the emphasis in this era is left upon his literary work.<sup>5</sup> Other historians such as Otto Maria Carpeaux mention how his work in these years demonstrated a perspective that “só viu anjos e demônios no mundo”, whereas I would argue that Alceu’s tolerant nature sought balance in all topics and that it is a critical element in understanding his theories, and also understanding why the progressive nature of his works remains overlooked.<sup>6</sup> In this same vein, in *Memórias Improvisadas* Medeiros Lima stated that in the 1930s “seu pensamento é de um católico de direita, temeroso de qualquer tipo de concessão que faça supor de sua parte uma abertura de flanco ao adversário”, whereas I would argue that Alceu was rarely a fearmonger or radical.<sup>7</sup> Medeiros Lima later described Alceu at this time as taking on “uma posição

---

<sup>3</sup> Antonio Carlos Villaça, *O pensamento católico no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 2006), 179.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>5</sup> Riolando Azzí, *A Neocrístandade: um projeto restaurador* (São Paulo: Editora Paulus, 1994), 130.

<sup>6</sup> Otto Maria Carpeaux, *Alceu Amoroso Lima* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições Graal Ltda., 1978), 77.

<sup>7</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Memórias Improvisadas: Diálogos com Medeiros Lima* (Petropolis: Editora Vozes Ltda., 1973), 28.

conservadora e tradicionalista, em que a Igreja se confunde com o pensamento direitista e reacionário”.<sup>8</sup> I would say for this reason it is critical to examine his published books instead of just his journal articles in Catholic journals because these are articles that he hand-selected as representative of his views. There was certainly a conservative cast to Alceu’s writings but to characterize them as only conservative, militant and intolerant, is overly simplistic.

These years in general are often passed over for the more explosive 1950s and 1960s where Catholic thought was transforming rapidly, but Alceu’s transformation in the 1930s and 1940s is a critical component necessary to understand both his development and that of Brazilian Catholic thought. . His own personal liberal inclinations remain throughout the years but it took time to develop them fully and combine them into the conviction that this is what the Church stood for, not just Alceu Amoroso Lima. I argue that Alceu was never as conservative and as militant as he is traditionally perceived in the 1930s and early 1940s and by overlooking this era of his life, the historiography has failed to recognize that Alceu was a precursor to liberal Catholic thought in Brazil. The progressive push of the Church in the 1960s was not a sudden revolution but instead a slow evolution, and its beginnings lie in the 1930s with intellectuals like Alceu. By examining his writings in the 1930s in depth we can see the seeds of the ideas that would define him thirty years later. . Due to the influence of Dom Cardinal Sebastião Leme da Silveira Cintra and Jackson de Figueredo, the latter his mentor and the former his superior, upon assuming direction of the Centro Dom Vital after the early death of Jackson in 1928, Alceu chose to follow the guidelines left to him

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 27.

rather than to realign the Centro Dom Vital and its journal *A Ordem* to fit his own personal beliefs. The Catholic works of the 1920s and the 1930s were truly the life's work of Dom Leme, and Alceu followed his guidance, and thus always stayed within the boundaries of accepted Catholic thought, allowing for his slow evolution to go unnoticed. Ultimately I argue that the historiography presents this decade as militant authoritarian phase followed by a radical change back to liberalism whereas I see continuity in his ideas and the roots of his liberal ideas.<sup>9</sup>

In this thesis, I will examine Alceu's correspondence with Jackson de Figueredo that covers the period surrounding his conversion, selected publications from 1931 to 1943, as well as his memoirs.<sup>10</sup> These works will demonstrate that the seeds of his liberalism were present at his conversion and would remain present in the 1930s even during his years as a supposed militant conservative, slowly evolving to take a noticeable central role in his ideas and writings in the mid 1940s. These same ideas, particularly those emphasizing liberty, justice and peace, would be the backbone of the new wave of Catholicism that would sweep worldwide in the 1960s under the Second Vatican Council. Effectively, I will demonstrate that while in general Alceu was recognized as a great humanitarian and one of Brazil's greatest laymen, the progressive content of his ideas in

---

<sup>9</sup> Laurita Pessôa Raja Gabaglia, *O Cardeal Leme* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympico Editôra, 1962), 179.

<sup>10</sup> The selected works from 1931 to 1943 concern the Church, politics, sociology, and economics. They include: *A Igreja e o Novo Mundo*, *Contra-Revolução Espiritual*, *Meditação sobre o Mundo Moderno*, *Mitos de Nosso Tempo*, *O problema da burguezia*, *Pela Reforma Social*, *Pela União Nacional*, *Preparação á Sociologia*, *O Espírito e o Mundo*, *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, *Indicações Políticas*, and *Elementos de Ação Católica*. Other critical sources include his memoirs *Memórias Improvisadas*, and a collection of his interviews *Memorando dos 90*. In all the quotes used I have remained faithful to the orthography utilized in the original printed version; thus any deviations from modern spelling are due to the age of the texts.

these early years has been overlooked. As a result his influence on the development of liberal Catholic thought is unacknowledged.

Alceu's ideas revolve around three important themes that would dominate Church social doctrine in the 1960s: the Church as standing for liberty, justice, and peace; Church intervention in temporal issues; and the linked issues of the importance of education and an increased role for the laity, which form the base ideas that would eventually lead to CEBs (*Comunidades Eclesiais de Base*). These are all ideas that Alceu wrote about in the 1930s in the context of intense political turmoil in Brazil while the Church sought to regain many of the traditional influences it had lost since the end of the Empire in 1891. Liberty and justice in particular are two recurring themes in all of Alceu's writings. The importance of these themes counteracts claims that during the 1930s he was a militant, intolerant conservative. Alceu was never a radical and he disagreed with violent revolution; for him, slow peaceful change was always the solution. Alceu was also a proponent of balance in general; he was a pluralist at heart and did not advocate radical positions. Therefore as he called for liberty he would counterbalance by stating that authority should still be maintained. He also saw this balance in Church affairs: he saw the world as inherently a combination of natural and supernatural and thus requiring the Church to deal with both spiritual and earthly issues. As such he foresaw the debate over ecclesiology that would characterize the Catholic Church beginning in the late 1950s. He also argued for greater involvement from the laity and tied this in to a general need for a greater understanding of Church doctrine. In order to understand this conservative phase we must first discuss the political turmoil of the era and the position and plans of the Brazilian Catholic Church.

Alceu was born in 1893 and came of age in an almost bucolic setting, but the onset of World War I shattered world peace 1914, and in Paris at the time Alceu witnessed firsthand the impact upon his generation. In Brazil, the old monarchy ended in 1889 and by Alceu's early adulthood power-sharing between the Coffee and Cream states was firmly established in the Old Republic. The 1920s were a decade of uncertainty and turmoil, both for Alceu and for Brazil. The year 1922, in particular, was a watershed year. It saw the Tenente Revolt at the Copacabana Fort in Rio de Janeiro which marked the beginning of the end, as the power-sharing agreement and political consensus between elites began to fall apart. The second Tenente revolt in 1924 in São Paulo and Rio Grande de Sul and the subsequent survival of the communist Prestes Column until 1927 showed that these political tensions could not be so easily crushed.. The urban elite and working class, merchants, and industrialists demanded a say in a political system run by coffee oligarchs; they were the new player on the national scene and the system struggled to accommodate these new voices.<sup>11</sup> 1922 also witnessed the establishment of the Brazilian Communist Party, ushering in an era where Communism would be the defining political issue and considered a major threat by many.

The year 1922 also witnessed a Brazilian cultural declaration of independence: the Modern Art Week of São Paulo heralded the onset of Brazilian Modernism. It declared that Brazil would mimic European culture no more, instead it would consume worldwide culture and make it specifically Brazil's own. While the group that hosted the Week did not stay united for long, it introduced São Paulo as the seat of modern art in

---

<sup>11</sup>Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 4.

Brazil, and brought to a head the conflict between traditional art and academia in Brazil and a new generation striving for a true national art. It was an artistic revolution amidst political revolutions and showcased a new sense of nationalism.<sup>12</sup> Finally 1922 marked the authorization of the building of the *Cristo Redentor* statue in Rio de Janeiro, inaugurated in 1933, illustrating the Catholic response to secularism and agnosticism.<sup>13</sup>

By 1930 the political process was unable to placate and accommodate all the national actors; the system could not reconcile the various elites' claims to power and tensions between the power players erupted into a serious revolution that culminated in the rise of Getúlio Vargas to power, ushering in a new era in Brazilian politics.<sup>14</sup> A new Constitution was written in 1934, in which the Catholics played an interesting role. Unable to create an official Catholic political party under the restrictions of Cardinal Dom Leme, Catholics instead created a political advisory group, the Catholic Electoral League [*Liga Eleitoral Católica*, or LEC]. The LEC sought to register new voters and provide recommendations on voting to Catholics based upon a party and its candidates' willingness to support Catholic issues. The League's platform called for reintroduction of obligatory religious instruction in public schools, the continued ban on divorce, civil recognition of religious marriage, and the creation of chaplaincies in the armed forces and prisons, as well as the right to vote for clergy and the return of state subsidies for the Church. The LEC proved to be remarkably well-organized, though unsurprisingly corrupt in some areas where political prejudices emerged or the LEC ended up recommending its own members for office. The potential of the group was in fact credited as one of the

---

<sup>12</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Azzi, 19, 23.

<sup>14</sup> Skidmore, 7.

main forces behind creation of a law in 1937 preventing mixed ballots, meaning one could only vote for a party, not for individual politicians, thus ending the LEC's ability to pressure individual politicians to fall into line to gain the Catholic vote. This law forced the LEC to either become a party or accept its eventual decline. Refusing to explicitly enter the political arena, Dom Leme chose the latter and moved on to a new strategy for ensuring Catholic interests.<sup>15</sup> However brief, the LEC proved the tremendous political and social influence the Church could call upon when necessary.<sup>16</sup>

1937 also saw the end of the fascist movement in Brazil: Integralism [Ação Integralista Brasileira or AIB]. Despite the shared emphasis on authority and tradition and the majority of Catholics who filled its ranks, the AIB was never officially allied with the Catholic Church, at the preference of Dom Leme, who again refused to overtly favor any one party. The Church's emphasis on combating Communism led many Catholics to support the Integralista movement, led by Plínio Salgado. AIB's slogan of "Authority, Discipline, Spirit and Tradition" seemed to many Catholics the one true available innovative reform option, and they responded by filling the AIB's ranks.<sup>17</sup> Salgado in fact strove for an official alliance with the Church but he never succeeded. Dom Leme followed the general guidelines of the Pope with this choice in refusing an official alliance, but he also astutely understood the political power the Church gained by its ability to maneuver by abstaining from any overt political position.<sup>18</sup> By this time Vargas was beginning to show his mettle at manipulating events and players to his benefit, as the

---

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Price Todaro, "Pastors, Prophets and Politicians: A Study of the Brazilian Catholic Church, 1916-1945" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1971), 338.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.

<sup>18</sup> Scott Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 32-33.

scapegoat Communist Party was hounded and finally outlawed after the discovery of a clearly forged plot to overthrow the government.<sup>19</sup> The Integralistas soon joined the Communists, as at the end of 1937 Vargas outlawed all political parties and declared the end of the Republic and the beginning of his dictatorship, the Estado Novo. His rule would last until 1945 when he would be forced out by the end of World War II and Brazil would begin its democratic experiment.<sup>20</sup>

This was also an era of religious and not just political change. The Catholic Church in Brazil was galvanized into action by what it considered a remarkably weak and untenable position, having lost its traditional privileges and powers in the few decades since of the start of the secular Republic whose Constitution contained no mention of God. In 1916 Dom Leme's call to action began a new movement within the Church, which would dominate Catholic thought and action until the 1950s when the buildup to the Second Vatican Council of 1962 would bring new ideas to reshape the debate.

This was not a recent sudden loss of the Brazilian Church's traditional powers, but an ongoing process since the passage of the Constitution in 1891, which was merely the culmination of the slow draining of power from the Church throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Royal patronage in Portugal and its colonies had founded a Brazilian Church that was dependent upon the state. Dom Pedro II, ruler from 1840-1889, was a lukewarm Catholic at best, and while he never overtly threatened the Church, throughout his reign he slowly but surely allowed the Church to stagnate, subtly undermining her power and

---

<sup>19</sup> Skidmore, 22.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 37.

prestige.<sup>21</sup> These strong ties between Church and state worked well when the goals of Church and crown were identical, but in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it left the Church dependent upon a state that was increasingly agnostic and scientifically and positivist influenced.<sup>22</sup> Over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of seminaries and thus of priests dwindled until in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Cardinal Dom Leme realized the true crisis lay in the tiny numbers of priests attempting to administer to an enormous population.

This slow backlash against the Church culminated in the writing of the liberal and positivist-influenced Constitution of 1891 that removed any mention of God, all traditional linkages between Church and State, and brought the end of state subsidies and privileges to the Church. This trend only intensified during decades of liberal rule, as secularization waxed and slowly all vestiges of Church influence were removed from the State, education and even professional and family life.<sup>23</sup> At a national level the Church was excluded from public life and state support; the hierarchy spent the first decades clamoring emphatically to regain these connections and privileges. However, this separation in fact represented independence for the Brazilian Catholic Church as for the first time in centuries it was able to enter into a normal relationship with Rome and to reorganize itself to best avail itself of structural change and organizational growth. This separation allowed the Church to grow such that by 1930 it was a strong, independent institution capable of offering influence, order and stability to national leaders.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Sister M. Ancilla O'Neill, "Tristão de Athayde and the Catholic Social Movement in Brazil" (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1939), 42.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas C. Bruneau, *The Church in Brazil: the politics of religion* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 12-13.

<sup>23</sup> O'Neill, 12.

<sup>24</sup> Bruneau, 17-19.

Despite this growth, the Church hierarchy was still determined to regain the privileges it had lost, however they lacked coherence, until 1916 and the Pastoral Letter of then Archbishop of Olinda Dom Sebastião Leme de Silveira Cintra. His call to battle and denunciation of the indifference of the Catholic majority of the nation would this era of Catholic thought and action until his death in 1942. Dom Sebastião Leme later became the first Brazilian Cardinal and it was under his guiding hands that the Catholic Church in Brazil began its attempts to combat its weak political position, widespread agnosticism and secularism, and the growing threat of Communism and social revolution. For Dom Leme the critical point was that Brazil was a Catholic nation yet the Church exercised little influence.<sup>25</sup> Dom Leme utilized two main systems to accomplish his goals: the first was the creation of Catholic Action [*Ação Católica Brasileira*, or ACB], a group for the laity that strove to revitalize the spirituality of Brazilians and thus help resolve the underlying moral and material ills afflicting society. The second was the use of private direct bargaining with the State to achieve Church goals.<sup>26</sup> Dom Leme called for a Restoration of Catholic values in all Brazilian institutions, but in general he set a limited set of goals and strove to accomplish these fully. He provided strong leadership, a firm plan of attack, and a coherent national vision until his death. He would be one of the most important influences on Alceu.

The Church desired to not only end the dominance of the State over her affairs, but to ultimately gain joint rule between the governmental and spiritual powers of the

---

<sup>25</sup> Thomas C. Bruneau, *The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 30.

<sup>26</sup> Todaro, 425.

nation.<sup>27</sup> Dom Leme and other leading Catholic intellectuals felt that the principal problem to first be addressed was religious indifference.<sup>28</sup> The hierarchy did not seek to create a mass movement touching all Catholics, but instead form a powerful core group of Catholic elites who would work under the direction of the hierarchy to become the vanguard working towards reconstruction of Catholic influence.<sup>29</sup> Dom Leme developed a short list of objectives that he considered crucial and these became the focus of all groups created under his auspices: the Christianization of the family and protection of the Christian concept of family, the defense of rights of the Church, dissemination of Catholic thought and culture through increased press activity, a general moralization of culture, and finally, Christian solutions to the social and political problems of the era.<sup>30</sup> The papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* published in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII was the basis for Catholic action until further encyclicals were published outlining the Pope's idea for Catholic Action.<sup>31</sup> This encyclical began the Church's concern with the masses and the appalling social conditions produced by modern industrialization. In this letter, Pope Leo XIII firmly rejected unrestricted capitalism and communism. He also introduced the first overtures of Church intervention in temporal affairs, stating that the Church must speak out on social issues in order to teach correct social principles and also that economic principles must be tempered by moral considerations.<sup>32</sup> Overall, this era was marked by a

---

<sup>27</sup> Todaro, 219.

<sup>28</sup> Villaça, 136.

<sup>29</sup> O'Neill, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>31</sup> João Alfredo de Sousa Montenegro, *Evolução do Catolicismo no Brasil* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes Ltda., 1972), 164.

<sup>32</sup> Leo XIII, *Encyclical Letter, Rerum Novarum: On Capital and Labor* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1891).

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_lxiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_lxiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html)

change from the traditional passive position of the Church to a new attitude of spiritual combat.<sup>33</sup>

The first concrete steps forward in the creation of the elite vanguard were the foundation of the Centro Dom Vital in 1921, a Catholic think tank led by the newly converted Jackson de Figueredo, and its partner Catholic journal, *A Ordem*, in 1922.<sup>34</sup> Jackson would be Alceu's spiritual guide and influence him deeply in the 1930s. A fiery and polemical writer, Jackson de Figueredo would be the face of Catholic thought until his death in 1928. Jackson interjected himself deeply in the political chaos of this decade. In many ways the opposite of Alceu, Jackson was a militant nationalist who placed greatest importance on authority, and felt the political could not be separated from the religious. A traditionalist, he focused his efforts on bringing the Church to the fore of political debates, pushing for a dominant and reactionary role among Catholics.<sup>35</sup> An authoritarian, for him the most important action was to reinstate order; his views on the importance of order are clearly demonstrated in the choice of this word as the title of the Catholic journal under his governance.<sup>36</sup> Jackson was the most important Catholic layman from his conversion in 1918 until his death in 1928.<sup>37</sup> His charisma and the power of his personality drew an increasing number of intellectuals to the Catholic movement. He laid the base upon which Alceu built as his successor.

---

<sup>33</sup> Azzi, 23.

<sup>34</sup> O'Neill, 52-53.

<sup>35</sup> Todaro, 94.

<sup>36</sup> Montenegro, 166.

<sup>37</sup> Mainwaring, 30.

As the lead institution of Catholic politics and ideologies, the Centro Dom Vital was a microcosm of the Church hierarchy; the same themes, issues, and plans run throughout both. The Centro sought to Christianize intellectual environments and intellectualize Catholic environments, to be a center of study of Catholic thought as well as a disseminator of religious culture in all social and political institutions of the nation.<sup>38</sup> The Centro Dom Vital, however, did not truly assume greatest influence until the installation of Alceu Amoroso Lima as president in 1928, at the behest of Cardinal Dom Leme and recently deceased Jackson de Figueredo. As a highly influential literary critic, writing under the name of Tristão de Ataíde, Alceu brought to the Centro and *A Ordem* an emphasis on culture, a sense of universality, and a weakening of the combative political spirit that had made Jackson so polemical.<sup>39</sup> Alceu's reputation as an intellectual, and his decided attention to culture and education brought many more intellectuals and priests into the organization. Jackson sparked its growth but Alceu guided the Centro to maturity.

Alceu would head most of the other Catholic groups formed in this decade and together he and Dom Leme strove towards a "Catholic Renovation". Alceu Amoroso Lima was the head of the Catholic Electoral League established in 1932, and a few years later would be elected president of Brazilian Catholic Action. In 1932 Alceu founded the ICES or *Instituto Católico de Estudos Superiores*, which in the absence of a Catholic university, offered lectures and classes in Catholic philosophy, sociology, religion, and

---

<sup>38</sup> O'Neill, 108.

<sup>39</sup> Montenegro, 174-5.

liturgy.<sup>40</sup> The Centro Dom Vital and its lectures served to educate Catholic youth until the first Catholic University was finally established in 1941 with the inauguration of the Catholic Schools of Philosophy and Law, culminating in the 1946 founding of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica of Rio de Janeiro.

