



**THE CHURCH AND THE *ABERTURA* IN BRAZIL,
1974-1985**

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the Catholic Church's interaction with Brazilian society from the military coup of 1964 through the years of repression and the long process of the *abertura* up to the inauguration of the New Republic in 1985. The author emphasizes the changing nature of the Church's role in the *abertura*, and outlines the history of the "People's Church" during this period, in particular the proliferation of the *Comunidades Eclesiais de Base*. The concluding section analyzes the turn to a conservative restoration within the Church in relation to the question of the durability of the CEBs.

RESUMO

Este trabalho examina a iteração da Igreja Católica com a sociedade brasileira desde o golpe militar, passando pelos anos de repressão e pelo longo processo de "abertura", até a inauguração da Nova República em 1985. O autor enfatiza a natureza variável do papel da Igreja na "abertura" e traça um perfil da história da "Igreja do Povo" durante esse período e, em particular, da proliferação das Comunidades Eclesiais de Base (CEBs). Na conclusão, o autor analisa a restauração conservadora que se dá no interior da Igreja no que diz respeito à continuidade das CEBs.

The definitive narrative of the Roman Catholic Church's role in the decade-long process of *abertura* in Brazil (1974-1985), which drew to a close with the advent of the "New Republic" in March 1985, will likely require another decade to be written.¹ But its general lines are now beginning to emerge and are worth tentatively tracing here.

This tracing is not without purpose. On the one hand, it seeks to underscore the highly conjunctural character of the Brazilian Church's effort to return Brazil to the "rule of law." As that effort got underway in the seventies, the press as well as the Church's partisans and protagonists tended to overstate the case for Catholicism's participation (in contradistinction to that of other institutions), underestimate its internal divisions (which have once again come to the fore), and finally pay scant heed to the Church's enduring institutional interests as a factor in its recent political activity.

On the other hand, tracing the Church's role in the *abertura* also obliges us to examine without sentimentality the question of the permanence of the Church's grassroots communities, the world renowned *comunidades eclesiais de base* (CEBs). Through some 80,000 CEBs organized along the length and breadth of the country, the Brazilian hierarchy (358 bishops strong and the third largest episcopacy in the Roman Catholic world after Italy's and the United States') has emerged from this decade as one of the most important spokesmen for the nation's lower classes. Moreover, from the Church's point of view, the CEBs have become as much an alternative form of cultic organization as they are "schools" for educating the exploited in their inalienable human rights. Finally, out of the CEB experience (and that of other ancillary, Church-related structures such as the *Comissão da Pastoral da Terra*) there has arisen a powerful people's critique of Brazilian capitalism and an equally spirited defense of a new socialist order. Consequently, the permanence of the CEBs is no mere academic or ecclesiastical matter, but one of the utmost political importance.

This essay focuses primarily on the eminently conjunctural character of the Church's role in the *abertura* and, to a lesser degree, on the "durability" of the CEBs.

The Coup of 1964: A Political and Religious Crisis

From the military coup of 1964 to the inauguration of the New Republic in 1985 the Church's interaction with Brazilian society can be best understood by dividing the period into four distinct historical moments.

The first extends from the 1964 coup to the 1968-1969 simultaneous ascent of military hardliners both to the high command of the armed forces and to the presidency of the Republic. In this period, the ideological and political divisions, which had rent the Catholic laity, clergy and

episcopacy into “progressives” and “conservatives” during the previous decade, continued to prevail. Conservatives came to hold the upper hand with the 1965 election of their candidates to the Secretariat of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (whose Portuguese acronym is CNBB) and the strong support exhibited by the Holy See for their position.

This development greatly facilitated the state’s purge of youthful militants, among them almost all the Catholics identified with the Church’s para-ecclesiastical structures such as the Young Christian Students, the Young Christian University Students, and the Young Christian Workers (respectively, JEC, JUC, and JOC). A change in international Church policy to demobilize the Lay Apostolate further precipitated their demise. By 1968, the most innovative Catholic experiment since the French worker-priests had been forced to a halt. Henceforth, the episcopacy alone would speak for the Church; in matters of politics, both clergy and laity were warned to hold their tongues.

But unlike the part of the laity that was now either indifferent to religion or exiled, imprisoned or forced into hiding by the repression, the Brazilian clergy—priests and nuns—took to the streets against the arbitrary acts of the regime. Nor did they spare criticism of bishops who preferred silence in these matters or who in Church affairs were slow to favor the winds of change then blowing off the Tiber after the closing of Vatican Council II (1962-1965). On a variety of issues (from celibacy to family planning, from a democratization of the sacraments to the election of bishops), the episcopacy proved intransigent.

Priests, historically in short supply, requested laicization en masse. Nuns, who outnumbered male clerics four to one, followed suit although at a slower rate. Vocations which had momentarily flourished from the ranks of specialized Catholic Action (JEC, JUC, and JOC) virtually withered, while replacements from Europe were harder to come by as the “priest-crisis” racked the whole of the Church Universal.

This decline in an ordained and celibate cadre—a fundamental structural impediment to Catholicism’s ability to “reproduce” itself institutionally and as a religious enterprise keep pace with Brazil’s demographic growth—could not have occurred at a more inopportune juncture. Within two years, a new industrial boom in São Paulo and the full-scale economic “conquest” of the vast untapped interior would once more draw migrants from the traditional Catholic hinterlands of the Northeast and Minas Gerais, just as São Paulo’s great post-World War II industrialization had done after the late forties.

In both these instances, former Catholic rural workers converted in large numbers to Pentecostalism and to various Afro-Brazilian and other cults on the outskirts of big cities and in the small boom towns of the great jungles.

Pentecostalism especially had been and remains until today the driving wedge against Catholicism’s once impregnable religious monopoly. Abandoned by the late nineteenth-century

elites for positivistic rationality and by the upper middle classes some half-century later for Marxist or consumerist talismans, the Church in this last half of the twentieth-century has been forsaken on ever larger scales for Pentecostalism by workers of the cities and countryside.