---

<sup>40</sup> O'Neill, 119.

## CHAPTER II

### ALCEU'S TRANSFORMATION & CATHOLIC UNDERPINNINGS

It is important to place Alceu in context, both as an intellectual and as a Catholic, because his transformation from an uncertain Catholic to a national voice for liberty and justice cannot be understood without understanding the development of thought nationally and internationally at the time, as well as the influences and pressures he was under as the leader of the Catholic intellectual laity. Before examining in detail the liberal content of his ideas in the 1930s, it is also necessary to know who he was as a person and as an intellectual. I will address his re-conversion to Catholicism and the importance it held for him as an emerging leader of the laity, as well as his intellectual influences, I will outline his general ideologies and arguments and their reception by the Brazilian hierarchy.

Alceu Amoroso Lima was born on December 11, 1893 in Rio de Janeiro. Raised in the echelons of the upper middle class, Alceu made his first trip to Europe at the age of six, where he began learning French, a language that would greatly impact his intellectual development. He did not attend a Catholic school but instead an academic school, the Ginásio Nacional, which included among its professors many famous academics. This

school strongly marked the intellectual environment of his youth.<sup>41</sup> His upbringing and schooling lacked a strong religious influence, and this would play a large factor in the first decades of his life as although raised with the framework of Catholicism, like many others of his generation he was more truly an agnostic.<sup>42</sup> He was raised among an era of agnostic intellectuals whose leader João Ribeiro openly classified himself as “materialista em filosofia, ateu em religião e comunista em política”.<sup>43</sup> Upon his graduation in 1913 Alceu made another trip to Europe, where he met Graça Aranha, an important Brazilian intellectual who played a role in the push for Brazilian Modernism. Graça Aranha mentored young Alceu and introduced him to the circles of leading European thought, as well as the discussion on how these ideas should be applied to Brazil.<sup>44</sup> The classes and lectures that Alceu attended in France marked the beginning of one of the most important characteristics in his formation as an intellectual: being in constant contact with the newest and sometimes most liberal thought in Europe and in particular France.

At this time Alceu witnessed the outbreak of World War I and saw its impact firsthand on the populations of Europe. He recognized this as the end of a century, the end of an era, leaving the world in flux. This reality arrived in Brazil a few years later as the majority of the nineteenth century’s leading Brazilian intellectuals died, leaving the new generation to assume leadership and reshape their world. Alceu called it “o fim de uma elite cultural brasileira...mas com o choque da guerra, com a redescoberta do Brasil, nos libertaríamos do cepticismo, da ironia, da gratuidade intelectual, e iniciariamos uma

---

<sup>41</sup> Carpeaux, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 26.

fase de revisão, de participação, de criação”.<sup>45</sup> These were years of formation for Alceu, full of many milestones. In 1916 he published his first article, and in 1918 he got married. His wife’s family would connect him to many important intellectuals, including historians and novelists. This same year he was presented to Jackson de Figueiredo for the first time. In 1919 he published his first article under his pseudonym Tristão de Atayde.<sup>46</sup> In 1922 he published his first book on a famous Brazilian author, truly beginning his career as a literary critic.

Soon after his correspondence with Jackson commenced, beginning with a political discussion they began in their first meeting and developing into an ongoing conversation covering many topics as the two developed an extremely close relationship. This dialogue bestirred Alceu to examine his beliefs particularly as Jackson’s fiery nature contrasted sharply with Alceu’s optimistic nature and they often argued head to head often over a variety of topics. Finally however, Jackson’s influence and experience in recently reconverting to Catholicism could not help but intrigue Alceu and he found himself doubting his agnosticism. Over several years of correspondence with Jackson Alceu discussed his thoughts and desires as well as his doubt in Catholicism and his ability to be Catholic, culminating in his re-conversion to Catholicism in August of 1928. He subsequently published the article *Adeus à disponibilidade: carta a um amigo* in which he officially declared himself Catholic and transferred his focus from literary to philosophical and religious circles. Later that year Jackson died, and Alceu assumed his

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 29.

position as director of the Centro Dom Vital, thus in the space of a few months Alceu transitioned from an agnostic to one of the most important laymen in Brazil.

He continued to be a prolific writer on various topics, including law, economics, and sociology, often derived from the papers he wrote in his quest to be a University academic chair. In 1934 he was elected president of the National Catholic Action Junta, at whose head he would remain until 1945. In this same year he also headed the newly formed Catholic Electoral League.<sup>47</sup> In 1935 he was named to the Brazilian Academy of Letters and the National Council on Education. His election to the Brazilian Academy of Letters defined his position as a leading intellectual. This was an elite club of intellectuals and a great honor to join at a relatively young age; in joining their ranks he rubbed shoulders with world-famous Brazilian intellectuals, novelists, and poets. It definitively marked him as one of the leaders of his generation in literary circles. His position there allowed him to invite leading Catholic intellectual Jacques Maritain to speak before the Brazilian Academy of Letters as well as the Centro Dom Vital when Maritain visited Brazil a few years later.<sup>48</sup> After the death of Cardinal Dom Leme in 1942, Alceu began to slowly fade from the national Catholic scene. He was becoming more overtly progressive which provoked strong clashes with the new Archbishop Jaime Câmara. In 1951 he took a post as the Director of the Department of Culture at the Pan-American Union in Washington, DC. He later represented the Organization of American States at an international United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization conference, represented Brazil at the Tenth Pan-American Conference, and was a member of the

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 80.

Brazilian delegation at the inception of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. In 1967 he was named a member of the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, and would go on to receive many more honors. He became renowned for speaking out against the censorship and repression of the military dictatorship in Brazil, and was of such important stature that the government refused to imprison him. He died at the age of 90 in 1983.<sup>49</sup>

Alceu's role as a literary critic led him to read works from all over the world. He pushed for Brazil to integrate itself more strongly into the international cannon, and often wrote about French and English authors, covering all genres. This work kept him on the cutting edge of European thought and Catholic development, and he even translated several important works into Portuguese and French. He was well-read in both the Brazilian and European cannon and he stayed abreast of the most recent developments. His role as an eminent critic was marked by both his participation in the Modern Art Week of São Paulo in 1922 as well as the invitation to join the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 1935 at a relatively young age. Despite not being a poet or novelist like most of the other members, his prolific writings contributed such to the understanding and spread of new literary works that he was considered one of Brazil's literary experts. It was not until the mid 1920s that he would begin to move outside literary circles and read philosophical and religious works, but soon these works formed the center of his life's work.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 125-131.

<sup>50</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 137.

Alceu's conversion to Catholicism was a long and tumultuous transition for him. There was no shining moment, no marked hour in which before he was agnostic and after he was Catholic. Rather over a period of months he poured out his heart to Jackson de Figueredo in their almost daily letters, and carved out the mysteries of his heart and soul, asking of his friend and mentor "como construir sobre este pântano? Como vir à luz? Como receber a graça? Como chegar à verdade?".<sup>51</sup> His correspondence with Jackson began a process that would coalesce into his lifelong search to better understand himself, religion, Brazil, and humanity. In this search he encountered Catholicism and he found many of his own personal convictions mirrored in Church dogma. He noted "a grande suprema do homem está primeiramente na bondade, isto é, no sacrifício, no perdão, no altruísmo, na tolerância (sim na tolerância), enfim no amor" yet he struggled to acknowledge a divine and supernatural being: "quanto mistérios já têm sido esclarecidos pelo homem, cuja tendência foi sempre de atribuí-los à divindade antes de penetrar-lhes a origem?"<sup>52</sup> Perhaps this quote best demonstrates why his conversion was no quick, easy affair. He desired to understand deeply his position, to examine it thoroughly, before he could ultimately declare himself firmly on one side or the other. The insecurity and change of the era left him reexamining himself and he understood why many men turned to their faith: "sentindo-se mergulhar na desordem, procuram na disciplina social da Igreja uma força em que se possam apoiar para resistirem à anarquia".<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> João Etienne Filho, ed., *Correspondência: Harmonia dos Contrastes (1919-1928) Alceu Amoroso Lima e Jackson de Figueredo*, Tomos I & II (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1991), Tomo I, 255.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

Alceu struggled with his faith, and with his ability to be a good Catholic, writing: “Creia, meu querido Jackson, que hoje já não peço a Deus apenas Fé. Peço também inteligência para propagar, para comunicar a Fé. Porque começo a sentir não mais a inquietação de chegar à verdade (compreendi que essa é eterna e necessária, mas que a Verdade em si não depende dela) mas a inquietação de mostrar a Verdade”.<sup>54</sup> He told Jackson that “eu não sou um católico...mas há em mim um católico”.<sup>55</sup> He felt that it was easier to have been an agnostic commenting on Catholic issues than a Catholic commenting on Catholic issues, describing to Jackson “eu era feliz enquanto era indiferente e sou infeliz agora que não sou indiferente. E pensando nisto me vem o terror de sentir suber em mim de novo os indícios da indiferença, o demônio do conformismo que me rói as entranhas”.<sup>56</sup> His background and upbringing, his time managing the family factory, brought him immense levels of guilt: “que luta, de morte, vai começar no mundo! E como me sinto miserável para essa luta! Um industrial! Um homem rico! Um capitalista! Um burguês!”<sup>57</sup> Philosophy lay close to his heart and he studied religion and Catholic liturgy and beliefs in a similar fashion as he studied philosophy. He believed that in every human activity lay both contemplation and action, and for him to take Catholic action required months of contemplation.<sup>58</sup> His months-long study of Catholic doctrine was what enabled him to truly feel he understood the Church and its role for humanity, and thus its role in his life. He believed strongly that such a deep understanding of doctrine was necessary for all Catholics in his era full of indifference

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 311.

and agnosticism. He felt Catholic doctrine needed to be re-explained to the masses to help them understand its application to the modern world.<sup>59</sup>

Alceu's re-conversion to Catholicism affected him deeply because in these years of introspection he attempted to define himself, struggled with many philosophical questions, and ultimately compared his beliefs with Church doctrine and united them. This union concerned him because he was uncertain that he would have to give up a part of himself in order to gain Catholic spirit. In fact one of his greatest fears in converting was "o terror de perder o estímulo para a liberdade".<sup>60</sup> As he emerged a fervent Catholic from this contemplative process, his views on the Church would become inextricably linked to his open mind, tolerance, and inherent liberal beliefs which would eventually lead him to become one of the leading *liberal* Catholic intellectuals in Brazil. He had debated many of these ideas before but in these years of correspondence with Jackson he debated ideas of authority, liberty, justice, economy, humanity, now within the context of the Church. His vision of the Church formed during these years would be quite different from that of the traditional conservative view: "a instituição que conseguiu varar os tempos com o mínimo de variações e que no entanto contém em si própria todas as variações, todos os contrastes, todas as oposições".<sup>61</sup> Ultimately his long and arduous conversion led him to combine the two most important things in his life: his faith and his ideals. The indecision and struggle that marked his conversion was crucial to the role he would play upon assuming direction of the Centro Dom Vital because it left him vulnerable and thus, insecure in his own Catholicism and abilities, he trusted to the works

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>60</sup> *Correspondência*, Tomo II, 222.

<sup>61</sup> *Correspondência*, Tomo I, 230.

and plans left to him by Jackson de Figueredo and Dom Leme. Therefore there was a marked conservative influence upon him for the first decade of his public Catholic role. While in this era he may certainly have followed the broader conservative framework set in place by Jackson, ultimately his position was neither conservative nor militant like his mentor. He recognized this in himself, even if he did not at the time realize the greater implications: “penso que o único meio de ser católico de verdade é ser sincero. Já que não posso ser santo... não sou nenhum miliciano de Cristo. Não tenho para isso nem preparo, nem coragem, nem temperamento combativo”.<sup>62</sup>

Alceu’s fame as a literary critic in the 1920s meant that his conversion to Catholicism produced much discussion and astonishment, and even a feeling of betrayal from some intellectual colleagues. This reaction, as demonstrated in part by an article written by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, provoked his article *Adeus à disponibilidade: carta a um amigo*, in which he pronounced his Catholicism and his reasons for conversion, declaring himself before the ideological community. He recounted this letter as a way to announce his “passagem da primazia do literário ao ideológico. Do primado da crítica estética à crítica filosófica. Da razão sem fé, à fé de base racional. Do domínio estético do possível ao domínio ético do dever e ontológico do ser”.<sup>63</sup> He felt he needed to explain that he was no longer “um crítico literário ideologicamente agnóstico e politicamente acomodado... crítico solitário que, sem participar de qualquer dos grupos modernistas”. He described it as: “houve uma ruptura com a disponibilidade, isto é, com o não-compromisso com as últimas conseqüências de uma Razão que, já agora, aceitava a

---

<sup>62</sup> *Correspondência*, Tomo II, 263.

<sup>63</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 95.

Fé, como uma plenitude e não como um obstáculo”. He wanted his peers to understand his new position, and for them to see this change as “tudo isso não como um abandono do passado mas apenas como uma mudança na hierarquia dos valores”.<sup>64</sup> He accepted the ramifications of this decision “optando pela Verdade eu bem sei que arranco de mim mesmo as últimas veleidades de influir sobre ‘a nossa geração e o nosso momento’” but that despite this he deeply believed that “os caminhos da vida não nos separam”.<sup>65</sup> Ultimately he described this letter as “não só como resposta à sua crítica prévia à minha conversão [de Holanda], mas principalmente para mostrar que a minha ruptura era com uma atitude e não com uma geração. Nem com tudo o que me ligara e continuava a ligar-me à minha geração”.<sup>66</sup>

As the director of the Centro Dom Vital, Alceu’s open mind and tolerant personality allowed it to assume broader goals and discussions than it had under the politically-inclined de Figueredo. Under Alceu, the CDV focused on culture and education, moving away from the militant political focus that had defined Jackson’s leadership. However this shift did not mean politics were not discussed; Alceu explained that he pushed for “a maior liberdade quanto às idéias políticas de cada um” and thus allowed many a discussion to occur that elsewhere would have been censored.<sup>67</sup> Alceu felt the Catholic faith meant a lifetime of examination, discussion, and continued learning. He said, “A fé é uma procura continua da fé. Ao converter-me, não me recolhi a

---

<sup>64</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 95-6.

<sup>65</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Adeus à Disponibilidade e Outros Adeuses* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Agir Editora, 1969), 18-9.

<sup>66</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 96.

<sup>67</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 213.

um porto, mas parti para o mar alto.”<sup>68</sup> This also expresses his view that there existed a variety of beliefs possible within Catholic dogma and believed in allowing all ideas to be voiced and discussed, He remarked that “estou inteiramente de acordo com o pensamento de Merton em sua condenação ao fanatismo e à intolerância de certas correntes do pensamento cristão...só os fanáticos confundem a fé, o sentimento religioso, com a supressão do sentimento de liberdade”.<sup>69</sup> In his Institute of Higher Studies courses, he invited lectures from priests and intellectuals from all over the political spectrum. Within these courses, extremely radical and liberal ideas for the times were discussed. Only under his auspices were these ideas allowed to be discussed; Dom Leme would not permit their implementation in his diocese, but Alceu saw to it that intellectuals and Catholic youths were introduced to a broad range of ideas.

The most radical and famous example is that of Dom Michler’s liturgy course in which mass in the vernacular, communal retreats, the positioning of the priest facing the congregation during mass, and recitation of the Holy Office by laymen were all discussed.<sup>70</sup> These ideas at the time were considered radical and dangerous, yet under the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s they all became standard use around the world. In this way Alceu removed the Centro from its pronounced political position and instead pushed it in new directions. His career and influence as a leading intellectual helped bridge the gap between recent Catholic converts and the wider intellectual community, helping bring the Church out of its recent isolated position in Brazil. His personality and reputation opened the conversation to more ideas and greater participation in a group that

---

<sup>68</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 117.

<sup>69</sup> Carpeaux, 105.

<sup>70</sup> Todaro, 247.

was often elitist.<sup>71</sup> His leadership built upon the base Jackson built in the 1920s and led to a new generation of Catholic youths and intellectuals characterized by a new conscience and a spirit of positive action.<sup>72</sup>

Already at this time, it was possible to see the seeds of the strong progressive he would become. His emphasis on education, and the need to truly understand Catholic doctrine, as well as reapply it to the modern world, are themes that would later combine in Brazil to create Base Ecclesiastical Communities, in which the laity used small groups to read Scripture, educate the masses in Catholic doctrine, and help them apply it to their own lives. He did not see the Church as merely a traditional institution based in the past and therefore what was necessary for his generation was to “insinuar no homem moderno um gérmen da convicção de que o cristianismo não é apenas um resquício do passado, uma estrutura morta, mas pode ainda conter a nossa alma contemporânea, tão maltratada pelos tempos e tão ambiciosa de liberdade e de instinto”.<sup>73</sup> All of his ideas that I will discuss were present at the time of his conversion – the ability of the Church to adapt, the need for Catholics to reinterpret Church works in the light of modern problems, and the belief that one could only truly be Catholic by truly understanding dogma and doctrine. However it took years for him to combine all these important beliefs into an actual ideology concerning the world. The importance of education is a constant theme in his writings, as is his belief that in order to truly commence a Catholic Renovation that a better understanding of doctrine among the laity was necessary. He particularly saw the need to educate Catholic youth, to create leaders through education: “estou convencido

---

<sup>71</sup> Todaro, 187.

<sup>72</sup> Montenegro, 171.

<sup>73</sup> *Correspondência*, Tomo I, 249.

de que os movimentos políticos se fazem pelos moços. Os movimentos que valham a pena de ser feitos. E para convencer a gente moça é preciso primeiro dar alimento a esses cérebros”.<sup>74</sup>

Education is the theme that truly defined his time as leader of the CDV; he considered it the most powerful agent of modern civilization and sought to use it as the solution for social ills.<sup>75</sup> He saw the Church as a transformative element, able to help every man overcome his own problems if he was only willing to submit to the will of God. He remarked to Jackson in their correspondence that “é o que realmente me seduz no cristianismo. É que a gente entra para ele pela porta da fragilidade, da renúncia, da puerilização, da equiparação ao terra-a-terra, ao inculto, ao analfabeto. E a força está depois. Não à entrada mas à saída....que vive procurando a Verdade e está certo de possuí-la”.<sup>76</sup> At the end, for Alceu, one “chega a Deus pela inteligência”; this was no blind faith, but instead a deep understanding of the Church and what was necessary to fulfill her mission in modern times and terms.<sup>77</sup>

Social justice and liberty are the two themes that would ultimately define Alceu as a Catholic intellectual, and his perception of the Church. He described this process as how “cheguei à convicção de que a Igreja antes de ser uma defesa da autoridade, é uma defesa da liberdade e da justiça”<sup>78</sup>. He was renowned in Brazil for criticizing the censorship and repression of the military dictatorship, and his appointment as a member of the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace indicates that he was considered one

---

<sup>74</sup> *Correspondência*, Tomo II, 20.

<sup>75</sup> O'Neill, 77.

<sup>76</sup> *Correspondência*, Tomo I, 235.

<sup>77</sup> *Correspondência*, Tomo II, 225.

<sup>78</sup> Carpeaux, 56.

of the Catholic intellectuals who worked hardest to protect these two concepts. While also deeply concerned by the onset of Communism, he also strongly denounced anti-Communist groups' use of this threat to justify sacrificing freedoms. Totalitarian and fascist sympathies worried him because of their all-consuming need for authority and discipline which he felt ultimately led to the loss of liberty.<sup>79</sup> He stated “hoje estou convencido de que a exigência maior do Brasil não é apenas o desenvolvimento mas também e sobretudo a liberdade. A dignidade humana exige a liberdade, a liberdade exige a justiça. A justiça e a liberdade exigem responsabilidade.”<sup>80</sup> Riolandi Azzi describes his position among the nation in the era of the military dictatorship: “por sua voz reivindica-se o direito do povo brasileiro de eleger livremente e diretamente seus governantes... exige-se o direito de todos os cidadãos brasileiros a um padrão de vida digno de criaturas humanas e exige-se a humildade de autoridades que existem para servir-nos em vez de dominar-nos”.<sup>81</sup>

Alceu was also a strong nationalist. Like many involved in the Modern Art Week, he felt Brazil was too strongly influenced by European and American thought, and had failed to develop systems, fashions, art, and systems uniquely its own.<sup>82</sup> A first-hand witness of the chaos of World War I, he was deeply affected by the subsequent social upheaval, and felt that a sane philosophy of life and restoration of the soul were key ingredients in the solution to this social insanity, and thus advocated the need for Church intervention, because matters of the soul and of philosophies of life were the dominion of

---

<sup>79</sup> Azzi, 155.