As this first period drew to a close, a conservative hierarchy, solicitous of the military promises to accede eventually to civilian demands for democratic restoration, confronted in Pentecostalism the challenge of an emergent “people’s religion” with far fewer clergy, a less organized laity and without effective means to recruit either one.

Church and Dictatorship at Odds

A “civil war” opens the second period in 1968-1969. A campaign for civil rights, instituted in 1973 by various Christian denominations (except for the Pentecostals) sees it to a close.

The “civil war” initially pitted the armed forces against the urban guerrilla movement, a veritable “Children’s Crusade” comprised of high school and university students and spearheaded by dissidents of communist and Marxist parties. In time, the generals also marked the Church as an enemy. In May 1969, an outspoken priest from the Northeast, reviled for his association with a long-standing opponent of the regime, Dom Helder Câmara, Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, was assassinated by agents of the regime for his non-violent political activities among students, who are always suspect. In turn, the Church made of him their first martyr of the repression.

That martyrdom spoke more eloquently than all the resolutions adopted at the Second Conference of Latin America’s bishops, held at Medellín (Colombia) the previous October (1968) in a monumental effort to “translate” the teachings of Vatican Council II into the realities of this Third World (whence three in every five Catholics would hail by the end of this century). The bishops’ denunciations of “institutionalized violence,” their commitment to be “one with the poor,” and their implicit *mea culpa* for four centuries of alliance with the ruling classes had been drafted by Church theologians and intellectuals, was embraced enthusiastically by most bishops, and even endorsed by the then reigning Pontiff, Paul VI.

For the moment, Medellín was the “saving grace” of the Brazilian Church and, for that matter, for Catholicism in every other Latin American nation where the scandal of military rule impiously took root over the coming years. Eventually, the massive exodus of disenchanted clergy from the priesthood came to a halt, the preoccupation over Pentecostal victories was turned more fruitfully to the defense of the Church’s “corporate integrity” against the assaults by an illegal regime, and the once bipolarized conference of bishops (CNBB) converged into a single centrist defense of civil liberties and human rights. But only by the end of this period.

At the beginning, the Church of the Brazilian Northeast, the most impoverished area of the country, appeared to stand alone. Since the mid-fifties its bishops had pioneered new forms

of Church organization, consciousness-raising campaigns for adult literacy, and the first, albeit ecclesiastically controlled and ideologically anti-Communist, mobilizations of rural workers.

Furthermore, the increased repression, symbolized by the martyrdom of a young priest and the growing impoverishment of Northeastern workers despite the military-induced “economic boom” of the early seventies, drove the regional Church to action. Document upon document gave the lie to the regime’s propaganda, its arbitrary alterations of the legal system, its flagrant disrespect for civil liberties and human rights.

Towards the end of this second period, the members of the Church in the industrialized South decisively joined the struggle of their Northeastern confrères. Until then, key Southern bishops had vacillated towards the military rulers. Despite repeated cause for condemnation of military violations against workers (in the 1968 Osasco strike), against clergy and pastoral agents (in São Paulo in 1969 and 1971), the conservative hierarchs had held out olive branches to the Church’s enemies and the people’s.²

Two dates mark the reversal of this policy. In 1970, in a story whose details are still unclear, the Vatican’s Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace and later Pope Paul VI himself denounced torture in Brazil. In the following year, Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns, the then newly appointed Archbishop of São Paulo, as head of the largest Roman Catholic archdiocese in the world, publicly condemned the torture of Church workers in the prisons of São Paulo, more specifically in the prisons and torture chambers of the soon-to-become infamous Second Army Command headquartered in that metropolis.³

The die was cast.

As this second period drew to a close, the Brazilian Church as a whole became galvanized into leading a world-wide campaign against torture in Brazil. Not even repeated efforts of the regime to label churchmen “subversives” and encourage ultra-conservative Catholic groupings to irresponsibly denounce priests and bishops as Communists could prevent the CNBB from forging a united front.

Moreover, prompted by the Northeastern critique of the “economic miracle” (high annual growth rates resulting from declining real wages and labor repression), the Church in the South, especially in São Paulo, soon took up the cry.

By late 1973, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Christian Churches of Brazil (with the exception of the Pentecostals, who are also seen as “competitors” by such “mainline” Protestant denominations as the Presbyterian and Methodist) launched a nation-wide campaign for human rights.

The first collective step towards denying legitimacy to the regime had been taken. Moreover, in the absence of viable voluntary associations and political parties, the Churches in

general and the Catholic in particular had by now become the paramount opposition force to military rule. In the case of the Catholic, no other institution except for the military enjoyed a comparable nation-wide network of cadres, a system of communications (even if only door-to-door) that functioned despite censorship and, unlike the military, a world-wide organization that it could draw on for support and bank on for an international “hearing.”

The Church as Surrogate for “Civil Society”

As the Church marshalled the opposition to the regime, the latter’s military leaders (in the person of the President-designate of the top brass, General Ernesto Geisel) proposed a “gradual and slow” devolution of political power to civil society. Referred to at the outset as *distensão* (the reduction of tensions), the policy spelled out neither a timetable nor a program.

Its announcement in late 1973 and early 1974 opens the third period which for our purposes can be said to have drawn to a close in 1978 when auto workers, with the sympathy of some sectors of the middle and upper classes, unleashed the first strikes in a decade and signaled both the depths of discontent to which the society as a whole had been driven and the potential fragility of military rule.

It is now commonly agreed that the policy of *distensão* had originated within the military for the primary, if not exclusive, purpose of curbing a minority hardline faction within the armed forces. Initially composed of ideologically intransigent conservatives, the hardline by now came to include both officers who had actively combated the urban and rural guerrillas and those who came to control a rapidly and greatly expanded national intelligence agency (the SNI or Serviço Nacional de Informações). At no time was this policy or its subsequent modifications actually intended to return the executive branch of government to civilian rule until well into the 1990s. In a word, *distensão* (which after 1978 became called the *abertura* for reasons explained later) was in effect a policy prompted by internal military factionalism and aimed at more artfully ensuring long-term military rule.⁴

Indeed it was the hardline’s reaction to their evident loss of power that triggered desperate acts of public carnage (such as “Rio Centro”), and the rash of outright acts of terrorism perpetrated, it now appears, with SNI’s knowledge or outright collaboration, against the Church, the national Bar Association (OAB), the journalists’ associations, and research centers (such as the São Paulo-based CEBRAP). Against these and other acts of unprecedented violence, against even “elite” citizenry, the moderate military faction remained intent on preserving both military discipline and their own continuity in office. They tacitly made alliances and reluctant concessions to the middle- and upper-class sectors of Brazilian society. By the mid-1970s, these

sectors began referring to themselves as “civil society” and to their ongoing effort to acquire minimal civil liberties as “opening up spaces” (*abrir espaço*).

During our period, there was no single “forward line” of development, but rather a zig-zag of confrontations and attritions, advances and retreats. Indeed, the surprising 1974 and 1978 electoral victories by the opposition, united despite differences behind the leadership of the only authorized opposition party, the MDB (Movimento Democrático Brasileiro), were met by the regime’s jimmying of electoral rules. Fiats were decreed in succession in order to give the government party a majority of elective offices, even though it had received a minority of the popular vote.

That vote was most solidly against the regime in São Paulo. There, former pro-government industrialists now began abandoning ship to protest the growing state control over the economy (denounced as *estatização*) and the regime’s “give-away” (of subsidies and favors) to the multinationals. Widespread corruption among the very officers who had seized power precisely to clear up “corruption” further gave big business a bad name. Large contingents of the middle class had by now grown disenchanted, while the impact of the petroleum crisis of 1973 promised only higher prices and fast eroding salaries. At last, São Paulo, the very heart of the Brazilian nation and the epicenter of its latter-day capitalist expansion, had begun to ail as badly as the rest of the exploited body politic.

Against this background, the Church was called upon and played its most significant role of the *abertura*. Certainly the personality of Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns, a Cardinal since 1973, does not alone account for this, although his impeccable character, political acumen, and personal courage inalterably marked the future. Rather, just as São Paulo rose up as the future of the nation, so too did the Church in that metropolis come to speak for the Church throughout Brazil.

The concrete conditions that made that possible are reviewed below. But the symbolic emergence of that reality and its political repercussion can be mentioned now. The October 1975 death under torture of Vladimir Herzog, the Paulista journalist, a Jew and alleged Communist, proved the “last straw” of regime brutality for civil society. An ecumenical service in the São Paulo Cathedral represented the closing of ranks—above party, class, religion, race, and region—of civility against barbarism. The death four months later, under identical circumstances, of the auto worker M. Fiel Filho, gave both cause and pretext for military moderates to move at last with the swiftness that had eluded them against the hardliners; the dismissal of the Second Army Commander and his substitution by a general loyal to President Geisel underscored that shift.⁵

From the point of view of civil society, the Church was now morally empowered to serve as its surrogate. In the campaign against torture, the recently created Peace and Justice

Commission of the Archdiocese of São Paulo (P&JC-SP) shared that task with the OAB. In doing so, it also became in effect a nation-wide force of civil society. (The official National Peace and Justice Commission was headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, but here the conservative Cardinal Archbishop, Dom Eugênio Sales, who “intervened” with generals as “one power to another,” had effectively muzzled it.) In its defense of untampered elections, an end to censorship, and amnesty for political prisoners, the Church in effect gave legitimacy to civil liberties and to liberal democracy. It was now one with the cause of the privileged and at last, disenchanted, classes to return Brazil “to the rule of law.”

But it was among the less privileged classes that the Church had most to gain—and most to lose. In the shanty towns (sometimes called *favelas*) on the far flung outskirts (or *periferia*) of Greater São Paulo populated by largely jobless and poorly paid migrants from the rest of the country and in the satellite towns of industrial workers (like São Bernardo), the Church’s “presence” was being severely challenged by competing faiths and ideologies.

Among the jobless and poorly paid, almost all “historic” Catholics, Pentecostalism and a variety of Afro-Brazilian, syncretic religions, most significantly Umbanda, proselytized with astonishing success in the early seventies. The Church, encumbered by the immobilism of its medieval European parish structure, had neither the finances nor the manpower to keep pace (as its policy since the forties had dictated). Among industrial workers, secular trade unionism free of government intervention frankly made more sense. Indeed, the Church’s successive strategies since the fifties to try to gain a foothold in the factories had made little or no progress (as the experiences of the Círculos Operários, the JOC, the Frente Nacional do Trabalho, and the “imported” worker-priest experiment in Osasco of French Fathers Domingos Barbé and Jean Wauthier attest). In the long view, the unbridled economic growth and ensuing impoverishment of São Paulo (memorialized in the study commissioned by the P&JC-SP and entitled *São Paulo: Growth and Poverty*) merely aggravated during the decade realities that had persisted for over a quarter-century.⁶

These concerns clearly lay behind the “trial and error” efforts to catechize between 1969 and 1975 on the heels of the vocation crisis and the demise of specialized Catholic action (JUC, JOC, and JEC).⁷ Elsewhere in the country and especially in the Northeast, however, the CEBs had just begun to take root.⁸ Their potential as a new form of Church structure and method of evangelization was gradually underscored by the two “National Encounters” convened in Vitoria (ES) in 1975 and 1976. Finally in 1976 and 1978, the Archdiocese of São Paulo adopted respectively their First and Second “Two-Year Plans” in which the “pastorals” (plans for religious and social action) for promoting CEBs among jobless and poorly-paid workers on the periphery and among the unionized in satellite towns would be given priority.⁹