<sup>80</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 117.

<sup>81</sup> Carpeaux, 43.

<sup>82</sup> O'Neill, 142.

the Church.<sup>83</sup> He felt that life was reduced to two entities: the individual and the State, and the Church was what reigned between them, unified them, and maintained order and stability.<sup>84</sup> Ultimately, he saw the Church as the defender of liberty and justice, and per its role in society, able and willing to interfere into the social issues confronting modern society.<sup>85</sup>

As long as he stayed within the accepted guidelines of Catholic thought established by Dom Leme Alceu was praised as a leader. Yet in the 1940s as his liberal opinions solidified, in many Catholic circles he was regarded as entering dangerous waters. He recounted that upon talking of the new publications he'd been following in Europe, he was often asked if he was aware that he was reading the works of heretics.<sup>86</sup> He was also accused of being overly sensitive, that he was influenced too easily by other intellectuals.<sup>87</sup> His relationship with the Church hierarchy also changed dramatically with the death of Dom Leme in 1942. Dom Leme's successor Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara, who was more conservative and stricter in his rule over Catholic activity, did not take kindly to Alceu's far-ranging intellectual interests and articles commenting on recently censured works. For example, Maritain at that time was censured by the Roman Curia and Dom Jaime assigned a censor to read carefully over Alceu's articles to make sure that none of Maritain's modernist influences were present.<sup>88</sup> Later on Alceu would categorize many of the difficulties he encountered as based in the nuances between liberalism and

---

<sup>83</sup> O'Neill, 103.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>85</sup> Villaça, 187.

<sup>86</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 29.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>88</sup> Marcelo Timotheo da Costa, *Um Itinerário no Século: Mudança, Disciplina e Ação em Alceu Amoroso Lima* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora PUC Rio, 2006), 35.

liberal; liberalism was associated with capitalism and thus condemned whereas he noted that liberal “pode representar o espírito aberto, o espírito reformador” and it was in this image that he characterized himself.<sup>89</sup>

The Church sometimes chooses to neither accept nor reject new philosophies and ideas, and many of the ideas to which Alceu catered and followed in these years fell in this Purgatory.. This marks Alceu’s position on the border between acceptable and questionable doctrine, pushing the boundaries of Church thought as many his mentors, for example Jacques Maritain and Teilhard de Chardin, were enough ahead of their time that multiple books of theirs fell into this middle zone. As Alceu called it, the Church chose to adopt “uma atitude discreta na apreciação da obra do Padre Teilhard de Chardin. Tinha naturalmente, presente o caso de Galileu, cujas teorias foram condenadas pelos teólogos e, mais tarde, comprovadas pela evolução científica. Não queria, portanto, entrar na discussão de uma problema que era limítrofe entre a ciência e a fé”.<sup>90</sup> In cases such as this, the Church can choose to release an opinion called “monitum” which means the work should be read with *juxta modum*, or with restrictions, meaning the Church allows the work to be released and discussed but does not officially and fully support its conclusions.<sup>91</sup> Both Maritain and Teilhard de Chardin, two leading Church intellectuals who were stigmatized in the 1930s and 1940s and accepted widely in the 1960s, had a strong influence on the development of Alceu’s beliefs on the Church. Thus it is interesting to note that his greatest influences were early on considered heretical. For many years he was constantly on the brink of what the Church defined as acceptable. He

---

<sup>89</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 151.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

pushed the limits, but he did so carefully, so that he was never seriously sanctioned. This ability to introduce new ideas without being too radical was what allowed him to remain under the radar. I argue that his lack of radical statements in the 1930s is why he is not recognized as being ahead of his time. He was an open-minded, tolerant man whose eloquent writing and search for truth sought a balance between contending positions, and thus in balance, there was no radical position to alarm Church leaders. He was certainly crucial in introducing these intellectuals and their works to Brazil and keeping Brazilian Catholics abreast of cutting edge Catholic thought.

The one instance in which Alceu always spoke his mind without restraint, and the issue that would come to define him in his later years was liberty. Liberty and justice were the issues that caused tension between him and Church leaders in the 1940s and 1950s and they were the issues on which he would become a national voice, read by Catholics and non-Catholics alike under the military dictatorship of the 1960s and 1970s.

## CHAPTER III

### LIBERTY, JUSTICE, AND PEACE

Alceu was renowned in the 1960s for speaking out against the military dictatorship, as an avowed supporter of the ideals of liberty, justice, and peace. The invitation from Pope Paul VI to be a member of the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace in 1967 is a testament to the fame he achieved nationally and internationally for his beliefs and protest against the military dictatorship.<sup>92</sup> Alceu believed that he had liberal tendencies from the beginning, after exposure to the vanguard of French thought before the outbreak of World War I. However, he acknowledged that after his conversion in 1928 he outwardly took a sharp turn to the right under the care of his mentor and spiritual guide to conversion, Jackson de Figueredo. Alceu and Jackson were sharp opposites in temperament and beliefs, and Alceu credited this with the force of their relationship and the close bond they shared. Upon the death of Jackson in late 1928, Alceu took over his position as leader of the Centro Dom Vital and eventually became one of the most important laymen in Brazil.

Considering Jackson's militant, authoritarian position as well as the generally conservative nature of Church doctrine, Alceu's inherently liberal beliefs had to move to

---

<sup>92</sup> Carpeaux, 131.

the right to fall into line with their positions. He remarked that “a conversão de 1928 foi uma conversão a Deus, a passagem do diletantismo, do descompromisso, para os problemas transcendentais, isto é, das origens e dos fins da vida e do ser humano. A partir daí, durante anos, julguei que muitos dos valores naturais de minha formação eram ilegítimos. Erradamente eu os ligava à posição da Igreja.” However he later came to understand differently during “um processo de revisão de meu comportamento e das minhas idéias em face dos problemas sociais e do destino da criatura humana em sua passagem pela Terra. Percebi então que o fato de acreditar na liberdade acima da autoridade, de acreditar na democracia acima das oligarquias ou das autocracias, de acreditar na liberdade de pensamento, acima do dirigismo intelectual, não implicava em nenhum conflito com as minhas convicções católicas, com a minha religiosidade, nem com os meus sentimentos cristãos.”<sup>93</sup> This is the position Alceu would arrive at in the 1960s, but in the 1930s he was only beginning this process and had yet to connect these two spheres of his life.

Thus it is in these first years after his conversion that he is perceived to have a strong conservative and even intolerant viewpoint, taking up Jackson’s authoritarian position that is often described as “Jackson de Figueiredo permaneceu fiel à concepção integrista da História...Partidário de um regime baseado no princípio da autoridade e da ordem, reagindo ao fluxo das transformações políticas e sociais, terminou ficando como um dos precursores do direitismo totalitário entre [intelectuais católicos]”.<sup>94</sup> Thus a common opinion is that Alceu fell completely into line with Jackson’s thought, here

---

<sup>93</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 234.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

illustrated by Medeiros Lima, who wrote the preface to Alceu's memoirs: "Influenciado pela herança de Jackson de Figueiredo e seu grupo, [Alceu] assume uma posição conservadora e tradicionalista, em que a Igreja se confunde com o pensamento direitista e reacionário...nenhuma concessão, nenhum desvio, nenhuma tolerância, mas a ortodoxia mais completa em face da sociedade e do Estado, ambos a seu ver necessitados de urgente recristianização".

I argue, however, that throughout these years his underlying liberal tendencies still shine through, and that by examining his writings closely, one can still find the seeds of what would later be his most important liberal ideas. They were not the centerpiece of his thought in this decade, but they were still there. This ideas would eventually culminate in his beliefs described in his memoirs in the 1970s as "hoje estou convencido de que a exigência maior do Brasil não é apenas o desenvolvimento mas também *sobretudo a liberdade*. A dignidade humana exige a liberdade, a liberdade exige a justiça. A justiça e a liberdade exigem responsabilidade."<sup>95</sup> This belief is what would transform him into not only a respected Catholic intellectual but also a respected Brazilian intellectual. In this chapter I will demonstrate how this idea was already percolating in the 1930s, even in his most conservative moments. He defined 1938 as the turning point in which he began "uma revisão dentro de mim mesmo e voltei politicamente ao que era antes da conversão", but I believe that even before this he was already beginning to

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 117.

formulate ideas that in the late 1940s would attract the attention of Church leaders as heterodox and almost heretical.<sup>96</sup>

Alceu was always more of a philosopher than a theologian, in a lifelong search to understand the deeper meaning of life and the realities of his faith. He is often credited with an open mind and tolerance, open to arguments from all sides, taking them at face value and not discarding any argument merely because it was foreign or opposite to his. He wrote extensively on all topics, economics, politics, sociology and literature, and he examined documents on the Russian Revolution, the French Revolution, American and British governments, and many other topics without ever leaving his rational mindset and balanced approach. Throughout all these writings, the themes of liberty, justice, and peace stand out, again and again, in a variety of contexts. Liberty in a variety of contexts was one of his main focuses, even during the 1930s which are widely considered his most conservative phase. Yet his unremitting search for liberty throughout all parts of life argues otherwise. The idea of liberty and the balance between it and authority slowly developed to become one of the mainstays of his philosophy.

His views on liberty are particularly interesting because they contrast with Jackson's beliefs on authority. Alceu credited Jackson's influence with a brief spurt of an overwhelming emphasis on authority, even at the cost of liberty. Jackson was a confirmed authoritarian, and when Alceu assumed direction of the CDV he was reluctant to make decisive changes in the nature of the journal *A Ordem* and the running of the Center, so he merely toned down the blatantly political and militant nature of the journal.

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 121.

Jackson and much of the Catholic leadership at the time saw the Church “em defesa da tradição, e ainda como reação ao caráter universalista das novas idéias em curso, evoluem no sentido de um nacionalismo chauvinista, antidemocrático e antiliberal. A autoridade como fundamento da ordem e da permanência das instituições, é posta acima da liberdade, que no caso, confundem com a anarquia, a subversão, a desordem.”<sup>97</sup> Yet despite the influence of Jackson’s overwhelming respect for authority, Alceu’s belief in the importance of liberty shone through. He dealt with these two combating ideals not by making one more important than the other, but by demanding a balance between them. This balance between authority and liberty defined his moderately progressive outlook at the time. In 1936 he saw in Church social doctrine “constante acentuação da Liberdade junto à Autoridade”.<sup>98</sup> The year before he had stated even more clearly that “a doutrina social católica é essencialmente o equilíbrio entre a autoridade e a liberdade obtido pelo complemento da caridade”.<sup>99</sup>

In a time where everyone was concerned with authority, Alceu was instead concerned with the balance between values and ideologies in Church doctrine. This moderation and search for balance is what prevented him from standing out amidst the conservatives and prevented his liberal tendencies from being recognized because he was not calling for all liberty above all, but instead for a balance between liberal and more traditional values like authority and maintenance of order. At this time he also did not proclaim himself to be liberal either or pro-liberalism, and not even necessarily in favor

---

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>98</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Indicações Políticas: Da Revolução à Constituição* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira S.A., 1936), 204.

<sup>99</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *No Limiar da Idade Nova* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1935), 48.

of democracy. He stated that: “A condenação parte, em geral, de pessoas que, conciente ou inconcientemente, continuam a confundir liberalismo com liberdade, democratismo com justiça social, pacificismo com amor da paz. E como a Igreja defende, intransigentemente, a liberdade, a justiça social, o amor da paz, ligam a ela o regime político liberal, que defende o liberalismo, o democratismo, o pacificismo.”<sup>100</sup> Here it is clear that he saw liberty, justice and peace as inherent qualities defended by the Church, yet simultaneously he was disillusioned with what democracy, liberalism and capitalism had achieved in Brazilian society, and thus he did not align himself in favor of them. He remained within the limits of acceptable Church thought, and thus his underlying liberal tendencies were overlooked.

Even with a conservative cloak over his ideas, his overall positive view of humanity and the possibility of new ideas to lead them forward shine through, such as when he said “nesse humanismo está a grande dignidade e a beleza da espécie humana”. This new humanism was his focus for the future. It was based upon Maritain’s theories and had an underlying emphasis on liberty. He was not one to look backwards, but instead always looked forward to new solutions and adapted to the uncertainty of the era and the new social issues that defined the decades. He described this as “a volta ao regime anterior à Revolução de 1930 não só é indesejável, mas ainda impossível. Indesejável, porque todo retorno histórico é artificial e portanto efêmero.” Among the Church’s roles and duties he included this forward-looking mindset and also an emphasis on liberty and justice:

---

<sup>100</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 189.

somos e seremos sempre o que a Igreja sempre tem sido: o Cristo Místico entre os homens, trazendo a todos os regimes e instituições, trazendo a todas as almas, as palavras de justiça social e de salvação individual; pugnando pelos oprimidos; corrigindo os opressores; condenando os abusos e os erros; perseguindo o pecado; moralizando os costumes; aperfeiçoando as instituições e... preparando as novas éras.<sup>101</sup>

It is intriguing that he already placed such an emphasis on liberty as central to Church social doctrine and an important concern to Church leaders in 1935. He stated that “agora no século XX, é o principio de liberdade que começa a acharse ameaçado e portanto a Igreja, ciosa do equilíbrio entre os grandes principios que governam a sociedade, cada vez mais se apresenta em defesa dêsse último.”<sup>102</sup>

Liberty would even define his views on one of his other favorite themes: education. This is what would make his views on education at the cutting edge of pedagogical disputes, but he was never one to limit freedom to those on his side. He was a firm believer in freedom for all people, those of different faiths, and those from different classes. He felt Catholics had the right to freely practice their faith and to maintain their religious influence and that they should not prevent other faiths from freely practicing their faith and educating their children in that faith. He saw no reason for children of various faiths to not all receive religious education at school:

Quando a experiência tem fartamente demonstrado que o perigo dessa coexistência de credos religiosos, nas escolas públicas, é inexistente. Em todos os grandes paizes do mundo a escola pública é bi ou tri-confessional. E católicos, protestantes e judeus, para mencionar apenas as tres grandes confissões religiosas dominantes, começam na escola pública a ter entre a convivência que mais tarde vão ter na vida. Com que coerência vêm os partidários da nova pedagogia, como nunca deixam de o ser esses grandes órgãos da imprensa liberal, protestar contra

---

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>102</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 48

essa coexistência –quando defendem a escola como ‘preparação para a vida’, segundo a formula pragmática moderna?<sup>103</sup>

His rational and practical mindset is clearly demonstrated here. In his search that “o Estado molde as suas instituições pela realidade de suas condições sociais e não procure, ao contrário, mutilar a nação real para aplicar-lhe uma estrutura artificial e abstrata”,<sup>104</sup> he saw no reason to be intolerant of other religious creeds or push for a Catholic dominance that did not accurately reflect the true nature of Brazilian society. Within schools and pedagogical debates he also saw the reenactment of the balance between liberty and authority proclaiming: “mas o abuso da liberdade, a que este naturalmente se inclina é tanto ou mais perigoso do que o abuso da disciplina a que chegava aquele”.<sup>105</sup> Again and again it is the search for liberty that defined his beliefs and writings.

Perhaps an even better example of his forward-thinking mindset was his support for women’s suffrage. It was certainly an issue at hand; not even all Brazilian *men* could vote at the time yet alone women, and he came down firmly on the side of allowing women the right to vote, the freedom to participate in public and political life. His argument is this:

Creio, entretanto, que essa participação desde que se faça dentro do rigor de uma educação moral integralmente racional e cristã, só pode ser benéfica.... não é muito preferível correr êsse risco, aliás corrigido por um esclarecimento mais rigoroso das consciências, sôbre os limites e a complexidade dos seus deveres, do que ver o desinteresse feminino pelas coisas públicas e o seu interesse excessivo em certos meios pela tufilidades da existencia?<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 45.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>105</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *O Espírito e o Mundo* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1936), 297.

<sup>106</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 105.

This example illustrates that Alceu did not apply liberty in a narrow sense; rather it was a quality he deemed should be present in all aspects of life. The necessity to protect liberty was a moral issue and hence fell within the boundaries of Church activity. He wanted liberty in politics, for women, in education.

Thus, it is clear that he deemed liberty critical in a variety of contexts, and yet as an ideal, liberty can be a vague concept. He more specifically defined this need for liberty in the political arena, especially in face of the moral decadence of the era. Mysticism, he asserted, was “a maior expansão da alma humana em seu esforço de libertar-se da material e dos sentidos”.<sup>107</sup> The truest application of liberty for him in this era was freedom from moral decadence. Social and moral decline was the most important Catholic concern of the era, and thus his beliefs here aligned closely with dominant Catholic thought. Yet again, it is because of his moderate outlook, his rational arguments, and never seeking to make forceful or polemical statements that allowed his emphasis on liberty to go unnoticed. He was no Jackson de Figueredo to draw a line in the sand and demand others to choose a side.

It is in his political arguments that he made some of his stronger statements and his stress on liberty emerges most strongly. One of his strongest arguments against socialism in fact had its basis in liberty: “O erro do apriorismo socialista é prender-se a um fator ‘único’ como base de toda história humana, desconhecendo um dos elementos mais evidentes da psicologia e da sociedade, quando compreendido em sua verdadeira

---

<sup>107</sup> *O Espírito e o Mundo*, 328.

natureza: a liberdade.”<sup>108</sup> He added in another work that both Karl Marx’s theories and Spengler’s cyclical theory of the rise and fall of civilizations, “falta em ambos o que torna a vida humana sobre a terra uma participação dos elementos que fazem do homem o que ele é: a razão e a liberdade.”<sup>109</sup> Perhaps he was unable to describe where liberty could be found in the political arena because as of yet he had not seen an ideology that fell into line with his ideas. In the 1930s, he felt Brazil and the world were on the brink of something new, and that a third way between liberalism and socialism had yet to be discovered, but that the possibility of a truly Christian state existed.

Some have said he had briefly aligned himself with Integralism, for example Medeiros Lima wrote that “fascismo e nazismo são olhados [por Alceu] como aliados naturais da Igreja”.<sup>110</sup> Integralism was noted for its emphasis on authority and tradition as a fascist-influenced political group, yet Alceu ultimately examined Integralist beliefs and found them to be inferior to a Christian and specifically Catholic solution to the political and social ills of society. He in fact did so during Integralism’s active phase before it was crushed by the beginning of the Estado Novo in November of 1937. All of the statements cited here were made in 1935 and 1936 in his books *No Limiar da Idade Nova* and *Indicações Políticas*. He responded to an Integralist claim “será exata a afirmação de um orador, em uma das últimas reuniões dos camisa verdes, de que o liberalismo, o socialismo e o cristianismo (sic) eram posições unilaterais e que só o integralismo é uma posição total?”<sup>111</sup> He first refuted the attempt to place a Christian state in the same

---

<sup>108</sup> *O Espírito e o Mundo*, 420.

<sup>109</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 11.

<sup>110</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 28.

<sup>111</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 61.

category as Integralism or Socialism because while these were merely social solutions, to him a Christian State signified so much more. His answer was “como se vê, a forma do Estado Nacional (como Integralismo) nem coincide com a do Estado cristão ideal, nem a excede em amplitude. Tem pontos de coincidência mas também de diversidade institucional.”<sup>112</sup> Alceu made an important point that the Church hierarchy in Brazil wished to keep clear: that Integralism was not the same as Catholic Action, and while sharing many beliefs, ultimately Integralism was never officially allied with the Church. I would argue that part of Alceu’s lack of enthusiasm for Integralism in these statements – it is by no means a condemnation, yet neither is it a ringing endorsement – lay in his concern over the need for balance between authority and liberty, and Integralism certainly fell far on the authority side of the line. He came down firmly against Integralism:

a filosofia política inspirada nos princípios do cristianismo integral, não se confunde...com os regimens autoritários do imperialismo de classe (comunismo), de raça (hiterlismo ou racismo) ou de nação (fascismo ou nacionalismo integral), três falsas místicas profanas, que representam cada qual o abuso de uma idéa justa, em gráo decrescente de êrro.<sup>113</sup>

Perhaps even more damning for proponents of Integralism, he stated that among all the current options available “não podemos identificar de modo algum qualquer desses regimens com que o sería uma sociedade moderna organizada de acôrdo com os mais puros principios da moral cristã.”<sup>114</sup> For a movement that strove to unite itself officially with the Catholic Church and saw itself as a Christian response to the Communist threat, this was a strong statement indeed. Medeiros Lima noted that he was identified with these

---

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>113</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 48.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 48.

rightist nationalist movements in his preface to their conversations in the book *Memórias Improvisadas*: “se em 1937 Alceu Amoroso Lima vibra com a vitória de Franco na Espanha, é que ainda não se apercebera dos riscos que representava a ascensão do fascismo e do nazismo por toda parte. Fascismo e Nazismo são olhados como aliados naturais da Igreja”.<sup>115</sup> Yet, in 1935 he had already made statements in which it is clear he did *not* strongly support nationalist and fascist movements. He had seen what Liberalism had wreaked upon his country thus he was not pro-democratic, yet he did not support rightist parties either.

In this line of thought, he pointed out that Catholics could belong to any political party or system as long as they obeyed these basic principles: “1) preeminência do social sobre o político; 2) liberdade de regime político, dentro das normas gerais da justiça social; 3) o Estado cristão, como ideal relativo a cada época, dentro de princípios gerais imutáveis.”<sup>116</sup> This quote while showcasing that he declared liberty to be necessary in any political system, also points out one of the other qualities that slowly developed into a cornerstone of Alceu’s beliefs: justice. The social issues of the era, the disillusionment of capitalism, the problems of the growing middle and urban class, all provoked in him a belief that justice was severely lacking in the current system and that in whatever solutions to come, whatever system should emerge, that justice needed to be a part of it.

Alceu’s ideas on social justice were slower to develop than those on liberty and peace, yet in 1936 he already considered it an integral part of solutions to the social problems that Brazil faced. The ultimate goal was to “conseguir um ideal social que em

---

<sup>115</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 28.

<sup>116</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 63-64.

essência se resume em duas palavras – justiça e variedade.”<sup>117</sup> He was a proponent of Maritain’s humanism and remarked that what was needed was “humanização da justiça, contra o positivismo jurídico burguês, apegado á letra da lei, e o materialismo jurídico revolucionário, aniquilador do direito”.<sup>118</sup> Justice, in fact, formed part of his criticism of capitalism and his call for a new form of government: “numa sociedade racionalmente organizada, isto é, feita segunda a justiça e a caridade, não há lugar para uma economia exclusivamente de lucro e portanto anárquica e individualista, e sim para uma economia a serviço das necessidades do homem e portanto organizada e corporativa”.<sup>119</sup> However, he did not see himself as alone in this fight because he saw a call for justice in the social thought of the Church already: “tudo isso é quasi que exclusivamente, fundado na doutrina das Encíclicas, que permitem, como se vê, a elaboração de toda uma nova ordem social, estritamente baseada no princípio da justiça e não mais no do interesse, como hoje em dia”.<sup>120</sup>

Alceu saw justice as crucial to resolving the social change of the era peacefully and simultaneously preventing a turn to socialism or communism. He recognized that the issues of the proletariat needed to be addressed, but wanted to do so in a peaceful and Christian way. Thus he stated emphatically: “só há um meio de impedir esse curso catastrófico da história: arrancar ao proletariado os motivos justos de sua revolta” therefore “impedir a proletarização da sociedade, é portanto, trabalhar pela justiça e pela paz social”.<sup>121</sup> Ultimately Alceu desired “uma ordem social mais justa”.<sup>122</sup> In this way

---

<sup>117</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 331.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

Alceu was arguing for the same thing that the rest of the Church hierarchy desired: prevention of the proletarianization of society, yet they did so for different reasons. Alceu desired a just resolution to their problems, and the Church desired maintenance of authority and tradition. In her dissertation, Margaret Patrice Todaro described the Brazilian hierarchy as full of “religious intolerance and preoccupation with the interior world [which] led them to attribute all national ills during the First Republic to the ‘forty years of social atheism’ which only ‘the restoration of Jesus Christ in our politics, society and individual life’ could cure. Both the Centro Dom Vital and the Brazilian hierarchy exhibited a startling lack of concern for or attention to the social realities of the nation”.<sup>123</sup> Yet I would argue that Alceu *did* care about the social realities of the nation, he merely did not believe in *violent* solutions to these social problems, but he was certainly cognizant of the problems that capitalism had created.

Inherent in this argument for the resolution of society’s ills in a just manner lay another one of the cornerstones of his theories and beliefs: peaceful change. Alceu’s strong aversion to violence was one of the reasons he protested revolution so strongly. He believed in working within the system to accomplish change, instead of sharply breaking with the past and tradition; he believed violent radical change eradicated social problems but also any positive remnants of the former system. For example, in response to the Revolution of 1930 he spoke out against violent change:

Eu também desejo um Brasil melhor. Também quero mais justiça, mais harmonia, mais paz, mais respeito religioso à lei, mas não apenas à lei positiva como proclamariam os revolucionários possivelmente triunfantes de amanhã, e sim

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 285.

<sup>123</sup> Todaro, 197.

também à lei moral e à lei divina. É muito mais profunda, muito mais ousada, muito mais ampla a reforma que devemos ambicionar. Mas não será pelos meios violentos que a obteremos. A violência é geradora da violência. Empregar a violência como meio de obter uma reforma política é o caminho mais certo de expôr essa reforma à violência dos seus futuros inimigos. A revolução, fazendo do próprio homem o juiz de todos os seus atos, tem de chegar logicamente onde chegam os teóricos do fundamento do direito na força, cujo resultado estamos vendo na revolução comunista...e de todas as revoluções, de qualquer caráter, que hoje se desencadeiem.<sup>124</sup>

This quote demonstrates his strong feelings on the nature of revolutions and violence: that they only beget more violence and systems where might is right, thus in fact moving a society backwards and not forwards. He looked to Catholics and a renewed sense of Christian morality to guide Brazil forward in a peaceful manner in search of resolving its social and political problems:

...contra essa revolução político-militar, que é o grande passo para a revolução social materialista de depois de amanhã –contra ela é que devemos afirmar os verdadeiros processos de reforma social, a ação espiritual, o esforço pacífico, lento, recriador e social. Se acaso tem algum sentido o renascimento espiritual que se tem notado ultimamente no Brasil – esse sentido deve ser o de pôr em prática os métodos evolutivos de reforma social e política, distinguindo-os nitidamente dos métodos revolucionários.<sup>125</sup>

Alceu then went on to cite the example of Luther versus Saint Francis of Assisi as the Protestant violent method of change versus a more positive and peaceful Catholic method of working within the system to accomplish reform. He cited Luther's abrupt and radical declaration of independence as “destruindo as paredes do velho edifício cristão como sendo incompatíveis com uma adaptação aos novos tempos e aos velhos ideais palestinianos”, and criticized this violent approach in contrast with St. Francis' peaceful methods within the system.

---

<sup>124</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 18.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

Este destruiu para construir, eliminando indistintamente o bom e o mau; aquele conservou o bom para reconstruir eliminando o mau. Este quebrou a tradição; aquele manteve o nexo com o passado. Este atentou contra a unidade do corpo místico de Cristo; aquele manteve vigorosamente essa unidade, mas saneou-o, purificou-o, elevou-o, como ‘quasi um outro Cristo’. O que eu vejo nos processos revolucionários é essa destruição da estrutura política, essa ruptura com o passado, essa insurreição contra a continuidade, a unidade, a autoridade, a ordem, afim de construir sobre as ruínas, como os protestantes tentaram loucamente fazê-lo.<sup>126</sup>

Here Alceu’s desire for a balance between authority and liberty rings clear. Liberty and justice were needed, but that did not warrant violent change. He clarified that authority and tradition needed to be respected. In statements such as these his moderate outlook stayed within the bounds of current Church thought and thus his call for peaceful change went overlooked.

Ultimately, all these quotes serve to demonstrate Alceu’s not-so-conservative position. He is frequently described as developing a “responsible”<sup>127</sup> position over several decades that would bring him respect and acclaim across all levels of Brazilian society, yet I believe that already in the mid-1930s he demonstrated a moderately progressive and certainly responsible position. He pushed a rational and practical series of arguments that fit within overall accepted Church thought, yet were already beginning to push at the limits. In contrast, Riolando Azzi notes that “as idéias liberais apregoadas por Alceu a partir da década de 40, constituem o caminho aberto para a aceitação e valorização do regime democrático”.<sup>128</sup> Here Azzi notes 1945 as the critical year in which Alceu ‘reconverted’ to liberalism, while as previously stated Alceu mentioned 1938 as being the turning point. All these varying dates only illustrate that from the moment of his

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>127</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 30.

<sup>128</sup> Azzi, 136.

conversion, Alceu's shift to the right was not as radical as it is often portrayed. It is ironic that the historiography has tried to select a specific year when Alceu became liberal again because people's ideas do not change so abruptly. Attempting to pinpoint a specific work as being a key influence is understandable, but every single work that focuses on this era of Alceu's life states a different year as the year that everything changed. Therefore I argue it is not necessary to pick a year as a turning point because his liberal ideas remained in place at the base of his theories throughout his period as a self-proclaimed "militant Catholic" working within the conservative rightist Church thought of the 1930s.

Alceu noticed society's debate to define a position on the scale between absolute authority and absolute liberty, and his uncertainty in the face of this swing to the far side of the authoritative spectrum:

Nos meios mais avançados e inteligentes, porém, já não vigora hoje o romantismo da liberdade e sim o da autoridade. E a mesma candura, com que outrora se endeusou a palavra mágica da revolução francesa, hoje se emprega para fazer crêr que basta uma passagem ao extremo oposto, da liberdade para a autoridade, do regimen liberal para o totalitário, do federalismo ao unitarismo, para que surja do êrro a verdade, e se tenha encontrado a salvação social da humanidade.<sup>129</sup>

Yet he placed himself apart from this movement. He was already a disciple of Jacques Maritain and in response to this debate he followed the development of Maritain's thought: "estudando a sociedade moderna e a Idade Nova, que é hoje a grande preocupação social da Igreja, colocou o problema da liberdade na base do seu humanismo integral, pois o homem se distingue do animal, pela razão e pela liberdade."<sup>130</sup> Maritain's thought would be crucial to Vatican II and Church social doctrine in the 1960s, and Alceu was already a devout disciple in 1935.

---

<sup>129</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 72.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

Marcelo Timotheo da Costa, whose recent book, *Um Itinerário no Século: Mudança, Disciplina e Ação em Alceu Amoroso Lima*, describes the trajectory of Alceu's growth into a prominent liberal Catholic, and labels his transition to a Catholic as a "radical" change, yet how radical was it really? Many of his underlying ideals remained the same, and his previous interest in leading French Catholic thought and Maritain's works continued.<sup>131</sup> In the preface da Costa's mentor Luiz Alberto Gómez de Souza describes Alceu: "nos anos 30, seria um campeão das causas da sua Igreja, às vezes à beira da intolerância; nos anos 60, o denunciador valente das injustiças, com irada indignação, no pólo oposto de sua tendência inata à tolerância".<sup>132</sup> Yet any intolerance shown on Alceu's part in the 1930s hardly compared to that shown by Jackson de Figueredo in the 1920s. Because his strong voice and indignation did not develop until later, the truly liberal qualities of his arguments in the 1930s are overlooked consistently in the literature on his life and works. Da Costa places Alceu's trajectory as beginning with the fervent authoritarianism of Jackson and evolving towards the liberal humanism of Maritain: "e se a conversão amorosiano se deu motivado pelo diálogo com Jackson de Figueredo, Alceu situará a influência de Maritain – com quem também manterá importante correspondência sobre temas contemporâneas –em razão inversa ao do pensamento do Jackson: à medida que se distancia deste, vai se aproximando de Maritain".<sup>133</sup> Yet I would argue that Jackson was neither the starting place nor should his influence on Alceu be overestimated because again, at their base, Alceu's ideas continued

---

<sup>131</sup> da Costa, 30.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 137.

to be oriented towards liberty and justice. He himself stated it best: “havia em mim uma grande sede de justiça social, que iria desenvolver mais tarde.”<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>134</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 66.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEBATE OVER CHURCH INTERVENTION

Contained within his views on liberty and justice is another important aspect of Alceu's beliefs: his conception of the Church's role in society. Like many other Catholic intellectuals of his era, Alceu saw the world changing about him and sought to reorient the Church to these changes. This slow process began in the nineteenth century and would continue on throughout the twentieth century as the Church slowly came to reexamine its role in the world and to attempt to redefine what that role should be and what its responsibilities should be in the light of the social transformations sweeping the modern world. This movement began slowly but surely with the publication of the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII, and would reach its pinnacle in the 1960s with the Second Vatican Council.

*Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) were the two papal encyclicals that defined Church social doctrine and opened the way for new interpretations of Church thought for Alceu's generation until the Second Vatican Council. *Rerum Novarum* focused on the problems of capital and labor, and dealt especially with the miserable conditions of the working class. It positioned the Church staunchly against communism and uncontrolled capitalism, and affirmed the right to own

private property.<sup>135</sup> Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* continued this discussion, reiterating the Church's concerns over communism and uncontrolled capitalism. He moved the focus from the workers onto the moral base and implications of the social and economic problems of the era. He also particularly noted the dangers arising that threatened human dignity and freedom.<sup>136</sup> It is these two works that frame Alceu's views on the Church's social doctrine and need for change.

Ultimately, Alceu's ideas on liberty, justice, education and change are all linked because they fit into a specific ecclesiology of the Church that defines the role of the Church in society and among its faithful, delineating its responsibilities and doctrine. Previously the dominant ecclesiology defined the Church as purely spiritual, present on Earth to prepare its followers for the afterlife and to teach them strength and patience to persist through life's challenges. However, the Church did not interfere with those challenges or teach anything but acceptance. From this position, the Church slowly evolved to its most progressive position promoting a "preferential option for the poor" in the 1979 meeting at Puebla of the Latin American Episcopal Conference. This debate over ecclesiology chiefly revolved around the issue of Church intervention and the extent of its role in temporal and spiritual affairs and Alceu had much to say about the Church's role in society in his era. As the world changed radically around him, Alceu saw the need for the Church to change as well and adapt its role to the modern needs of its

---

<sup>135</sup> *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII, 1891. Papal encyclical.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html).

<sup>136</sup> Pius XI, *Encyclical Letter, Quadragesimo Anno: On Reconstruction of the Social Order* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1931).

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19310515\\_quadragesimo-anno\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno_en.html).

congregation. He saw change as inevitable and necessary, and as the social needs of his era required a moral solution, this also required a more involved Church: “Só as transformações sociais e morais profundas, exteriores e interiores pódem corrigir realmente os males e injustiças sociais. De outro modo é ficar no mesmo plano e não chegar a resultado algum positivo. É preciso mudar de plano. E para isso, deslocar o problema ou antes completar a solução social com uma solução moral”.<sup>137</sup> His own personal philosophy saw life as continual growth, a continual evolution, a constant search for knowledge and truth. He applied this philosophy to the Church and saw a certain need for reevaluation and change in the Church’s role and philosophy. Ultimately the Church did not create new eras but adapted itself to the new era and the new era to Christian principles:

Estamos no preâmbulo, não só de uma Idade Nova, mas de uma Nova Cristandade. E como a função social do Espírito Divino não é de criar civilizações (função essencialmente temporal, que cabe aos homens e aos Estados) e sim de sobrenaturaliza-las, prepara-se a Igreja e prepara os seus fieis, não para impôr uma Idade Nova cristã...e sim para espiritualizar a Idade Nova.<sup>138</sup>

Alceu in fact felt that Church doctrine was often continuously reinterpreted in light of modern movements and that this interpretation and constant shift in roles should be recognized by the hierarchy:

enquanto os católicos-liberais, tipo século XIX, acentuam, na doutrina e na atuação da Igreja, a necessidade de defender a Liberdade, a Justiça, a Fraternidade, a Cordura, os Direitos Naturais do homem, a Paz nacional e internacional, e com isso combatem as reações modernas das direitas... os católicos-sociais, tipo século XX, procuram na doutrina da Igreja o que ela diz em favor da Autoridade, da Hierarquia, da Ordem, da Força, dos Deveres, da própria

---

<sup>137</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 133.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

Guerra justa.... Haverá amanhã católicos-proletários como temos hoje católicos-burgueses.<sup>139</sup>

Alceu's social-political theories and views on sociology had a direct impact on the role he crafted for the Church. He was very interested in sociology and, via this sociological perspective; he saw society as divided into two basic elements: the individual and the state. Society's key institutions such as family, education, and the Church were placed between these two components, maintaining balance and each fulfilling their role in society, as indicative of the Church's general corporatist view of life. Defense and maintenance of these institutions lay to the Church and the State, the Church maintaining the spirituality and unity of the family, and the State defending these institutions with its laws.<sup>140</sup> Again and again balance defines Alceu's viewpoints. Here it is a balance between Church and State that maintains society. He argued for humanism, particularly in economics, and felt many of society's social ills derived from a lack of balance in the power structures, resulting from an incredible emphasis on individualism and an overemphasis on state power through the influence of secularization and socialist thought. He quoted from the Social Code that supported the papal encyclical *Quadregesimo Anno* to support his point: "a sociologia católica repudiava nitidamente, tanto os exageros do individualismo como os do socialismo. Como diz o citado Código Social: 'enquanto o individualismo deifica o indivíduo, o socialismo deifica o Estado e o socialismo positivista deifica a sociedade'. Ao passo que a sociologia católica 'prende firmemente os dois extremos da cadeia –isto é, a eminente dignidade da pessoa humana e

---

<sup>139</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 191.

<sup>140</sup> O'Neill, 67-8.

a necessidade da sociedade para o seu desenvolvimento integral’.”<sup>141</sup> He went on to explain that “a sociedade é um meio para que o homem atinja os seus destinos sobrenaturais”, showing how temporal and spiritual interests intertwined and supported each other.<sup>142</sup> He elaborated this point by outlining that: “a vida sobrenatural não é o que fica depois da vida natural, e sim o que nela se insere, para com ela constituir a vida plenamente vivida, pois a grace não sucede à natureza mas convive com ela, e a ordem sobrenatural é concomitante, em nossa vida, com a ordem natural”.<sup>143</sup> Therefore because the supernatural and natural coincide and coexist, then the Church plays an integral role in society, a society in which economic, political, social and religious activities were all interrelated and as such the Church had a need to involve itself in more than just the spiritual affairs of its followers. He in fact attributed the lack of Church involvement as a critical component of the social upheaval of his day, as society

começa então a procura desesperada da salvação: salvação pela tecnica ou salvação pela força; salvação pela ditadura de uma classe ou pela pureza de uma raça, pelo genio de um homem ou pelos milagres da ciencia. Pululam os salvadores e as fórmulas de salvação. E o mundo continúa agitado e irrequieto, a considerar com inquietude os dias que se seguem, sem paz duradoura e sem alegria serena. Ha, porem... uma instituição que não se surpreende com o estado das coisas nem se precipita em soluções assomadas- and this institution was, of course, the Church.<sup>144</sup>

As an integral component of the solution to society’s turmoil Alceu reiterated that the Church could no longer remain apart from the world; as all parts of life were interrelated and intimately connected, it was impossible for the Church to remain unaffected by the changes and disorder sweeping the Earth and remain isolated in its

---

<sup>141</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 274.