But whatever the original intent of ecclesiastical architects, the CEBs would take on a life of their own. In retrospect several reasons now appear obvious, though inexhaustive. São Paulo's internationally recruited clergy, inspired by Medellín and frequently harassed by the regime, envisaged a return to the fraternity and equality of primitive Christianity. Their lay cadres—mostly Catholics, but not a few Marxists—came with previous (sometimes clandestine) political experience and current political concerns in so far as other “social spaces” were under heavy regime surveillance. Liberation theologians, (whose works first began to appear in the early seventies) for their part found it easier to bring their theologies “down to earth” in the social specificity of the CEBs, while the Church pedagogues, especially attuned to working-class idiom, developed the techniques of applying biblical exegesis to the surrounding social problems. And then, in a parallel development (still to be analyzed) Church intellectuals completely “reworked” the field of “folk religion” (sometimes referred to as popular religion or popular Catholicism); heretofore condemned as “superstitious,” the beliefs and practices of the unlettered were now appreciated as potential well-springs of personal and collective transformation.¹⁰

Clearly, the receptivity of ordinary and long-suffering believers to this “revolution within the Church” was itself extraordinary (and unfortunately almost without written record). But three factors that help explain the rapidity with which this “process” reunited, renewed and relaunched an institution and its constituency on a largely overt political-religious trajectory are worth mentioning briefly before concluding this period.¹¹

First and foremost, a new hegemony, i.e. a new hegemonic group—let's hereinafter call it, for want of a better term, the People's Church (*Igreja do Povo*)—had through an ongoing struggle come to prevail within Brazilian Catholicism by the early seventies. Indeed, the very history of this entire post-war period with respect to religion and society in Brazil is the history of this group's struggle. Thus, until *this* story can be told—with names and documents—our accounts perforce must take recourse to the institutional and public record and its (necessarily opaque and sometimes distorted) reading of our times.¹²

But for our purposes here the new hegemony of the People's Church is best understood as follows. Since the 1950s, several generations of Catholic activists—men and women, lay and clerical, hierarchs and the rank and file—have forged a common cause and common links. Like the Church itself, this cadre is transnational in character and indeed has its existence as much in the transnational Church as it does in the specific arrangements of classes, regions, and ethnicities of Brazilian society itself.

It is this transnational cadre—rooted ideologically in the liberal European Catholic critique of authority and tradition within the Church and in a Latin American “Third World” critique of capitalist underdevelopment and the excesses of state power—that is directly responsible for today's progressive stance of Catholicism.¹³ Vatican Council II, Medellín, and in part “Puebla”

(after the Mexican city in which the III Conference of Latin American bishops was held in early 1979) are its “work.” So too, it can be said, is the People’s Church in Brazil in the seventies.

The formation of this cadre (like the Catholic activists’ struggle against those who held power in the Church through the first half of this century) still goes untold. But it is clearly linked to institutionally identifiable “movements, currents, forces, and schools” (as Raymond Williams might say) and can with patience be historically reconstructed. In that latter task, prominence must one day be accorded the Catholic University of Louvain and the generation of priest-sociologists trained there; the JOC, JEC, and JUC movements in Brazil and their offshoots and extensions (such as Ação Popular and the Movimento de Educação de Base); the São Paulo-based Dominicans; and to a lesser extent the Rio de Janeiro-based Centro João XXIII of the Jesuits.¹⁴

Finally, the struggle itself takes place at all levels within the Church (nationally and transnationally, from the grassroots to the hierarchs) and has enveloped bishops, pastors, and nuns; schoolteachers and pastoral agents; sociologists, economists, political scientists, and historians; journalists and theologians; pastoral agents and Church office workers—in a word, the “organic intellectuals” of Gramscian thought. In the early seventies, their struggle accorded the People’s Church an extraordinary ascendancy within the institution as a whole. To the outside world, the former’s commitment to the poor and a more just social order was perceived (or misperceived?) to be that of the entire Church.

The second factor which brought institution and constituency together with such rapidity was the CNBB’s unequivocal legitimization of the “process” that had begun to unfold.¹⁵ As early as 1970, a more liberal slate took office as well as the day-to-day control of the Secretariat and permanent commissions. In August 1973, it seized the offensive with regard to *distensão* and in March 1974 authorized Brazil’s four Cardinals to attend General Geisel’s inauguration. The CNBB answered attacks against individual clergymen (such as Dom Helder or Dom Adriano Hypólito, the Bishop of Rio de Janeiro’s industrial suburb of Nova Iguaçu) and consequently the “corporate autonomy” of the Church with unanimous denunciations. It countered the arbitrary measures of the regime with the frank espousal of democratic principles. In record time, the CNBB and its annual assemblies of the nation’s bishops became the bellwether of the struggle for democracy. Four consecutive documents between July 1974 and late 1979 so attest.¹⁶

But it is within the governing structures of the Church as a whole that the CNBB played an even more substantial and innovative role: it formally sanctioned new institutions through which critical social segments of the faithful could mobilize against the onslaught, for the most part boldly economic, of the regime.

Three of these merit noting here: the Council for the Indigenous Mission (CIMI), established in 1972; the first Inter-Ecclesial National Encounter (in 1974), a deliberately “non-

“official” structure to convene the diverse CEBs for the purpose of “exchanging” experiences; and finally the Land Pastoral Commission (CPT), created in 1975, which like CIMI and the National Encounter was at once autonomous of the CNBB but—through its bishop-members and officers—an indissoluble entity of the CNBB itself.¹⁷

The three structures shared several features in common: for the most part, they held jurisdiction in the “frontier” areas of the country where capitalist intervention in the form of government corporations, private enterprise, and the multi-nationals advanced savagely and unbridled; they “spoke for” local communities of Indians, rural day laborers, squatters, and small farmers whose lives were daily threatened by “economic progress” and where neither government (in the guise of the National Indian Service and rural unions) nor political parties took up their defense; finally, they were structures in which Church cadres (from bishops to laymen) genuinely shared the lives and destinies of their humblest constituents and exhibited in the face of daily danger extraordinary personal courage.¹⁸

Of the three, the CPT is the most controversial, perhaps because it is so consistently militant in both its attacks on the regime and its defense of rural workers. It is also controversial within the Church and as such stands as a metaphor for the “problematic” surrounding all grassroots undertakings. Are these new structures, for example, merely new “instruments” for the Church to manipulate its historical rural (and in the case of Brazil, indigenous) “wards”? Or do these new organizations reflect a genuine Church effort to keep pace with the dramatic changes in class relations now occurring and that in time will give way to more appropriate interest groups, like a workers’ party or rural trade union?