<sup>142</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 274.

<sup>143</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Elementos de Ação Católica* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora ABC, 1938), 22.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

spiritual position. He wrote that “a história mais moderna mostra os vários elementos sociais, do econômico ao espiritual, se entrecrocarem no mesmo plano, com ações e reações recíprocas, que fazem tão forte a ação do homem sobre a técnica como a desta sobre aquele”.<sup>145</sup> He contended that this argument applied both to the Church attempting to realize a new social doctrine, and to the State that sought to exclude the Church from any political participation. The spiritual, political, economic, and social realms all intertwined, Alceu asserted, and it was necessary for all institutions involved to acknowledge this reality and cease isolating themselves:

A Constituição de um povo não é a expressão apenas da sua maioria ‘política’ e sim da sua realidade organica. Separar os direitos ‘de estriccta expressão política’, únicos respeitáveis, segundo esses laicistas, da realidade étnica, económica ou religiosa da nação, é exatamente criar na vida pública do país um dissídio permanente desastroso que separa a nacionalidade em grupos dissidentes e cria o germe de revoluções continuadas.<sup>146</sup>

In his writings in the 1930s, Alceu already saw the Church to have a rather proactive role even within the spiritual realms. Balance defined many of his arguments; he sought to show how no one principle should be dominant over another and thus in this case the Church should not merely involve itself with the spiritual realm but instead balance its duties and responsibilities between the spiritual and temporal affairs. In this way Alceu struck at the heart of the matter, engaging in the debate over what the Church’s mission and goals should be. He argued that just because the Church’s primary mission was spiritual and eternal did not mean that it could not involve itself in temporal affairs: “como trabalhamos para a eternidade e não para o tempo nada disso será motivo

---

<sup>145</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 221.

<sup>146</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 50.

para que não procuremos agir sobre os meios políticos nacionais”.<sup>147</sup> For this reason Alceu argued that not only was it possible for the Church to intervene in temporal affairs, but that it made logical sense to achieve the Church’s further goals:

a atuação direta da Igreja, no campo social, se justifica porque a sociedade deve conceder ao homem condições de vida que lhe permitam realizar... os seus destinos últimos. E como estes representam o domínio específico da Igreja, nada do que contribue ou prepara para eles, pode ser estranho às funções da Igreja.<sup>148</sup>

In fact it was the Church’s duty to supply a moral nature to the arguments surrounding political and economic affairs: “quando mas sombria é a realidade ambiente, mais necessária se torna a luz orientadora da Igreja”.<sup>149</sup> Cognizant of Maritain’s writings on the subject, he quoted his mentor’s writings often in an attempt to define what role the Church should pursue, for example: “essa possibilidade de transformações sociais profundas... mostra que isso não sera obra direta da Igreja ‘que tem fins não temporais, mas eternos e espirituais, essencialmente supra-políticos e supra-sociais’, nem mesmo da ‘ação católica’ em si, que é também trabalho de espiritualização universal da sociedade e não de política militante”.<sup>150</sup> Maritain in fact did not define Catholic Action to be the Church involving itself in temporal affairs because to him it was in fact indirect intervention, a topic spurring regular debate since the polemic end of the Action Française in the 1920s, as described here by Alceu: “inspirado ainda nos debates levantados pela condenação da Action Française, sustenta a tese do direito de intervenção indireta ratione

---

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>148</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 284.

<sup>149</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 80.

<sup>150</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 58.

peccati, que a Igreja, como poder spiritual tem sôbre o Estado, como poder politico e gerente do bem comum da sociedade”.<sup>151</sup>

Conservative Catholics and agnostics saw this action as the Church leaving the spiritual realm to enter the temporal but Alceu saw it rather as a junction of the spiritual and temporal, aligning the Church between both. He explained this junction as natural because “a vida sobrenatural completa a vida natural. E completa-a, não depois dela, não quando cessa a primeira para começar a segunda. Não. Completa-a simultaneamente”.<sup>152</sup>

The base of this argument perhaps lies in his belief that man lives in three planes simultaneously which he described as

o inferior, que lhe é comum com os animais, instintivista e gregarista.... o médio, que lhe é próprio, onde se afirma como sêr racional e livre... e, finalmente, o plano superior, que faz do homem um reflexo da Divindade... a vida humana, participa, assim, desses tres planos de ascensão e intensificação. E a historia do homem em sua instituições tambem o acompanha nossa participação triplice.<sup>153</sup>

Thus, because man lives simultaneously amongst these realms, mixing the spiritual and the temporal, Alceu argued that the Church must do the same. As he wrote that “nós não separamos a finalidade religiosa da finalidade economica ou da finalidade politica. O homem é uma unidade substancial e não um aggregado de compartimentos estanques”, he argued that because man was a combination of religious, political and economic elements and the Church worked for man’s salvation, the Church must thus address all

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid..

aspects of man's life, not just the spiritual.<sup>154</sup> He also clearly recognized the necessity to involve the Church in temporal affairs in order to achieve its spiritual mission:

sendo a função da Igreja, na sociedade, de caracter moral e religioso, nada do que se refira a essa dupla atividade pode ficar estranho à Igreja....sua missão, na terra, é pugnar pela pureza da vida moral e religiosa de todos os povos. Pode a Igreja sofrer decepções ou perseguições, pode ver tolhida a sua liberdade por leis iníquas, nunca porém ha de renunciar à sua altíssima missão na sociedade.<sup>155</sup>

Alceu wrote that the Church could not remain in the past and must face the future.

He saw the need for the Church to maintain its traditional positions, but adapt them for modern purposes. He was cognizant of the two camps within the Church that saw its role in two different ways: “Nas relações entre a Igreja e o mundo sempre houve dois pólos que poderíamos chamar da Tradição e da Profecia. Ambos relativos à sua posição em relação ao tempo: a Tradição voltada para o passado e a Profecia voltada para o futuro”.<sup>156</sup> Many saw these positions as contentious and there was certainly some tension between them, but again Alceu sought balance between these two opposing poles. He saw the Church as encompassing both positions: “posições coexistentes e complementares que só podem ser compreendidas, no plano da Igreja, como associadas e não como isoladas”.<sup>157</sup> However, in Church writings he ultimately saw “tantos outros textos evangélicos mostram como toda mensagem de Cristo está antes de tudo voltada para os tempos futuros”.<sup>158</sup> Especially in the 1930s he noted that “continúa a ser indiscutível que o mundo moderno se debate na expectativa”, and thus the Church as a

---

<sup>154</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Pela Reforma Social* (Cataguazes, Minas Gerais: Spinola & Fusco Editores, 1933), 8.

<sup>155</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 233-4.

<sup>156</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 263.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

pillar of society, needed to be involved in this debate.<sup>159</sup> Therefore while he respected tradition and agreed it was integral to the Church, he felt that in this moment the need to adapt was pressing: “a ação católica... não deve ser, de modo algum, rígida ou estandardizada, mas ao contrario adaptavel, tanto às necessidades do momento, como das pessoas, e dos lugares”.<sup>160</sup>

The Church’s newfound desire to intervene had several intentions: indirectly help the Catholic population, to help heal the social ills of the day, as well as attempt to prevent further upheaval and revolution. Alceu discussed that these efforts impacted two key arenas: the social and the political. The political argument defined the 1930s because of the political upheaval in Brazil at the time, and it was the arena in which the Church entered first evoking a strong response from the rest of society. Politics were the Church’s focus for this decade because Dom Leme saw an opportunity in the writing of a new Constitution for the Church to end its forced isolation from public life inflicted by the Constitution of 1891.

The political upheaval and revolutions of the day deeply concerned Alceu. He often described this decade as the world on the cusp of a new era, on the brink of deep change, and as of yet no one could tell what philosophy would reign, or which political movements would dominate. Therefore he advised that the developing political situation was too important to be ignored, nor could Catholics could afford to be indifferent to politics:

---

<sup>159</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 8

<sup>160</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 182.

a indiferença política também é formalmente contrária ao dever político. Não e nem pode ser indiferente a um católico conciente, que as leis do Estado sejam favoráveis ou hostis à Igreja. Ora, se êle permanecesse indiferente em face da política, estaria concorrendo diretamente para que as leis se fizessem por estranhos ou por adversários, e portanto com grande probabilidade de silenciarem os direitos da Igreja ou hostilizarem a sua própria consciência.<sup>161</sup>

Indifference was never a role possible for the Church or her followers: “a cada nova etapa da história do mundo, a Igreja, como expressão do próprio Crissto, está presente como um fermento de sobrenaturalidade. Ou de sacralidade. Jamais indiferente. Jamais estática.”<sup>162</sup> In this same line of thought, to rest of the laity he wrote that “é preciso que os católicos comecem realmente a congregar-se para influir como ‘expressão política’ no Estado...[porque] só pela sua agrupação política poderão ser ouvidos e ver reconhecidos os seus direitos”.<sup>163</sup> Thus, to Alceu political action was necessary for Catholics, particularly in the 1930s, yet it was always an integral and consistent part of Church activity.

Alceu saw the Church’s recent political voice as, first of all, responding to a threat to its traditional domains, and thus the Church’s opponents could not truly blame the Church because it was merely defending what rightfully belonged to the Church. Catholics had witnessed persecution in Mexico and Spain and the Brazilian Catholic Church reacted to prevent such persecution occurring in Brazil: “A marcha acelerada para a esquerda...é uma consequência direta da laicidade integral do Estado. E o socialismo integral não é mais ‘a Igreja livre no Estado livre’ ..., ou a ‘separação entre a Igreja e o Estado’ ...—e sim a ‘igreja oprimida no Estado livre’ como na Espanha ou no México.”<sup>164</sup>

---

<sup>161</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 183.

<sup>162</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 264.

<sup>163</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 58.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

For this reason the Church would permit greater political action than normal among priests and laity because “se vemos, com grande e funda inquietação a participação excessiva que certos elementos do clero tem tomado nos últimos acontecimentos, é porque justamente tememos o perigo da invasão da política na ordem dos interesses espirituais”.<sup>165</sup> Secondly, Alceu explained that the Church assumed a political voice because of the social implications of any political system: “o problema político não interessa à Igreja em si mesmo e sim pela s consequences humanas que tem e que repercutem em todos os sectores da vida”.<sup>166</sup> He in fact saw the Church’s interference as “o inicio da volta ao equilibrio e ao bom senso. E eis o que justifica a intervenção da Igreja na solução do problema social moderno”.<sup>167</sup> Finally, he saw the Church’s political interference as an attempt not to demand a restoration of its traditional privileges, but rather to seek to protect the traditional pillars of Brazilian society such as the family. In 1933 he argued that:

as nossas chamadas ‘reivindicações’ não têm um caracter de privilégio e sim um sentido social. Se pleiteassemos apenas favores para a Igreja, se exigissemos para ela uma situação indébitadamente privilegiada –o mais rudimentar bom senso nos ensina que não chegaríamos nunca a obter muito mais de cem votos para medidas que não haviam sido objeto de qualquer espécie de compromisso dos deputados para com o eleitorado.<sup>168</sup>

He explained the Church’s motivations and actions logically to refute common arguments levied against the Church, clearly the main argument being that it was solely trying to regain privileges from the colonial era. He negated this claim and countered that the Church merely fought against the growing secular nature of government and sought to

---

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>166</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 220.

<sup>167</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Preparação à Sociologia* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Centro Dom Vital, 1931), 141.

<sup>168</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 115.

maintain the traditional Catholic values that had defined Brazilian society for centuries: “a Igreja, hoje em dia, não exige privilégios, nem mesmo aqueles a que tem direito por sua própria natureza... o que a Igreja pede, porem, é que lhe permitam trabalhar pela paz e pela santificação das almas e dos meios sociais”.<sup>169</sup> Thus, to explain the Church’s position in light of the writing of the new Constitution he contended that “o que queremos é que o Estado molde a suas instituições pela realidade de suas condições sociais e não procure, ao contrário, mutilar a nação real para aplicar-lhe uma estrutura artificial e abstrata”.<sup>170</sup> In 1936 he asserted that Catholic Action fought “não para pedir um ‘privilegio’ qualquer...mas para exigir que se respeitem os nossos direitos”.<sup>171</sup> In 1943 he expanded his claim: “por isso é que Ela pede aos Estados, não privilégios mas independência”.<sup>172</sup>

The progressive social doctrine of the Church was still developing at this time.

The Church had decided that it needed a social doctrine, but the specific outlines had yet to be determined. Alceu described this process as:

só modernamente podemos dizer, e especialmente a partir de Leão XIII, que a Igreja, depois de ter definido a maioria absoluta de seus dógmas espirituais pode dedicar-se enfim a definir mais precisamente a sua doutrina social. Nunca a Igreja deixou de intervir ativamente na vida social, no cumprimento de sua missão sobrenatural. Mas só agora, depois do esforço de definição filosófica da Idade Média e de definição teológica ao longo de todos os Concílios e de modo especial no Concílio de Trento e no Concílio de Vaticano —é que a Igreja está procurando a sua definição social.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 102.

<sup>170</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 47.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>172</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *A Igreja e o Novo Mundo* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Editora Zelio Valverde, 1943), 135.

<sup>173</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 276.

Because the problems of the 1930s seemed to have a moral base, and therefore particularly affected institutions that the Church deemed critical such as education and the family, the Church felt spurred to act. These threats to education and family are what propelled him to link recent Church action to its developing social doctrine: “é mais uma vez podemos verificar como as preocupações máximas da Igreja, coincidem com as preocupações mais sérias do mundo em torno dela”.<sup>174</sup>

Alceu also described how the Church sought both direct and indirect political intervention. He defined these two types of action as “intervenção indireta pela aplicação dos princípios católicos à vida política; Intervenção direta ‘toda vez que as questões políticas envolvam interesses religiosos e morais’”.<sup>175</sup> He followed Dom Leme’s lead and always argued against an official Catholic political party or any overt link between Catholics and any one party, pointing out the Catholic Electoral League was the Church’s method to pursue influence without selecting any sort of partisan position. However, he emphasized that not creating a political party by no means implied political indifference: “pelos outros se esclarece que essa isenção da política partidária, não implica qualquer forma de desinteresse pela vida política do país. Pelo contrário admitem-se duas formas de intervenção, não só indireta mas ainda direta”.<sup>176</sup> For Alceu this choice to not form a Catholic political party in fact conferred greater flexibility and greater opportunities on the Church to react to national politics as necessary.

---

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>175</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 233

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

However, in the 1930s, Alceu was defining his beliefs. He had yet to link his passion for liberty, peace and justice to his developing view of the Church's need to interfere in temporal affairs. He hesitated to thrust the Church completely into secular affairs; he certainly saw a need for Church influence and guidance, but he hesitated as yet to demand anything beyond current projects. As previously noted, his liberal ideas remained unnoticed because his beliefs stayed within the wider guidelines of Church thought. Despite acknowledging a need for a political voice and fighting against political indifference he also pointed out that “precisaremos então, não de padres-políticos, mas de padres-sacerdotes, não de ‘católicos-revolucionários’ ... mas de católicos disciplinados, ortodoxos, ...devotados à causa de Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo e de sua Igreja”.<sup>177</sup> Statements such as these moderated his arguments. He had his finger on the pulse of the times and often anticipated future developments. He was truly in touch with developments and the sentiments of fellow Catholics. He felt that in the 1930s “se agitava uma mocidade intelectual dominada pelo sentimento místico do cristianismo, ansiosa na busca de respostas às suas inquietações, dominada pela grande crise do capitalismo e pelos novos conflitos políticos e sociais surgentes”.<sup>178</sup> He recognized the need for change but again and again he strove for *balance*, and slow, methodical and peaceful change to maintain equilibrium between the various currents of Church thought. He saw this of utmost importance: “E por isso mesmo podemos manter, no calor das lutas, que dividem o Brasil de hoje, o equilíbrio de que tanto precisam a nossa terra e o nosso tempo, não para nos conformarmos com as injustiças e os sofrimentos atuais, mas afim de preparar,

---

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>178</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 322.

como dizia ha pouco Pio XI, ao encerrar o Ano Santo, ‘a aurora de melhores tempos’.”<sup>179</sup> His call for action was tempered by his preference for a united front and a well-prepared plan over hasty, radical reactions. He also tempered his calls for change and intervention, stating “‘Dai a Cesar o que é de Cesar e a Deus o que é de Deus’, é a sentença de Cristo que a sociologia cristã coloca na base de toda a sciencia politica. A intervenção da Igreja, portanto, é legitima no problema social, que é eminentemente um problema moral” and therefore the Church asked for ideally “nem Deus excluido da vida social, nem Deus confundido com a autoridade social”.<sup>180</sup>

In conclusion, Alceu saw change in the world about him, and the Church changing in response. He told the world: “Pois estamos todos em marcha. Estamos em plena escalada, em serviço do Cristo e da sua Igreja, que nos mandam para frente, como exploradores das selvas misteriosas e colaboradores humilimos e anônimos na grande obra de conquista para Deus, das civilizações presentes ou futuras, que Ele vai empreendendo invariavelmente através de toda as idades”.<sup>181</sup> Dom Leme had spearheaded the effort to combat Catholic indifference and regain the Church’s traditional position of respect and authority in society, but Alceu looked beyond the immediate political situation. He foresaw the debate over ecclesiology that would transform the Church over the coming decades and he was already exploring ideas that in the 1950s would define the debate over a new Church ecclesiology. He explored a new active role for the Church and defended its right to intervene in temporal affairs, but as

---

<sup>179</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 249.

<sup>180</sup> *Preparação á Sociologia*, 143.

<sup>181</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 7.

usual, he did not promote a radical position, but instead equilibrium between two possibilities:

Que é o que justifica o interesse da Igreja pela nova ordem do mundo? Não é a Igreja, por natureza, uma instituição que não é deste mundo, como deste mundo não é o Reino de Deus, de que a Igreja é o início da realização nesta terra? Essa objeção é corrente... [mas] a Igreja, justamente porque é a Verdade e a Verdade é a equidistância entre os erros contrários que reciprocamente se destróem... Muitos vêem a Igreja como uma instituição entre as demais, como um Estado... uma concepção ultra-terrena e política da Igreja... Outros, ao contrário, consideram a Igreja como uma instituição puramente ultra-terrena, que deve prudentemente evitar a contaminação com as coisas deste mundo e ficar apenas no recinto dos templos... A verdadeira posição da Igreja é aquela que se traduz pelos dois termos já de início empregados – independência e vigilância.<sup>182</sup>

He also discussed the practical, current applications of his ideas, so the implications of developing his ideas were not considered. In retrospect his writings could be easily construed as only discussing contemporary events such as the LEC, but at the heart of his writings Alceu always looked to define the deeper nature of man, of Catholics, of the Church, and thus these arguments apply to times beyond his own.

---

<sup>182</sup> *A Igreja e o Novo Mundo*, 119-20

## CHAPTER V

### EDUCATION AND THE MASSES

Alceu sought not just to change the role of the Church in society but also the role the Church played in the lives of the faithful and interaction between clergy and laity. As he contemplated the changes the Church needed to make to face the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he saw a need for interior as well as exterior changes. Education was a theme that resonated strongly with him. He saw himself as a Catholic on a lifelong spiritual journey and continuous search to better understand one's relationship with God, and in this context he often linked education, the opening of minds and spiritual reflection. In this journey he also emphasized the need to truly understand Catholic doctrine and to apply it to each nation and person's needs. He believed this process was something every Catholic should experience, not just the clergy.