These questions also lay at the heart of frequent conservative ecclesiastical accusations that the Brazilian Church favors only one class, that of the “oppressed,” to the detriment of its universal (“polyclass”) mission. They also are at the root of an ongoing debate among Church intellectuals as to whether the “people” are or are not capable of shaping their own destiny without the “guidance” of a (usually middle class) “vanguard” of pastoral workers. To this debate,¹⁹ precipitated fully only after 1980, it will be necessary to return again. Nor is it irrelevant to the third and final factor bringing institution and constituency together.

That factor is the emergence of new secular social movements among the popular classes in the peripheries of São Paulo between 1973 and 1978. They took various forms—from mothers’ clubs to youth groups, from day-care centers to cost of living associations. But regardless of their particular finality, in each of them “the role of the Church was central and direct.”²⁰ For outsiders, the exact relationship has remained unclear. A study now in progress may shortly clarify that nexus.²¹

But these popular movements, like the CPT and the CEBs, posed questions about grassroot organizing similar to the “problematic” mentioned before. Above all, they posed a

fundamental political question: could these movements, which arose over local and specific campaigns (for paved roads, sewerage, new schools, etc.) and were more often than not geographically delimited to one or another periphery neighborhood, resist the return of electoral politics or the need for truly national organizations like parties and trade unions? Moreover, could the participatory experience made necessary by the regime's excesses (against liberties) and inadequacies (toward popular welfare) ultimately transform elitist politics (whether military or civilian) into a truly democratic politics? Into a truly democratic praxis?

For the Church, this political question might prove itself to be nothing less than "subversive." If indeed the CEBs were the essential nucleus around which—according to many observers—the new "Popular Movement" (as these secular social movements came to be called collectively) was built, then what would be the consequences of a democratic social praxis upon the Church? A democratic praxis within the CEBs? Within the Church as a whole?²² Precisely this vision of democracy within the Church was one of the central projections of Leonardo Boff, the Franciscan theologian.²³ During this period, Boff had come to be ranked among Latin America's leading exponents of Liberation Theology, that interpretation of Catholicism which argued that the Faith had to free men from their sins and social injustice simultaneously, an interpretation whose orthodoxy was under constant challenge since the early seventies.

From Military to Civilian Rule

In the ensuing and, for our purposes, last period, the preceding questions came forcibly to the fore. New ones also arose. But, from 1978 until the advent of the "New Republic" in March 1985, facile description finds no haven.

Perhaps the term *abertura* is key to this historical moment. For it is in late 1978 and early 1979—with the "hand-picked" succession of the former SNI Director, General João Baptista Figueiredo, to the presidency—that *abertura* replaces *distensão* in the country's political lexicon. It reflected the sea-change that had in fact taken place. Henceforth, the citizenry believed it could and would regain its sovereignty, return to civilian rule and implant democracy. Democracy too would no longer be left a hollow platitude of the elite political class that historically monopolized the political system. Redeemed by the emergence of popular movements and soon enough by repeated massive electoral defeats of the regime, democracy had become for many the credo and condition for permanent military withdrawal from the affairs of the nation and of a new participatory future for all citizens.²⁴

In 1979 this was by no means clear; nor was it the intention of the military to relinquish either their current initiative or perennial power until well into the 1990s. But the industrial strikes of May 1978 and the opposition's powerful electoral showing that November obliged the regime to

adopt new tactics if it were to retain control. Key was the “new parties” law (*Lei Orgânica de Partidos*). In fact a decree, the measure allowed for a multi-party system to be established in 1980 for the sole purpose of dividing opposition forces in the 1982 congressional and gubernatorial elections, thus enhancing a government party victory.²⁵ Other tactics aimed to guarantee the indirect election of Figueiredo’s still unchosen successor (via a trumped-up “electoral college”) in 1984. Still others sought to reduce the increasingly deleterious effects of the mounting debt crisis and the austerity measures the IMF obliged the regime to abide by (even if these were not always put into effect).

An analysis of why these measures ultimately failed is still forthcoming.²⁶ But Alfred Stepan makes the most convincing case for the military side of the equation. He reminds us that divisions arose within the military regime—largely because of personal ambitions among the by now ascendent moderates—over a successor. In the end, that division resulted in a civilian candidate (Paulo Maluf) who was unacceptable to most officers of the armed forces. Also persuasive is Stepan’s evidence that growing hostility within the services towards the SNI’s pervasiveness, privilege, and seeming control over military promotions made a return to (conservative) civilian rule a potential counterweight to intelligence excesses and a guarantor of the services’ integrity. Finally, Stepan suggests the armed forces calculated that their budgets (already the lowest in Latin America) would grow larger faster in austerity under civilians than under another military administration.

And what of the civilian side of the equation? No comparably illuminating study such as Stepan’s exists to my knowledge. But it would have to take into account several factors. For one, civilians had after 1978 simply lost their fear and organized, even if they were without arms and effective power. How else must the successive waves of strikes (1978, 1979, 1980) be understood? Or their electoral triumphs in the great cities and most industrialized states (in 1978 and 1982)? Or their multitudinous rallies for “direct elections, now!” in 1983 and 1984, which brought literally millions to “vote with their feet” in the public squares of most state capitals?²⁷

For another, the elite political class—the leadership of the opposition parties—acted astutely to deflect their own potentially bitter rivalries anticipated by the regime. They later moved swiftly to incorporate dissident members of the government party eager to abandon the corrupt and sinking ship of state and formed a new ruling party (whose ideological weight shifted noticeably to the center-right). And lastly, they rallied unanimously behind the one politician (Tancredo Neves) whose credentials and political acumen made him acceptable to soldiers and civilians and to “Greeks and Trojans” alike.

For still another and final factor, world politics could not have afforded a more “neutral” conjuncture. America’s ability to intervene in Brazilian affairs had ebbed dramatically since 1964, while the Reagan administration’s commitment to debt-burdened U.S. banks dictated favoring

whatever course most assured debt repayment. For its part, neighboring Argentina exemplified the potential chaos that might befall the Brazilian military were they to preside over a bankrupt and rebellious citizenry for another term. Finally, it was the trend elsewhere in Latin America towards civilian rule against which Brazil's new course would be measured.

"The Vatican Offensive"

For the Church, this period has been replete with paradox and fraught with dilemmas. With regard to the polity, it would seem that the very "opening to democracy" (or more modestly put, the transition to civilian rule), to which the Church had so much contributed, now obliged it to "disengage" itself from politics and as an institution disavow the partisan preferences of its rank and file. With regard to world Catholicism, forces within the very transnational structure out of which the hegemony of the People's Church had emerged were now—with the Holy See's apparent approval—marshalling strength in Brazil and abroad to dismantle that same People's Church.

Obviously, both developments are only analytically separate. Historically and from the point of view of the abiding struggle over power and authority within the Church, they are of a single cloth, inextricably woven together. In the account which follows, however, it seemed advisable to unfold the paradoxes and dilemmas of the period around three nearly chronologically sequential questions: The papacy of John Paul II and the rise of a "Euro-Latin Alliance" within world Catholicism; Brazil's "new parties" law and the conflict between the Church's hierarchy and grassroots over party options; the debate over "the Two Churches" and what I shall call the "conservative restoration" within Brazilian Catholicism.

It is now unarguable that the 1978 election of Karol Wojtyla to the papacy responded to the deep-seated need of his fellow Cardinals to rally to a helmsman who would at least set the supposedly rudderless Montini-esque barque of Peter on a surer course. In Latin America, that sentiment was emphatically shared by profoundly conservative hierarchs who slowly but surely came to the conclusion that their young intellectuals and theologians had deceived them in 1968 at Medellín. In fact since 1972, with the election of the ambitious, brilliant, and conservative Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, at the time the Auxiliary Bishop of Bogotá, to the Secretary-Generalship of CELAM, a systematic region-wide purge of progressive cadres began in earnest, first within CELAM bureaucracies, then throughout the continent.²⁸ Supported theologically, morally, and financially by a conservative wing of the West German Catholic hierarchy, the newly forged transnational faction (let us henceforth call it the "Euro-Latin Alliance") set out to "conquer" Rome. At the Fourth Synod of Bishops convened there literally on the eve of Wojtyla's election the course was set to pull the People's Church out of "politics" and push it back into the sacristy.²⁹

Puebla was to be the stage on which the Euro-Latin Alliance and the recently proclaimed Pontiff, John Paul II, were to join forces in the rollback of the People's Church. For more than two years, the CELAM Secretariat had systematically laid plans for Medellín's reversal.³⁰ Propagated in a preparatory document, the subtle text, labeled the "Green Book" (after the color of its cover), had the opposite effect. Everywhere, the progressive currents went into action. They mobilized national hierarchies, especially the Brazilian and Peruvian, to discuss the proposal publicly, and thus seizing the initiative threw the conservatives off guard. A compromise text was hammered out and served as the starting point for the meeting which—postponed earlier by the death of John Paul I—at last commenced in January 1979.

The outcome fell short of victory for the Euro-Latin Alliance. First of all, the progressives, denied status as "experts" (*periti* in Latin) and entry to the assembly hall (a seminary chosen for its distance and incommunicability from the center of Puebla), simply set up shop at local hotels. A system of runners kept them in contact with the handful of progressive prelates "within the walls." As each topic came to the top of the agenda inside the seminary, the *periti* "outside the walls" retorted without delay. Moreover, it was the *periti*—rather than the secretive CELAM press office—who kept the world press abreast of the daily "score." Finally, the Holy Father himself apparently stole the conservatives' thunder. Scandalized by the misery of Mexican peasants (that made their Polish counterparts look like plutocrats), the Pope reportedly discarded a speech prepared for him by CELAM officials and unabashedly embraced the cause of the poor.

The repudiation of Medellín's teachings about the "poor" had indeed been central to the conservatives' attempted rollback at Puebla, and the progressives did succeed in approving a final resolution that put the Church on record as endorsing the now celebrated formulation, the "preferential option for the poor." But on other matters Puebla was in my opinion a "draw," even though the progressives would subsequently portray the event in all the media accessible to them as a victory for the People's Church.³¹

That eventual strategy was well-founded for Brazil, where John Paul II was scheduled to make his second Latin American tour in July 1980. On the one hand, the Pope had publicly repeated in Mexico the conservatives' attack on Medellín. He brandished their doctrinal epithets both against the "politicized" view of Christ as a "Liberator" (instead of the theologically "timeless," Savior of Souls), and against the "parallel magisterium" (alluding to the progressives' supposed "upstaging" of the doctrine of Papal infallibility).³²

On the other hand, there were signs that the Euro-Latin Alliance was not without Brazilian sympathizers nor high-placed allies in Rome who could directly pressure the Brazilian Church. In late 1979, the press reported that Leonardo Boff's theology (already attacked seven years earlier by a prominent conservative Brazilian Cardinal) was about to be condemned by Rome.³³ In March 1980, rumor had it that the Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo was knuckling under to

“outside admonitions.” (He did not, in fact, and refused to withdraw his invitation to host the controversial Fourth International Ecumenical Congress of Theology held that month at the Paul VI Institute on the outskirts of São Paulo.) But sometime later, unidentified voices clamored for his removal.³⁴