These were themes that greatly interested him and appear often in his works. Within these ideas are the seeds of what would develop into CEBs (*Comunidades Eclesiais de Base*) in Brazil and a worldwide greater participation from the laity in the 1960s. In the 1930s the topic that most interested him and the vehicle he saw as the method to implement these changes was the new group Catholic Action. Thus, he often discussed these ideas in the context of this group, and within this context it could certainly appear that he advocated a return to traditional Catholic values but his beliefs,

ideas and theories speak to the possibility of transformation of both man and Church and contain an overlooked progressive potential. His musings speak to deeper beliefs about human nature that had wider implications for the future of clergy-laity relations. If we first examine his call for a greater role for the laity, then tie in his general beliefs about education, particularly in a Catholic context, and ultimately his views on human nature, we arrive at a viewpoint that sets out the path for developments in the 1960s and 1970s.

In general Alceu frequently discussed how he saw the 1930s and 1940s as the end of one era and the beginning of a new era that was as of yet still metamorphosing. These sweeping changes not only affected the political arena, but also brought a new focus to Church affairs, and new alliances. He predicted the end of the alliance between the Church and bourgeoisie, noting the beginning of a “reação contra aquela aliança inconciente entre catolicismo e burguesia que predominou no século passado e se estende, em certos meios, até nossos dias”.<sup>183</sup> He called for an end to the hostility and distance between the clergy and the laity, which he blamed on the individualistic tendencies of bourgeoisie culture which

também não deixou de contaminar os meios católicos. E o catolicismo burguês absorveu esses venenos e creou toda a sorte de preconceitos contra a colaboração dos fiéis na Igreja, espelhando uma hostilidade latente entre clero e laicato e habituando os leigos a considerarem a Igreja como uma instituição ilhada na sociedade e com funções estritamente religiosas, isto é, do foro íntimo e do destino de cada um, e quando muito, entregue a misteres caritativos e educativos.<sup>184</sup>

In this vein, he saw Catholic Action as a good example of the Church’s ability to close the distance between the laity and the hierarchy, noting how “não é apenas uma

---

<sup>183</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 56.

<sup>184</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 42.

participação mais íntima dos leigos na vida da Igreja. É também uma aproximação maior dos mesmo com a hierarquia, pelo desaparecimento gradativo dos motivos de afastamento e compreensão recíproca”.<sup>185</sup> Ultimately he verified that within the Church “as mais humildes e as mais elevadas estão unidas entre si por uma absoluta comunidade de natureza”.<sup>186</sup> He called for a greater unity within the Church, and in order for this to occur he saw the need for a greater role for the laity.

Alceu believed in the importance of the laity and explained this belief by discussing the distinction that Jesus had made between the apostles and the disciples. The apostles were those chosen by Jesus and God to be their representatives on earth, and the priests were their successors in modern times. Thus he designated them as the “os sucessores desses ‘setenta e dois’ discípulos, que Jesus também convocou para o seu serviço, e aos quais confiou uma missão especial”.<sup>187</sup> Thus for Alceu the laity had a clear role to play. He denoted that “o apêlo que a Igreja faz aos fiéis não é para ficarem e sim para partirem. Ela chama todos os fiéis para os enviar à linha da frente”.<sup>188</sup> In the events organized for the laity and the faithful in the 1930s he saw the potential in the masses to transform into a vibrant sector of the Church: “era a massa serena, tranquila, espiritualizadora... Era a imagen da Paz nos espíritos e da purificação nos corpos. O oposto da massa carnavalesca. O *outro lado* do homem. O lado de Deus”.<sup>189</sup> He understood that these ideas and ideals required a shift in perceptions of society, of the Church, and of relations between the clergy and the laity, but he saw the potential and the

---

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>186</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Mitos de Nosso Tempo* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1943), 224.

<sup>187</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 31.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>189</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Pela União Nacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1942), 46.

absolute need for the laity to develop into an active component of the Brazilian Catholic Church.

More importantly, he stressed how the laity could make up for Brazil's lack of priests, noting that if "o Brasil para uma população de 40 milhões de católicos....conta apenas com 6 a 7.000 padres!" then therefore "em parte alguma se mostra tão indispensavel a intervenção dos leigos para suprir a deficiencia numérica dos sacerdotes".<sup>190</sup> While the Brazilian Church could encourage a greater number of vocations and increase the numbers of seminaries and students, in the short term another solution was needed, and Alceu offered the laity. In general he called for greater responsibilities for the laity and proclaimed their new increased role within the Church. He stated that "a responsabilidade do movimento recai diretamente sobre os fiéis, e a estes comete a direção imediata de tudo", explaining that while the hierarchy would guide, it would fall to the laity to be proactive and be involved: "uma mobilização dos fiéis, de todos aqueles que por muito tempo se habituaram a ver na Igreja uma instituição que os conduzia, em que se abrigavam, que lhes ensinava o caminho da salvação, mas nunca onde tivessem um papel a representar".<sup>191</sup> But now the Church moved in a new direction and Alceu announced that there was "necessidade de adaptação a um novo espírito, de união mais íntima entre clero e povo, em funções que pareciam até ha pouco exclusivamente entregues à hierarquia".<sup>192</sup> He explained that the Church "procura intensificar nos seus fieis, não só a conciencia mais viva de sua Fé, mas ainda uma pratica mais efetiva da vida cristã" but beyond that it was clear the "necessidade de uma

---

<sup>190</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 150-1.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

participação mais ativa dos fieis na oração comum e oficial da Igreja”.<sup>193</sup> He understood this movement’s polemical nature but he defined the clear problem to be “seu uso generalizado e coordenado, ainda tão escasso e defeituoso”; however he did see reason to hope, noting “felizmente, já se vai processando mesmo entre nós um movimento sadio de participação mais intensa dos fieis na vida de oração e da ação da Igreja”.<sup>194</sup>

He believed that “greater participation means greater success” for the laity, but that in order for participation to occur, that they must be well educated. He based this upon a statement by St. Thomas about governments and extended it to the Church saying “quanto maior for a intervenção de todos os seus membros na vida da Igreja –respeitadas rigorosamente as funções de cada um na hierarquia geral dos valores –maior a probabilidade de uma grande vitalidade do Corpo Místico”.<sup>195</sup> However, he stipulated that: “para fazer apostolado é preciso estar bem formado. Mas só se está bem formado, quando nunca se abandona o esforço de bem formar-se. E esse esforço nos acompanha por toda a vida. A vida cristã é uma formação continua”.<sup>196</sup> Therefore, while Alceu charged the laity with the need of their active involvement, he also cautioned that this involvement would only be beneficial if they were well prepared, intimate with Church doctrine, and incorporated doctrine and Catholic values into their lives. This education, Alceu elaborated, was not merely a process of a few years, like school as a child, but instead a lifelong proposition to make every man a better man, and a better Catholic.

---

<sup>193</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Meditação Sobre o Mundo Moderno* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1942), 314, 317.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>195</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 108.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

This lifelong process of education was a repeating theme in Alceu's works. He deemed formal education merely a starting-point for a lifelong search to better oneself and to open one's mind to the world and to God. For Alceu, "é mister que o homem se aperfeiçõe continuamente. A alma humana foi feita para subir. A própria lei da sua composição é a perene ascensão para o melhor, para o mais perfeito".<sup>197</sup> Education was an integral part of this process because "educar é formar em nós o homem superior. É tirar, de dentro de nós, o que ha de melhor em nossa natureza, eliminando o que ha de inferior. Educar é aprofundar, ordenar e elvar".<sup>198</sup> Education was the critical tool to help men realize this "aperfeiçoamento da natureza" because through "uma formação educative, ...a natureza é elevada até o nível a que deve atingir e a que não atinge sozinha".<sup>199</sup> To reach these heights, education and effort were required because "o homem vive uma dualidade constante e só por um grande esforço consegue que a liberdade domina em si a servidão".<sup>200</sup> As such, he saw education in a religious context as a way to free oneself from the overwhelming materialism of the modern world, as the "maior expansão da alma humana em seu esforço de libertar-se da materia e dos sentidos".<sup>201</sup> In general these quotes demonstrate Alceu's belief in the possible transformation of every man through education, in both a spiritual and philosophical sense.

Alceu noted that Christian perceptions of the world combat "essa dissociação artificial de atividades que a sociologia naturalista criou entre interesses temporais e

---

<sup>197</sup> *A Igreja e o Novo Mundo*, 138.

<sup>198</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 69.

<sup>199</sup> *Mitos de Nosso Tempo*, 57.

<sup>200</sup> *Meditação Sobre o Mundo Moderno*, 257.

<sup>201</sup> *O Espírito e o Mundo*, 328.

interesses espirituais. A economia e a religião são os dois interesses primordiais da vida de cada homem. A primeira lhe permite alimentar o corpo. A segunda lhe permite alimentar a alma”.<sup>202</sup> Alceu affirmed that temporal and spiritual affairs naturally completed in each other in man’s life, thus they should be dealt with together, and not separately. He called for this change in both individual and group affairs, to transition towards a more Christian conception of society and life. Therefore Alceu opined that Catholic groups should encompass all aspects of the laity’s lives and that it was an error to work “com um pequeno grupo ou voltada apenas para *uma* associação, *um* movimento, *uma* determinada forma de espiritualidade”.<sup>203</sup> In this way education was not merely an intellectual exercise, but a process that linked religion and morality, and should be applied to every aspect of one’s life--political, religious, and social. Alceu spoke out against the trend that had created a system of education “sem fundamento moral e apenas sociológico” that lacked the capacity to guide society out of its political turmoil and moral decadence.<sup>204</sup> Building upon the positive nature of Catholic education, he advocated that Catholic social action should adapt to the needs of the congregation and encompass all forms of spirituality and all aspects of their lives, rather than address a single narrow perspective or issue.

For Alceu, education was paramount for a multiplicity of reasons. Education combats ignorance which is something that Alceu felt strongly about, stating that “o homem não tem direito à ignorância. Tem direito a saber; não a não saber. Exatamente porque o saber é o exercício normal da inteligência, faculdade do saber, isto é, de

---

<sup>202</sup> *Preparação á Sociologia*, 65-66.

<sup>203</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 104.

<sup>204</sup> *Pela Reforma Social*, 163.

penetrar na essência do universo e tentar reduzir o universo ao âmbito da nossa consciência”.<sup>205</sup> He saw the right to educate as a traditional and ancient right and role of the Church that was being threatened by growing secularization. He stated that “a Igreja Católica tem dado sempre o exemplo, não só de educar mas de ensinar, como sendo a sua tarefa primordial”.<sup>206</sup> In this respect, he compared Christian education to Communist education, and obviously as a Catholic he deemed Christian education to be superior, but more importantly, he did so because he felt Christian education opened one’s mind to the world. He described the Communist system as one that “reduz-se a educação a uma simples máquina de formar comunistas” as compared to Christian education that strove to protect and prepare its faithful to face the conflicts of the modern world.<sup>207</sup> Thus, to Alceu it was an affront to him that society witnessed “o Estado pretendendo organizar uma educação física sob a medida e sob uma medida uniforme, emanada de si mesmo, sem consulta às autoridades ‘naturais’ a quem cabe, em conjunto com o Estado, organizar a educação: a Família e a Igreja.”<sup>208</sup> As education should be a duty shared by state and Church, therefore it should be a balance of the scientific and the spiritual, and he feared the spiritual component was being eradicated. This was one of the reasons why materialism threatened to overwhelm Brazilian society and he credited only the ability to open oneself to God as capable of “arrancar a nossa alma da sua tendência excessiva à Terra”.<sup>209</sup>

---

<sup>205</sup> *Mitos de Nosso Tempo*, 170.

<sup>206</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 109.

<sup>207</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 59.

<sup>208</sup> *Pela Reforma Social*, 112.

<sup>209</sup> *O Espírito e o Mundo*, 381.

Aside from his belief in the value of education in general, specifically in the Catholic context Alceu deemed that there was a general lack of a deeper understanding of Church doctrine among the laity and society in general. For this reason he stated “nossa impreparação nesses tres terrenos é um fato. Temos um conhecimento ainda muito limitado da doutrina da Igreja... Dessa ignorância é que decorre a maioria das duvidas contra a legitimidade da nossa atuação”.<sup>210</sup> This was important for two reasons: first because this ignorance meant that the public did not understand that recent Church action and adaptation were in fact completely in character and an integral part of Church doctrine. Secondly, combating ignorance was crucial for the laity because he concluded that for the faithful to truly receive God’s salvation, they needed a life full of continuous contact with God and a constant union with his doctrine and works. For Brazil as a whole he was convinced that “só a vida vivida em união íntima com a Igreja pode salvar a nossa civilização periclitante”, because he firmly believed that “todas as soluções simplesmente humanas são passageiras ou contraproducentes”.<sup>211</sup> For the faithful specifically he also called for an intensification of “a vida religiosa dos seus fiéis, como deve ser vivida, isto é, em intima e constante união com a vida da Igreja”, because ultimately, “não nos esquecemos nunca dessa verdade central, a presença constante de Deus na terra”.<sup>212</sup>

Alceu demonstrated consistently his belief that the separation of the natural and the supernatural led to incomplete solutions. Therefore he also linked religious education and the Church to more than just the religious issues because he affirmed that this interior spiritual preparation should be directly applied to one’s exterior life and challenges. This

---

<sup>210</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 101.

<sup>211</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 7.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

lifelong quest to better oneself is applied to all aspects of life, not just personal problems: “é também ordenar o tumulto interior de cada vida humana e ordená-la ao mesmo tempo, à vida dos outros homens e do meio exterior e social”.<sup>213</sup> Thus education in the Catholic context meant something more: “esse trabalho ordenador de educação visa também adequar a personalidade à comunidade. A preparação para a ação católica é, em grande parte, uma preparação para a vida exterior”.<sup>214</sup> Consequentially, Alceu called not only for individual self-reflection, but also for introspection on a communal level:

E a nossa força, por isso mesmo, deve ser o reconhecimento preliminar de nossos próprios erros. Como cristãos e como burguezes devemos ter a coragem bastante para começar olhando para dentro de nós mesmos e reconhecer que só uma obra de reacção interior pôde preparar-nos para o trabalho de reacção colectiva que devemos empreender.<sup>215</sup>

This application of religious doctrine and education to all aspects of life leads to one of the most critical aspects of his beliefs: that as the faithful applied Catholic doctrine to their everyday lives it would awaken their consciences and illuminate their lives. He called first for an application of Church doctrine to everyday life: “a vida liturgica intensamente vivida, em união com a propria vida liturgica da Igreja, dia a dia, de modo a fazer de cada cristão uma hostia viva nas oblações quotidianos e uma figura do Cristo em sua missão terrena”. In doing so this would “despertar essas consciencias falsamente tranquilizadas numa religião, que para eles é apenas uma tradição social”.<sup>216</sup> The effect would be to “iluminar a vida dos que se confessam discípulos do Cristo. ... Exatamente porque Ele é que é o Caminho, a Verdade e a Vida e fora dele não há salvação nem para

---

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>215</sup> Amoroso Lima, *Contra-Revolução Espiritual* (Cataguazes, Minas: Spinola & Fusco, 1933), 7.

<sup>216</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 153, 156.

nós nem para o mundo”.<sup>217</sup> The salvation and illumination promised by the Church are thus indeed attainable in this life and to that end the Church’s supernatural work begins in this life, because “o Reino de Deus não existe apenas na eternidade, mas, ao contrario, começa no tempo”.<sup>218</sup>

In the face of social problems of his era, Alceu called for not only an improvement in the spiritual lives of the faithful but also “uma melhoria nas condições econômicas, intelectuais e morais da sociedade”. He deemed this issue to be of utmost interest to the Church.<sup>219</sup> He abhorred the appalling situation of the poor as a result of “progressos incontestáveis nos métodos de exploração das riquezas jacentes e dos povos colonais” which was one of many deplorable effects of capitalistic society. Capitalism in the early twentieth century had produced “o aumento das desigualdades entre as classes e dos egoismos ferozes na divisão crescente da sociedade em duas classes antagônicas – a dos capitalistas e a dos proletários”, between which the poor “morre de miséria no meio de uma hipertrofia de riquezas”.<sup>220</sup> In light of these circumstances he proposed social action and defined it as “uma ação não imediata, mas eminentemente religiosa” because it is “um ato de justiça mas também um ato de amor. É o que devemos dar aos outros, porque assim o exige o equilíbrio social dos direitos e deveres”.<sup>221</sup> This marked Alceu’s growing concern for social justice, but in the 1930s he did not address the greater implications of this concern for the poor for the Church, but instead what the Church could potentially achieve at the moment.

---

<sup>217</sup> *Mitos de Nosso Tempo*, 233.

<sup>218</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 130.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>220</sup> *Meditação Sobre o Mundo Moderno*, 95; Alceu Amoroso Lima, *O problema da burguesia* (Rio de Janeiro: Schmidt, Editor, 1932), 167.

<sup>221</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 291.

Consequentially Alceu focused on the reality that every society required something different from the Church and thus emphasized the adaptive nature of the Church and social action, to address local needs. Church groups should adapt themselves “ao temperamento de cada povo, às tradições locais, à história, ao regime político dominante, às relações da Igreja com o povo e com as autoridades públicas”, and that therefore the strength of these groups lay in this ability to adapt. However, he did point out that Church movements should be based in “a organicidade e a espiritualidade” of a community, and stressed the importance that they “seja organico e não individualista ou regionalista”.<sup>222</sup> Thus while he highlighted the adaptability of the Church to address the specific needs of a people, he also emphasized that the Church’s social action should address community needs over individual needs. This emphasis repeated itself throughout his works and he lectured that Catholic prayer and work is most effective in a community setting and done in a communal fashion. In support he highlighted Brazil’s history as a non-individualistic nation, thus “a formação grupal que a característica é que está exactamente a chave do nosso futuro”.<sup>223</sup> The importance of community is accented when he noted that “a vida da oração se faz não apenas nos momentos em que, isolados ou ainda melhor em comunidade, levantamos a Deus a nossa voz e os nossos pensamentos”.<sup>224</sup> Thus for Alceu it was “indispensavel voltar à comunidade, tanto religioso como social”.<sup>225</sup>

---

<sup>222</sup> *Pela Reforma Social*, 176.

<sup>223</sup> *Contra-Revolução Espiritual*, 155.

<sup>224</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 39.

<sup>225</sup> *Meditação Sobre o Mundo Moderno*, 381.

In the light of social action, Alceu felt people in general and the faithful in particular should NOT be passive. Education and social action prepared the faithful to “põe em ordem nossas paixões e permite que as dominemos, em vez de sermos por elas dominados”.<sup>226</sup> Church doctrine speaks to its followers of the ability to transform from “sofrimento à alegria, da opressão à transfiguração”, but in order to do so they needed to be active Catholics.<sup>227</sup> As such, he called for the transformation of “catolicismo praticante a catolicismo militante” because today’s faithful needed to be “um membro vivo do Corpo do Cristo e não como uma célula passiva”.<sup>228</sup> Therefore, Alceu defined a combination of action and contemplation as the base of social action, education, and religiosity. A deeper understanding of the world and Church doctrine was not enough, the faithful then needed to act upon these beliefs.

Consequentially, Alceu intrinsically linked the civic life and apostolic works of the laity, which he felt had been affected detrimentally by “a concepção burguesa da vida” which created “a separação radical entre a vida civil e a vida apostólica”.<sup>229</sup> Thus Catholic action and contemplation in the apostolic lives of the laity ultimately prepared them to confront and fight the challenges of their world, because Catholicism “não é uma fuga às coisas deste mundo mas uma vida intensa, de ação e de oração”.<sup>230</sup> Specifically in the face of overwhelming indifference among Catholics and rampant agnosticism in society, he affirmed that Catholic life “deve ser vivida como uma conquista e não

---

<sup>226</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 69.

<sup>227</sup> *A Igreja e o Novo Mundo*, 171.

<sup>228</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 156.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>230</sup> *Pela União Nacional*, 16.

recebida como um legado convencional e inerte”.<sup>231</sup> In order to rechristianize society, “é necessario combater, encarar a vida como uma lucta constante e uma criação continua da nossa vontade”.<sup>232</sup> Catholics could not afford to be passive in the face of the challenges of the 20th century, and too often they opted for peace, not realizing that “a paz morte, a paz da indiferença, a paz ecclectica da confusão de principios, é uma annullação perigosa do que o proprio triumpho do mal”, and that they could no longer confuse “ o temor de causar o escandalo e o temor de denunciar o escandalo”.<sup>233</sup>

Therefore, at a basic level, Alceu advocated an increased role for the laity to combat the scarcity of Brazilian priests. As such, the laity should be well educated on Catholic doctrine, and be prepared to be active, if not militant Catholics, instead of passive observers. A good education for Alceu was something more than just book learning; instead it meant a constant search to better oneself, and taking this internal progress and applying it to exterior challenges. He conceived of education as a tool to help every man better his life, and thus prepare him to address all aspects of his life not just the spiritual or intellectual. Therefore education should be both scientific and spiritual, because temporal and supernatural issues coexist in the modern world, and therefore men must be prepared to deal with them both. In consequence, education should be moral and religious, scientific and practical, and aid men to apply their apostolic roles to their civic lives. He also encouraged communal prayer and action, because Catholicism is not an individualistic religion. He also urged that education and religious efforts should be organic and adapted to the local needs and culture.

---

<sup>231</sup> *Pela Reforma Social*, 171.

<sup>232</sup> *O problema da burguezia*, 235.

<sup>233</sup> *Contra-Revolução Espiritual*, 55.

Effectively, the discussion of Alceu's ideas on education and the laity single out the puzzle pieces that would eventually be shaped together to create some of the most fundamental progressive ideas of the 1960s and the 1970s. CEBs, in particular, stand out as an important result of developing the ideas that Alceu discussed in the 1930s and early 1940s. CEBs were community groups that focused on basic education and concerned themselves with literary training but also with social mobilization through the concept of *conscientização*, or an awakening of consciousness in which people are taught to be aware of their own intrinsic ability to learn and grow and bring about change in their lives and thus begin to control their destinies, a technique developed by Paulo Freire.<sup>234</sup> These groups started as Bible study groups, where the members learned to read the Bible together and then applied the lessons learned to their own lives, thereby learning to voice their problems and work through their own solutions. The members of the group were responsible for making decisions on discussion topics as well as any religious observances, giving them new levels of responsibility.<sup>235</sup> CEBs' efforts focused on the masses and the poor, and aimed to help to bring about necessary changes and improvements in their horrible social and economic situations through a more active connection with the Church and its moral and religious lessons. CEBs were primarily run by the laity, and they encouraged an active approach to religion and life, as evidenced by the name of their primer book 'Viver e Lutar'.<sup>236</sup>

However, Alceu has never been credited with discussing these concepts at so early of a stage, because he was never directly linked with the development of CEBs; the

---

<sup>234</sup> Bruneau, *The Political Transformation*, 79.

<sup>235</sup> Mainwaring, 108-9.

<sup>236</sup> Bruneau, *The Political Transformation*, 79-82.

form of CEBs that became famous in the 1960s is widely acknowledged to have begun in the late 1950s, but the development of the ideas that produced them is rarely traced back to its origins.<sup>237</sup> Because Alceu was famous in the 1930s as a conservative leader, and in the 1960s he was famous as a liberal leader who primarily focused on liberty and justice, other aspects of his writings and ideas have been overlooked. However, by comparing his ideas with the structure and ideas that define CEBs, we can see that he did indeed argue concepts that were integral to the CEBs. His points, though, were always taken in the context of the Catholic Action movement of the 1930s and the then imperative push to regain the right to religious education, and never applied to wider conceptions about Catholic life and interactions between the clergy and the laity. It is undeniable that Alceu conceived that a deep knowledge of Catholic doctrine was imperative for all Catholics, any active member of the laity and not just the clergy. He also discussed the potential of a combination of communal prayer and action guided by Catholic doctrine to help transform the lives of the faithful, and to help them confront the challenges presented them by the modern world. Just because he did not speak in the context of literacy does not mean that the basic ideas are not the same. Many of his ideas seem to follow traditional Catholic thought and ordain a return to traditional Catholic values, but examined closely, his beliefs demonstrate a possibility for transformation, a progressive concept of the Church and what it should mean to its followers.

Again, Alceu always stayed under the radar. He rarely made radical statements, and any tribute to liberty and justice was often immediately balanced out by a reference to authority within a few sentences. For example, even while discussing the greater role

---

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 80.

and the new responsibilities assumed by the laity, he made statements such as “pois só faz ação católica quem age em ligação com organismo official e por ele devidamente autorizado”.<sup>238</sup> He summed up his arguments about the laity in this manner, such that he offered a new idea yet made it clear that the hierarchy remained in charge, so it never appeared to be a progressive idea:

A Ação Católica, portanto, na base destes seus dois principios formais que a especificam e delimitam, será tanto mais viva e fecunda: 1) quanto mais intensamente participarem os fiéis da vida espiritual e social da Igreja, 2) quanto mais souberem subordinar-se à autoridade da hierarquia oficial, agindo sempre com a Igreja, pelos seus idéais e sob sua imediata direção, 3) e quanto mais souber a hierarquia compreender a importancia da cooperação dos leigos na vida ativa da Igreja.<sup>239</sup>

In this quote it is easy to see how in these years examined he never alienated the hierarchy, because these statements while introducing new ideas, also offered a balance of new and old, of new liberty maintaining old authority. He strongly believed in evolution, not revolution, and thus in slow but steady transformation towards a better life and a better society. As such he presented no alarming radical changes to those who preferred tradition and conventional methods. His writings on education and the laity also took longer to develop, as he discussed them from 1931 through 1943, because in this time he was more preoccupied with the political situation of the nation. Again, his slow methodical nature and his forceful belief in the need for balance in every aspect of life prevented his ideas from being recognized as progressive.

---

<sup>238</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 163.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

## CHAPTER VI

### ALCEU IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Through the last three chapters I have discussed the key themes of Alceu Amoroso Lima's ideas and delineated the progressive thoughts located within his early writings on those topics. These themes were also selected because they were issues that grew in importance throughout the decades and in the 1960s came to be central to Catholic thought, culminating in their inclusion in the Second Vatican Council. Now it is time to place Alceu in the historical context of Church publications, notably papal encyclicals in which the current Pope lays out a map to guide Catholics in the issues most pertinent to the Church and emphasizing what changes needed to be made. The most critical encyclicals that affected Alceu's life and intellectual development were *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, *Quadragesimo Anno* in 1931, and then *Mater et Magistra* in 1961 and *Pacem in Terris* in 1963, both of which laid the groundwork for the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Placing Alceu in context transitioning between these two eras of Church thought help us to understand that his writings in the 1930s actually resembled the encyclicals of the 1960s more than the encyclicals that guided Catholic Action and his responsibilities as one of the most important Catholic laymen in Brazil in the 1930s. Placing Alceu in this historical context also helps to highlight the themes that run

throughout all his writings, and understand his development as an intellectual paralleling and preceding the evolution of Catholic social thought.

*Rerum Novarum*, written by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 to address the issues of capital and labor, is often considered the encyclical that began the modern Church's concern for the poor. It was the first encyclical to address the horrible conditions of the working classes: "in any case we clearly see, and on this there is general agreement, that some opportune remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class".<sup>240</sup> Pope Leo XIII affirmed the right to form labor unions, and denounced unrestricted capitalism and communism. He also defined Church and state roles by noting that it was the state's role to promote social justice through the protection of rights whereas it fell to the Church to speak out about social issues in an effort to teach proper social principles and encourage class harmony, as "there is no intermediary more powerful than religion (whereof the Church is the interpreter and guardian) in drawing the rich and the working class together, by reminding each of its duties to the other, and especially of the obligations of justice".<sup>241</sup> He also asserted that economic forces must be balanced by moral considerations, thus acknowledging a more active role for the Church in the lives of the faithful that worked towards amelioration of their lives on Earth with the reminder that "neither must it be supposed that the solicitude of the Church is so preoccupied with the spiritual concerns of her children as to neglect their temporal and earthly interests".<sup>242</sup> Here the dialogue of Church intervention still spoke specifically of charity: "The Church, moreover, intervenes

---

<sup>240</sup> *Rerum Novarum*, paragraph 3.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 19.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 28.

directly in behalf of the poor, by setting on foot and maintaining many associations which she knows to be efficient for the relief of poverty”.<sup>243</sup> The Church’s charity for the poor would eventually transition into a demand for justice for the poor, and in 1938 Alceu was already linking these two concepts: “a nossa ação social...e esta nos coloca a serviço de um ideal de aperfeiçoamento da ordem temporal, no sentido de...uma paz social mais perfeita, de mais prosperidade, mais justiça e mais caridade”.<sup>244</sup>

*Quadragesimo Anno*, written by Pope Pius XI in 1931, built upon the foundation of *Rerum Novarum* and sought to adapt its message to the changing economic, social and political challenges of the twentieth century. Pius XI emphasized a need for change without complete upheaval: “some of them, carried away by the heat of evil counsel, were seeking the overturn of everything, while others, whom Christian training restrained from such evil designs, stood firm in the judgment that much in this had to be wholly and speedily changed”.<sup>245</sup> In comparison several years later in 1938 Alceu wrote “não venceremos o mundo pela força e sim pela paciência”.<sup>246</sup> In this vein Pius XI noted the need to modernize the Church’s response to modern challenges: “it is not surprising, therefore, that many scholars, both priests and laymen, led especially by the desire that the unchanged and unchangeable teaching of the Church should meet new demands and needs more effectively, have zealously undertaken to develop, with the Church as their guide and teacher, a social and economic science in accord with the conditions of our time”.<sup>247</sup> It was efforts such as these that inspired Alceu ten years later to discuss the

---

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 29.

<sup>244</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 25.

<sup>245</sup> *Quadragesimo Anno*, paragraph 4.

<sup>246</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 36.

<sup>247</sup> *Quadragesimo Anno*, paragraph 19.

potential within the Church to adapt, explaining “para quem vê a Igreja da fora....o catolicismo é um bloco da autoridade absoluta e da obediencia sem replica.....para quem vê a Igreja por dentro e nela vive, porem....o que assombra não é a rigidez, mas a plasticidade. Não é a unidade, mas a variedade. Não é a autoridade, mas a liberdade. Não é a permanencia, mas a mudança”.<sup>248</sup> This statement encompassed what Pius XI had conveyed in *Quadragesimo Anno* yet developed the ideas further, moving from a call for adaptation to a conception of change as inherent in the Church, from a concern for social ills to a call for liberty. It was this progressive vision of the Church that would begin to call attention to Alceu’s ideas as perhaps a touch heretical shortly thereafter.

Pius XI also focused on the ethical implications of the changing economic and social order, therefore reinforcing “that principle which Leo XIII so clearly established must be laid down at the outset here, namely, that there resides in Us the right and duty to pronounce with supreme authority upon social and economic matters”.<sup>249</sup> In this manner, Pius XI solidified the Church’s right to foray into temporal affairs. He accentuated that ethics is based on religion and it was thus in the realm of ethics and morality that the Church met modern industrial society. Whereas, I would argue Alceu was about to take the next step in the development of this concept, writing several years later in 1938 that “o que interessa à Igreja é a eternidade e não o tempo. Mas como este é o ‘caminho da eternidade’...e não o contrário da eternidade...é no tempo que a Igreja atúa para iniciar a salvação dos homens”.<sup>250</sup> Instead of merely discussing the Church’s concerns with

---

<sup>248</sup> *Meditação Sobre o Mundo Moderno*, 66.

<sup>249</sup> *Quadragesimo Anno*, paragraph 41.

<sup>250</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 37.

temporal affairs, he already argued that the Church must *act* in this life and not wait for the next.

For the first time in *Quadragesimo Anno*, a greater role for the laity was discussed, noted first in the inscription which the Pope dedicated not just to the normal litany of bishops but also “to all the faithful of the Catholic world”. Also of interest are Pius XI’s remarks on the lack of understanding of the ideas proposed in *Rerum Novarum* prompting him to write: “those who would seem to hold in little esteem this Papal Encyclical and its commemoration either blaspheme what they know not, or understand nothing of what they are only superficially acquainted with”.<sup>251</sup> This was one of the main reasons that he sought to reinforce his predecessor’s critical encyclical and reinterpret it 40 years later; in this concern we can perhaps see the foundation upon which Alceu built his theories for the need of a greater understanding of Church dogma and doctrine among all Catholics, as discussed in the previous chapter.

By comparing Alceu’s writings with the development of official Church thought through these encyclicals, I contend that Alceu was on the cutting edge of ecclesiastical debate, already incorporating shifts in conceptions of the Church into his writings. Yet it seems clear that some of these ideas he took one step further. In several areas Alceu’s ideas do much to bridge the thirty year gap between these encyclicals, and to foreshadow the strong progressive turn of the encyclicals of the 1960s where previously subtle statements would be reiterated firmly and developed into a vision of a modern progressive Church advocating liberty, justice, and peace. The constant themes of

---

<sup>251</sup> *Quadragesimo Anno*, paragraph 39.

Alceu's works in the 1930s and early 1940s are the issues that would characterize Church work in the 1960s, namely liberty and justice, a push for peaceful reconciliation, a balance between temporal and spiritual affairs for the Church, and a push to increase lay understanding of Church doctrine. For example, in 1943 Alceu wrote that there were many false conceptions of the Church:

como um corpo politico de ordem estritamente ético-juridica. Outros ao contrário, consideram a Igreja, como uma instituição puramente ultra-terrena, que deve prudentemente evitar a contaminação com as coisas deste mundo e ficar apenas no recinto dos templos... é uma concepção diríamos angelista da Igreja, que não lhe reconhece a parte da natureza concreta e social. A verdadeira posição da Igreja é aquela que se traduz pelos dois termos já de início empregados – independência e vigilância....a Liberdade, portanto, é a própria lei da Igreja.....A Igreja... não pode desinteressar-se da constituição e do destino das sociedades humanas... o seu exercicio começa nesta terra.<sup>252</sup>

In this quote we can see that Alceu had already delineated the debate over Church nature that would be one of the reasons why the Second Vatican Council was convened in the 1960s, as well as affirming that liberty is inherently a part of the Church.

Thirty years later *Mater et Magistra*, published by Pope John XXIII on “Christianity and Social Progress”, aimed to reevaluate the goals of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* in the face of evolving social issues, and begin a conversation on contemporary debates over Church ecclesiology. It spoke of the “temporal and eternal” roles of the Church in order to promote an increasing involvement of the Church in temporal affairs, stating “hence, though the Church's first care must be for souls, how she can sanctify them and make them share in the gifts of heaven, she concerns herself too with the exigencies of man's daily life, with his livelihood and education, and his general,

---

<sup>252</sup> *A Igreja e o Novo Mundo*, 120.

temporal welfare and prosperity”. This encyclical saw the beginning of what would be considered by many a radical leap forward for the Catholic Church after decades of debate, by deciding that it must involve itself fully in the temporal affairs of the faithful and that it could not ignore unjust conditions. Here we can see how Alceu’s ideas foreshadowed this firm stance of the Church that it indeed pertained to the temporal world and had a right to involve itself in *all* affairs of its faithful.

*Mater et Magistra* also discussed the need for a just wage, the balance between economic development and social progress, and new aspects of the social question. It stressed the need for balance in the social and economic arena, as well as the need to respect a nation’s individuality and adjust plans to suit each nation’s history and culture. It also began a deeper discussion of the role of the laity in the modern Catholic world vision. Their role was delineated as “our beloved sons, the laity, [who] can do much to help this diffusion of Catholic social doctrine by studying it themselves and putting it into practice, and by zealously striving to make others understand it”, which is strongly reminiscent of Alceu’s emphasis on the need to understand Church doctrine as discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>253</sup> The theme that defines this encyclical is balance: balance between social progress and economic development, balance between private property and inequality, balance between the material and the spirit in man, balance between the state’s duties and the Church’s moral obligations. Here is where Alceu truly foreshadows the development of official Catholic social thought, for balance defined his writings

---

<sup>253</sup> John XXIII, *Encyclical Letter, Mater et Magistra: On Christianity and Social Progress* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1961).

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_15051961\\_mater\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater_en.html) , paragraph 224.

throughout the 1930s and 1940s. “Quando equilibrado” was a commonplace addition to many of his explanations.<sup>254</sup> Duality and thus a balance between two concepts were also commonplace in his writing, for example he wrote in 1938:

deste capítulo acentuemos a coexistencia necessaria desses dois principios, que são complementares e corrigem mutuamente os excessos a cada um deles poderá levar....o primeiro marcando o caracter disciplinar, hierarquico, autoritário e estrutural da Ação Católica; o segundo a sua plasticidade, a sua capacidade indefinida de se aplicar a todos os meios, a todos os tempos.<sup>255</sup>

In this quote it is clear that he in particular highlighted the balance of authority and adaptability in Catholic social thought. However, he had previously delineated in 1931 that further balance was necessary as Catholic sociology “procura respeitar o equilibrio [da variedade e justiça], dando a cada um o que lhe é devido, mas não mais do que lhe é devido”.<sup>256</sup>

*Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII’s last gift to the Catholic world months before his death in 1963, was the most famous encyclical of the last half of the twentieth century and defined the Church’s position on liberty, justice, and human rights. Entitled, “on establishing universal peace in truth, justice, charity and liberty”, it was written in response to the building of the Berlin Wall and the Cuban missile crisis, and was the first encyclical to be directed to not only all Catholics but also “all men of good will”. Its ringing tones called for peaceful negotiations to end the conflict ripping the world apart and stressed the importance of human rights. In some of Pope John XXIII’s statements we can see ideas that Alceu discussed in a more basic fashion in the 1930s. For example, when Pope John XXIII stated “we would remind such people that it is the law of nature

---

<sup>254</sup> *O Espírito e o Mundo*, 198.

<sup>255</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 247.

<sup>256</sup> *Preparação à Sociologia*, 114.

that all things must be of gradual growth. If there is to be any improvement in human institutions, the work must be done slowly and deliberately from within”, we can see Alceu’s insistent calls for slow, peaceful change.<sup>257</sup> For example, in 1936 Alceu wrote “o que a força não teria podido realizar...o que pela armas não pode o comunismo realizar, teria alcançado pelo espírito e as revoluções mentais são tão graves como as revoluções armadas”.<sup>258</sup> In Pope John XXII’s statement that “but it must not be imagined that authority knows no bounds”, one can see the result of the transition from Jackson’s authoritarianism to Alceu’s placement of liberty as an equal to if not a controlling factor of authority.

The discussion of these critical encyclicals explores the development of Church thought over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* pioneered and guided the creation of Catholic Action and the beginnings of Church intervention in temporal affairs, and ultimately defined an era of Catholic thought. *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris* marked the beginning of a new, more progressive era of Catholic thought and action. The importance of Alceu’s ideas lies in understanding the transition between one era to the next. Alceu always looked to move forward, stating “a volta ao regime anterior...não só é indesejável, mas ainda impossível. Indesejável, porque todo retorno histórico é artificial e portanto efêmero”.<sup>259</sup> In fact he underlined that “nas épocas de inquietação [vivem os homens] no futuro”.<sup>260</sup> Thus in his writings, he

---

<sup>257</sup> John XXIII, *Encyclical Letter, Pacem in Terris: On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty* (Washington, United States Catholic Conference, 1963). [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_11041963\\_pacem\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem_en.html) , paragraph 162.

<sup>258</sup> *O Espírito e o Mundo*, 282.

<sup>259</sup> *Indicações Políticas*, 82.