Not surprisingly, even the planning of the papal visit was rife with the divisions within the Brazilian hierarchy, while the visit itself appeared as a careful effort to balance one current against another.³⁵ As to the event itself, it gathered up tens of millions of the faithful to cheer on “John of God” as if he were some heroic Brazilian center-forward and left otherwise loquacious and skeptical social scientists speechless and then adulatory. When they came to their wits, almost all concurred in a single finding: that this great people’s “feast” demonstrated how deeply “Christian discourse” underlay the daily language of the masses and that this language antedated and perhaps even resisted many subsequent discourses.³⁶

A retrospective balance of the papal visit has yet to be undertaken. But at this juncture three rather daring propositions can, in my opinion, be put forth. First, in Brazil and the rest of Latin America, religiosity or faith is almost as extensive as the masses of the poor. But by no means is the People’s Church—nor for that matter, the CEBs—even minimally coextensive with that religiosity. Second, in contra-distinction to the multiplicity of representations of the Brazilian Church, the Pope was the single symbol of all religiosity. Moreover, in Brazil as in Mexico (and wherever he traveled) the Pope appropriated that faith as “Catholic culture” and as such pronounced it anterior to both the Brazilian nation and all the current specificities and divisions within the actual Brazilian hierarchy. Rome transcended class and nation and Church and thus bid to “command” all three.

Finally, for its part the People’s Church decided to “appropriate” John Paul II for both of the above circumstances. Just as in the aftermath of Puebla, now on the heels of the papal visit it proclaimed itself, if you will, “the Pope’s party.” In my opinion, this was a calculated political judgment: the new Euro-Latin Alliance was seen at this moment as the “party of the Roman Curia” in the throes of a comeback that the new Pope, still the champion of the worker of Kracow and Nova Huta, would perhaps in time put in its place. Perhaps.

Electoral Politics and the CEBs’ Setback

It was certainly just a matter of time, however, before conservative voices of the Brazilian Church made the Pope’s words their own. Selected words, that is. Words, as one wise and sober observer had predicted, that would be carefully chosen and clipped out of context; “words of caution and possible admonishments.”³⁷ The occasion was the race to form new parties, draw up slates and platforms, and launch campaigns for the elections of November 1982. Until

the Pope's visit had concluded, the issues posed to the Church by the "new parties" law (*Lei Orgânica de Partidos*) had simply had to take a back seat.

Conservatives, of course, read every subsequent move as proof of the politicization of the Church. In that context, Dom Eugênio Sales, their spokesman, publicly seized upon the "failure" of the CNBB to publish a papal letter of December 1980. That letter warned against temporal "distractions" from the Church's religious mission and against the "betrayal" of putting social welfare above religious salvation. Its most pointed paragraph appears in retrospect to have been "tailor-made" for the moment (as if it had been drafted in Brazil):³⁸

Most grave would be the loss of identity if, under the pretext of acting in society, the Church allowed herself to be dominated by political contingencies, if she became an instrument of certain groups or put her pastoral programs, her movements and her [grassroots] communities at the disposition or at the service of party organizations.

But even progressives and moderate bishops for that matter were hardly advocating a "Church party." In fact, the Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo had earlier ruled out reviving the onetime confessional Christian Democratic Party whose pre-1964 electoral base in São Paulo was substantial. Moreover, CDP flag bearers were nestled comfortably in the PMDB (that in November 1982 carried Franco Montoro, the leading ex-Christian Democrat, to the governorship of the state).

The problem was elsewhere: in the ecclesial base communities. There the "new parties" law had sown confusion (at best) and partisan militancy (at worst—in the minds of some). In April 1981 at the Fourth Inter-Ecclesial Encounter, held in Itaici, which brought together CEB members, pastoral agents and their advisors (*assessores*), (including theologians, bishops and Church intellectuals), the day devoted to the discussion of politics was, according to one observer, "highly problematic."³⁹ In the end, the Encounter gave its blessing to politics as "a great arm" in the construction of justice and to political parties as possible programmatic and practical instruments of action in society. But the fundamental conclusion was for the CEBs to have no party at all: "We also believe that the ecclesial base community is not and cannot be a party cell (*núcleo partidário*), but rather a place where we must live out, deepen and celebrate our faith ... so that we might see if our political action is in agreement with the Plan of God."⁴⁰

As early as February 1981, some CEBs, however, had already opted for the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), the entirely new political grouping of auto workers, intellectuals and university youth, principally from São Paulo.⁴¹ Led by Luís Inácio da Silva, nicknamed Lula, the charismatic leader of São Bernardo autoworkers, the PT—despite its initial hostility to the Church

and to its competitive union cadres (the *oposições sindicais*)—was by now doubly identified as the “Church’s party,” or at least, the “party of the CEBs.”

The decision of the São Paulo hierarchy to convert church buildings into union halls during the strike of 1980 (after the government had closed them down by force) partly contributed to that picture. So too did the presence of Frei Betto (Carlos Alberto Libânio Christo), the Dominican friar, as Lula’s constant companion and house guest during those strikes. Moreover, as pioneer in the seventies of the CEB experience in Vitória (ES) and author of the principal tract of 1981 that boldly called upon the CEBs “not to be indifferent” or “omissive” to the efforts of workers and popular movement activists to embark on a new “political conduct,” Frei Betto and his friendship with Lula gave credence to the “indissolubility” of the PT and the Church.⁴²

The hierarchy of the Church certainly did all it could to disavow that perception. In July 1981, it summarily called back a primer prepared by a commission of the São Paulo Archdiocese and entitled “Faith and Politics.” A text accompanied by slides (and also available in cartoon editions), the document was intended to educate CEB members in their political responsibilities and orient their options before the 1982 elections. But the press corps attending the off-the-record briefing about the primer found one of the slides (and corresponding sketches in the cartoon edition) to be hardly “neutral.” As the voter approached a crossroads in one instance, he came face to face with a traffic sign in the next. Arrows pointed helter-skelter, except for one that pointed to the “right road.” On *that* arrow, the initials, “PT” were prominently marked. The following day, headlines slanderously attacked the hierarchy’s “partisanship.” Subsequent editions of the primer had all initials removed.⁴³

But throughout the remainder of the electoral campaign the impression of a CEB-PT alliance was indelible.⁴⁴ True, other parties seen as friendly to the “oppressed’s” cause—such as the PMDB and the primarily Rio de Janeiro-based Democratic Workers Party (PDT) of Leonel Brizola—were also endorsed. However, CEB members who chose to run for political office in São Paulo did so primarily on the PT ticket.