<sup>260</sup> *No Limiar da Idade Nova*, 8.

pushed subtly at the bounds of Church thought, ever looking to the future of humanity and the Church, not to the past. In his insistence on the balance inherent and necessary in human nature and society, he introduced progressive ideas without ever appearing to be radical. The terms liberty and justice which were only just entering international Church dialogue in a more concrete fashion were two of the themes most repeated in his writings, and he attributed each as naturally pertaining to the Church and thus a critical component of its work: “pois a justiça é a lei natural derivada da lei eternal e portanto de Deus”.<sup>261</sup>

The examination of these encyclicals also helps to understand the progressive Catholic that Alceu developed into in the 1960s as he entered the years in which he was renowned for his forthright stance on liberty and justice in the face of the military dictatorship. My in-depth examination of his writings in the 1930s and 1940s foreshadows the issues that would define him later in life. Therefore, by briefly examining his position in the 1960s and 1970s, we can clearly make the connection between the seeds of progressive ideas in the 1930s that blossomed into a firm liberal stance in the 1960s. The tolerant, open-minded nature that defined him remained the same, but if anything his concern for liberty, justice, and peaceful change had only intensified and became his main focus. These constant, subtle themes that had defined his writings in the 1930s and 1940s transformed into the issues that he staunchly defended in the 1960s and 1970s. He also continued his concern for the poor, and sustained his ruminations on the nature of the Church as the debate on ecclesiology moved to the forefront of international Catholic thought.

---

<sup>261</sup> *Elementos de Ação Católica*, 231.

Despite his dislike of political involvement, Alceu became a prominent national voice during the military dictatorship in Brazil. He was characterized by Antonio Fernando De Franceschi who wrote the introduction to *Cartas do Pai de Alceu Amoroso Lima para sua filha madre Maria Teresa* as how “graças à sua enorme autoridade moral e intelectual, exerceu, como se sabe, papel predominante preponderante naquela longa noite da resistência civil ao regime autoritário”.<sup>262</sup> Despite his normal attempts to “não personalizar seus ataques, nunca visando à pessoa, lembrando sempre a frase de Santo Agostinho: ‘ataca-se o pecado, mas absolve-se o pecador’”, he still placed himself “firmemente contra os abusos do governo militar”.<sup>263</sup> However, despite this tenacious public position, “o regime jamais ousou censurar Alceu... o que fez dele um dois raros intelectuais brasileiros de oposição com acesso à imprensa”.<sup>264</sup> He in fact scarcely avoided imprisonment several times, but his respected position was acknowledged by the military generals, and he in fact received a personal phone call from President Humberto Alencar Castello Branco in an attempt to co-opt his voice for the military.<sup>265</sup>

The power of his voice in those dark days, particularly during the “anos de chumbo”, was his resounding protest over the loss of liberty and justice under the military’s Institutional Acts and his call for a return to a peaceful and democratic regime. He divulged to his daughter on the anniversary of the first year of the revolution that he had yet to publish any sort of response because he felt “cada vez mais, uma absoluta incapacidade de me meter em política e a necessidade de refrear um pouco a própria

---

<sup>262</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Cartas do Pai: de Alceu Amoroso Lima para sua filha madre Maria Teresa* (São Paulo: Instituto Moreira Salles, 2003), 8.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

participação jornalística do comentário seminal dos acontecimentos”, yet as the regime continued and the repression worsened, he could not maintain his silence.<sup>266</sup> He followed the development of the Second Vatican Council closely and declared that its conclusions were “é uma afirmação da liberdade em face da autoridade...é uma afirmação da flexibilidade em face da rigidez...em suma, e será a nota mais importante de espírito aberto em face do espírito fechado. Em termos políticos: do espírito democrático em face do espírito autocrático”.<sup>267</sup> This inspired hope in Alceu, appalled by the cruelty of the regime which was “transformando-se o Brasil inteiro num campo de concentração”.<sup>268</sup>

Faced with the reality of deep repression in his homeland, he declared that:

por isso é que cada vez mais concentro na liberdade a idéia fundamental de uma sociedade justa. O limite da liberdade deve ser apenas impedir o seu abuso para oprimir os fracos ou os pobres. Mas mesmo na repercussão contra esse tipo de abusos é preciso usar a liberdade, e o que estamos vivendo faz com que isso se torne em mim uma verdadeira obsessão.<sup>269</sup>

As the repression continued he ultimately concluded that “antes a desordem com liberdade, que a ordem com opressão”.<sup>270</sup>

In social terms, Alceu’s concern for the poor only increased. His involvement with the Centro Dom Vital continued throughout his life and as it struggled to remain relevant he declared in 1964 that “como foi o espírito de riqueza que matou o centro, recomeçaríamos pelo espírito de pobreza”.<sup>271</sup> He worried over the future of social works after the death of Pope John XXIII and expressed his uncertainty to his daughter that the

---

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 498.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 478.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 515.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 519.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 605.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 350.

Church would remain “atrelada às classes ricas e nobres, aos Torquemadas, campistas, aos integristas e catolições e cada vez mais alheia ao futuro”, instead of continuing with the lessons outlined in *Pacem in Terris*.<sup>272</sup> He stressed that “será que essa calamidade *pobres e ricos* haverá até a consumação dos séculos?”, because he considered this “iníqua divisão entre pobres e ricos” not only a danger to society, but ultimately unjust. This issue which decades earlier had only vaguely concerned him, became of increasing interest as the problem persisted year after year.<sup>273</sup>

Yet he did not allow these concerns to overwhelm his optimism for the future, stating that “não quero crer em nada disso. Não quero, contra tudo o que tenho pensado em minha vida, ceder ao pessimism....para mostrar que a essência do cristianismo é precisamente o paradoxo da vitória através da derrota, da vida através da morte, da glória através da cruz”.<sup>274</sup> He saw the world changing around him “olhando para o futuro e pressentindo que realmente o mundo está mudando... nos acompanhamos essas mudanças ou nos fechamos a elas. Acredito que possam fazer essa mudança sem sangue mas não sem suor e lágrimas”.<sup>275</sup> And in light of this change he maintained his “insistência na Igreja como ‘voltada par a Idade Nova’ e não para a Idade Média”, fighting against a return to the former “esplêndido marginalismo em face do mundo em marcha”.<sup>276</sup> In this vein, within the Church debate over ecclesiology he proclaimed himself “pela Igreja *pró*.

---

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 471.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 354.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 472.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 500.

Não pró-liberal, etc, mas pró-paz, pró-amor, pró-fraternidade, pró-convivência, pro-compreensão, pró-entendimento, pró-relações, pró-diálogo”.<sup>277</sup>

Ultimately, as his years advanced Alceu saw no reason to soften his statements or worry about censure from the hierarchy, simply expressing that “respeito a autoridade do meu bispo, nihil sine episcopo [nada fazer sem o bispo], mas acho que, aos 70...é tempo de me tornar...um homem livre. Não quero morrer sem me sentir um homem livre”.<sup>278</sup>

His openness to new ideas and constant push forward to the future were criticized, but he considered himself free from these restrictions, ready to express his opinions as forcefully as he felt necessary. In these final years of his life, his ideas crystallized and he wrote about what deeply concerned him. He still called for balance and maintained a tolerant viewpoint, in fact stating that “minha inclinação natural, anterior a todos...ao espírito da conciliação dos contraries, de acomodação, de anti-polémica”, but his belief in liberty and justice was profound.<sup>279</sup> He saw no more need for pretense. In the last decade of his life he defined himself clearly:

o que eu sou mesmo é um existencialista. Isto é, um tipo apaixonado pela existência, pela vida, pelos fenômenos, pelas idéias como pelos fatos, acima de tudo, pela originalidade...pelo otimismo, pela tolerância com as idéias alheias, pela relatividade de todas as filosofias, de todas as ciências, de todos os regimes políticos, a menos que sejam abertos às outras filosofias, às outras ciências, aos outros regimes políticos.<sup>280</sup>

---

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 321.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 322.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 558-9.

Hence, it is in these last but most difficult years that his legacy is easiest to see, and it becomes clear why the center of study founded in his name is the Centro Alceu Amoroso Lima para a Liberdade.<sup>281</sup>

---

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 11.

## CHAPTER VII

### EPILOGUE

In the current historiography on Alceu Amoroso Lima what is lacking is a true understanding of the nature of his conversion and thus of his ideas in the 1930s. What I see in the trajectory of Alceu Amoroso Lima is continuity. I believe that his beliefs slowly evolved over his entire life, gradually developing the liberal ideas that defined him in the 1960s and 1970s. I do not believe that his conversion to Catholicism and his writings in the 1930s were a sharp turn to the right. I believe that his foundational ideas remained the same and that he merely assumed a conservative public presence in the 1930s in order to fall in line with the political orientation left to him by Jackson de Figueredo. His personal convictions on humanity and liberalism always remained the same, what changed over the 1930s was his perception of the range of views that were possible within the Church. Therefore, the 1930s are a critical era in the development of his ideas on social justice and liberty. Those who have focused on Jackson's political influence on Alceu in this era have failed to see the foundational continuities beneath this early conservatism. As a result, it is generally unacknowledged that in the 1930s Alceu was already discussing views of the Church that would be confirmed by Vatican II. He was truly a precursor of liberal Catholic thought and the development of liberation theology in Brazil.

Alceu wrote about the continuity in his views in a general manner but also specifically about his views on the Church the 1930s. In general, in his lifelong process of spiritual development Alceu offered no radical solutions, but instead always endeavored to emulate the balance that he found inherent to nature and society. He acknowledged that he had spent his “vida inteira dialogando comigo mesmo, pois a minha luta não é propriamente entre o homem velho e o homem novo, mas entre os dois homens novos, ou antes: entre os dois homens, o eterno e moderno, o absoluto e o relativo, o sagrado e o profano, o de Deus e o do mundo, unidos, fundidos, fraternos, sempre reconciliados, mas sempre em debate”.<sup>282</sup> The importance of this quote also demonstrates that Alceu did not believe that there was an “old” Alceu and a “new” Alceu or that such a distinction in his ideas existed, but rather his life was spent in dialogue between various ideas. He described this development as “houve mais uma incorporação e um predomínio do que uma sucessão. E muito menos uma ruptura”.<sup>283</sup> He did not see the development of his ideas as abrupt changes but rather a gradual incorporation of new ideas: “as diferentes fases por que tenho passado em minha vida são *incorporativas* e não *excludentes*. De maneira nenhuma minha conversão importou no abandono de minhas outras posições....A fé é uma procura contínua da fé. Ao converter-me, não me recolhi a um porto, mas parti para o mar alto”.<sup>284</sup> In general he described his intellectual and spiritual development this way, emphasizing that there were no radical changes:

Costumo dividir em três ciclos a minha própria evolução intelectual. O primeiro, dominado pela preocupação com as formas de expressão. E, portanto,

---

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 528.

<sup>283</sup> Francisco de Assis Barbosa, *Memorando dos 90: Alceu Amoroso Lima, entrevistas e depoimentos* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1984), 321.

<sup>284</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 117.

predominantemente literário. O segundo, dominado pela preocupação com as idéias. E, portanto, predominantemente filosófico e religioso. O terceiro e atual, dominado pela preocupação com os acontecimentos. E, portanto, predominantemente político-social. Entre esses ciclos não há descontinuidade mas complementação. Não separo a vida literária da filosófico-religiosa. Nem esta da político-social.<sup>285</sup>

Regarding the 1930s, Alceu admits that he did indeed pass through a conservative phase due to the influence of Jackson de Figueiredo, but he tempers and explains this influence and its limited impact. It is this explanation of the influence that has been overlooked, thus leading to misunderstandings of his position in the 1930s. Alceu clarified Jackson's influence by explaining that it was specifically a political influence, and did not impact his deeper beliefs: “a conversão e as influências de Jackson sobre mim não chegaram a alterar as minhas idéias liberais anteriores. Continuei sendo o mesmo homem, para quem a idéia da liberdade estava ligada à idéia da justiça.”<sup>286</sup> Alceu elaborated that after a few years “ficou do meu convívio com Jackson a influência religiosa, a fé católica, a crença de que Deus é o princípio e o fim de todas as coisas... mas me libertei de suas concepções políticas”.<sup>287</sup> He emphasized that “nosso relacionamento, no entanto, estava ligado exclusivamente ao plano religioso. Não tinha com ele nenhuma ligação de tipo político, literário ou estético... mas quando de sua morte, senti-me na obrigação de continuar sua obra, aceitando muitas daquelas suas idéias que me pareciam detestáveis e que contrariavam a minha formação”.<sup>288</sup> An example of the maintenance of his former beliefs is his reaction condemning both the Revolution of 1930 and Getúlio Vargas' overthrow of the state to form the Estado Novo

---

<sup>285</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Revolução Suicida* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Brasília, 1977), 14.

<sup>286</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 120.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

in 1937: “tendo sido contrário à revolução de 1930, não aceitei também o golpe de 1937. Não podia concordar com a transformação do Estado nos termos em que era feita. Tratava-se de um retrocesso, já que se substituíam as instituições livres por um sistema baseado no autoritarismo e no centralismo político, contrário ao espírito federativo e às liberdades públicas”.<sup>289</sup> In statements such as these, Alceu asserted that his ideas had not changed so drastically, therefore I stress that Alceu took on a public presence of conservatism, but that it did not impact his deeper beliefs on liberty and humanity.

An important example in the continuity in his ideas is Maritain’s influence upon his works. This influence is critical to understanding how in the 1930s the roots of Alceu’s ideas were liberal and led him to his progressive perception of the Church. Alceu first took a serious interest in Jacques Maritain before his conversion in 1928, and Maritain’s influence only grew on him during the 1930s: “me voltei especialmente para Maritain. A partir daí, já inteiramente voltado para a Igreja, militando em suas fileiras, é que sua influência cresceu em mim”.<sup>290</sup> He acknowledged that many of the books he wrote in this era “como *O problema da burguezia* [1932], *Preparação á Sociologia* [1931], *Esboço de Introdução á Economia Moderna* [1933], estavam impregnados das novas idéias sociais e políticas de Jacques Maritain”.<sup>291</sup> It was at this time that “a influência de Jacques Maritain passou a ser em mim de novo tipo, uma influência caracterizada pela tendência democrática e liberalizante do pensamento católico”.<sup>292</sup> Maritain was considered dangerously liberal in this era and thus for Alceu to continue to

---

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 218-9.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 147.

follow his works closely does not support the argument that he was ultra-conservative in the 1930s. Alceu's inner dialogue in the 1930s revolved around a gradual shift towards a liberal conception of the Church which was confirmed by Maritain's groundbreaking work *Humanismo Integral* (1936): "encontrei exatamente aquilo que já estava em minhas cogitações político-sociais.... daí por diante, fui gradativamente caminhando em direção de um catolicismo aberto, democrático e reformista".<sup>293</sup>

The true change in the ideas of Alceu in the 1930s lay in his conceptions of the Church. As a convert mentored by Jackson, he was left Jackson's authoritarian views on the Church, and he spent the 1930s attempting to define his own views: "entre 1928 e 1938 eu passei a ver na Igreja não mais uma mestra de autoridade, mas um estímulo para a liberdade".<sup>294</sup> It was in this period that he came to understand that "o fato de acreditar na liberdade acima da autoridade, de acreditar na democracia acima das oligarquias ou das autocracias, de acreditar na liberdade de pensamento, acima do dirigismo intelectual, não implicava em nenhum conflito com as minhas convicções católicas, com a minha religiosidade, nem com os meus sentimentos cristãos".<sup>295</sup> Alceu's liberal beliefs and passion for liberty remained throughout the 1930s, but as a recent convert he was insecure in his knowledge of Church doctrine and thus was "tomado da convicção de que o Catolicismo era uma posição de direita".<sup>296</sup> For this reason he followed closely Jackson's legacy in the leadership of the Centro Dom Vital and *A Ordem* but he did not become a conservative, militant, intolerant Catholic.

---

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>294</sup> *Memorando dos 90*, 229.

<sup>295</sup> *Memórias Improvisadas*, 234.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 120.

The message that we should take from the 1930s is the beginnings of Alceu's lifelong passion for liberty and justice that would eventually come to define him as a humanitarian and as a Catholic. In this decade he discovered that "a Igreja evidentemente sempre teve uma doutrina social implícita".<sup>297</sup> Thus as he faced the modern world and called for greater liberty and justice, he rarely saw reason for despair. One of his final legacies to generations of Brazilians was that of hope. He deeply believed in the dignity of human nature, and his vision of humanity and the world was ultimately a positive one. He called for change and worried over the poor and modern ills, yet he did not believe that society was so wrong that it could not be saved, but instead that changes could be made, and that ultimately the future would be better. He never hesitated to defend a just cause. It is in this light that we can understand why he reached such fame and such respect as not just a Catholic intellectual, but a true humanitarian in the 1960s.

---

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 237.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources by Alceu Amoroso Lima

Amoroso Lima, Alceu. *Preparação á Sociologia*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Centro Dom Vital, 1931.

\_\_\_\_\_. *O problema da burguezia*. Rio de Janeiro: Schmidt, Editor, 1932.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Contra-Revolução Espiritual*. Cataguazes, Minas: Spinola & Fusco, 1933.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Pela Reforma Social*. Cataguazes, Minas Gerais: Spinola & Fusco Editores, 1933.

\_\_\_\_\_. *No Limiar da Idade Nova*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1935.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Indicações Políticas: Da Revolução á Constituição*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira S.A., 1936.

\_\_\_\_\_. *O Espírito e o Mundo*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1936.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Elementos de Ação Católica*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora ABC, 1938.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Meditação Sobre o Mundo Moderno*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1942.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Igreja e o Novo Mundo*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Editora Zelio Valverde, 1943.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Mitos de Nosso Tempo*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1943.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Pela União Nacional*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1942.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Adeus à Disponibilidade e Outros Adeuses*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Agir Editora, 1969.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Memórias Improvisadas: Diálogos com Medeiros Lima*. Petropolis: Editora Vozes Ltda., 1973.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Revolução Suicida*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Brasília, 1977.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Cartas do Pai: de Alceu Amoroso Lima para sua filha madre Maria Teresa*. São Paulo: Instituto Moreira Salles, 2003.

de Assis Barbosa, Francisco. *Memorando dos 90: Alceu Amoroso Lima, entrevistas e depoimentos*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1984.

Filho, João Etienne, ed. *Correspondência: Harmonia dos Contrastes (1919-1928) Alceu Amoroso Lima e Jackson de Figueiredo*, Tomos I & II. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1991.

#### Works about Alceu Amoroso Lima

Carpeaux, Otto Maria. *Alceu Amoroso Lima*. Rio de Janeiro: Edições Graal Ltda., 1978.

da Costa, Marcelo Timotheo. *Um Itinerário no Século: Mudança, Disciplina e Ação em Alceu Amoroso Lima*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora PUC Rio, 2006.

Mendes, Candido. *Dr. Alceu: da 'Persona' a Pessoa*. São Paulo: Editora Paulinas, 2008.

O'Neill, Sister M. Ancilla. "Tristão de Athayde and the Catholic Social Movement in Brazil." Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1939.

#### Papal Encyclicals

John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, Mater et Magistra: On Christianity and Social Progress.

Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1961.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_15051961\\_mater\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater_en.html)

John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, Pacem in Terris: On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty. Washington, United States Catholic Conference, 1963.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_11041963\\_pacem\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem_en.html)

Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, Quadragesimo Anno: On Reconstruction of the Social Order.

Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1931.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19310515\\_quadagesimo-anno\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadagesimo-anno_en.html)

Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, Rerum Novarum: On Capital and Labor. Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1891.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html)

#### The Brazilian Catholic Church

Azzi, Riolando. *A Neocrisandade: um projeto restaurador*. São Paulo: Editora Paulus, 1994.

- Bruneau, Thomas C. *The Church in Brazil: the politics of religion*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982.
- Bruneau, Thomas C. *The political transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- Gabaglia, Laurita Pessôa Raja. *O Cardeal Leme*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympico Editora, 1962.
- Mainwaring, Scott. *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986.
- Montenegro, João Alfredo de Sousa. *Evolução do Catolicismo no Brasil*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes Ltda., 1972.
- Skidmore, Thomas E. *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Todaro, Margaret Price. "Pastors, Prophets and Politicians: A Study of the Brazilian Catholic Church, 1916-1945." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1971.
- Villaça, Antonio Carlos. *O pensamento católico no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 2006.