PT’s poor showing at the ballot boxes in 1982 did more than stun political neophytes. For the elite political class, it gave reassurance that the grassroots Church was less of a threat and required less of a hearing than they had previously imagined. For the CEBs and the intellectuals of the People’s Church, it called for a major re-evaluation of their position before the new political order and before the Church as a whole.

That evaluation is now in course. Just prior to the elections, it was said to have unfolded in an atmosphere of “confusion..., fear..., withdrawal..., and disorientation...” as grassroots CEB members in some areas of the country tried to make sense out of the constantly changing pressures exerted upon them by the parties, pastoral agents, and the Church hierarchy.⁴⁵ Since the elections, however, it has proceeded with greater dispassion and deliberation. Clearly, this is

not the place to set out all the issues under review (since a subsequent essay proposes to do precisely that). However, the preliminary insights of, in my opinion, the most balanced and lucid analyst, the Jesuit priest Cláudio Perani, deserve mention.

Perani, whose writings appear almost exclusively in *Cadernos do CEAS*, the bimonthly journal of his Order's Centro de Estudos a Ação Social in Salvador (BA), suggests in a recent article that after a decade of labors at the grassroots level the Church's work has fallen seriously short of the mark.⁴⁶ First of all, there remains a greater lack of grassroots leaders than of their middle class (lay and clerical) advisors; second, relationships between the CEBs and secular voluntary associations are as unclear today as a decade ago; third, the purpose of the Church in "conscientizing" CEB members about politics and especially partisan politics remains ambiguous; fourth, there has been a pronounced tendency to use "faith" as a justification for political options, rather than as a source of questioning about such options; fifth, there is a latent impulse to convert the CEBs either into a new form of "Christendom," albeit popular and even "leftist," or some lower-class analogue to the specialized Catholic Action movements of the fifties in which the hierarchy was the first and ultimate locus of decisions.

Indeed, of all the militants of the last decade, Perani seems to be alone in his forthright eschewing of rhetoric about the *povo* (lower classes) bursting in upon the Church and "converting" it. To the contrary, his criticism centers precisely on how weighty the influence of the institutional Church continues to be with regard to the CEBs and their until now hegemonic cadres of the "People's Church."

In his most recent article, Perani reminds us that there is still "a long road ahead" before power is "redistributed" in the Church. "We must recognize," he adds, "the great capacity of ecclesial authority to maintain or recoup its power."⁴⁷ Bishops weigh heavily on the institution and their "election" still takes place in Rome. Nor has anything changed in regard to the nomination of vicars to local churches. Moreover, the ever larger number of bishops who have recently endorsed (*aderiram*) the CEB movement, the CPT and the CIMI is not necessarily a sign of their "conversion" to the popular cause.⁴⁸ Further, the continuing lack of clergy and vocations (and, in my own opinion, the rapid numerical expansion of the episcopacy) is not necessarily a sign of the "democratization" of the Church, but perhaps rather of the increasingly great direct intervention of bishops in the day-to-day life of the faithful. Finally, Perani, in a phrase borrowed from a CEB text from Maranhao, seems to exhort CEB advisors to "leave Noah's Ark" now that the military deluge has subsided, for the people are greater than any "grand design" of the CEBs. It is time, Perani proposes, for renewal, new militance and a healthy respect for pluralism at the grassroots.

Perani's call for a fresh start will come as a surprise only to less astute observers of the Brazilian CEB movement. But it is also an accurate indicator of the entire Church's awareness

that—with the restoration of political parties, the electoral process, and an elitist political system—Catholicism has come to a new crossroads in its centuries-long inheritance in Brazil.

The “Conservative Restoration” in Brazil’s Catholic Church

Equally true is that Brazilian Catholicism has come to a new crossroads with the Church Universal. In a turn thought to be impossible only a decade or two ago, conservative forces within the Brazilian Church have come to stake their future on the new Euro-Latin Alliance and, not surprisingly—despite the unilateral appropriation by the People’s Church—on the Holy Father himself.

This is not to say, as does one analyst who insists it “can never come to pass,” that the components of a transnational Church external to Brazil are about to crush in one fell swoop the country’s 80,000 CEBs.⁴⁹ Nor is it to say, as the same analyst again denies as possible, that a papal visit or even the Papacy is able to “change the Church of Brazil” and its intimate ties to the lower classes.

This is to say, however, that a “conservative restoration” within the Brazilian Church (hierarchy and clergy for certain—among the laity it still remains to be seen) has been in progress for at least a decade. Moreover, this “conservative restoration” (as the Brazilian faction shall be called) has forged links to the Euro-Latin Alliance that with each passing day appears to have greater access to and truck with the Papacy. In addition, it has created its own publications (the locally produced *Boletim da Revista do Clero* and the internationally edited *Communio*, both distributed nationally out of the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro), established working seminars for upper middle class professionals and guarded zealously the teaching posts in many seminaries around the country. Its principal spokesman is Cardinal Eugênio Sales, while a half dozen other bishops can be counted as supporters.

Certainly, the “conservative restoration” is hardly about to “come to power.” But its several sources of strength should not be discounted. For one, this faction has never repudiated “democracy”; at least, it is perfectly at ease with the return of civilian elitist politics under the New Republic; it is decisively not socialist, as are many of the CEBs (but hardly the Brazilian electorate). For another, it espouses “that ‘ole’ time religion”: pomp and processions; pilgrimages, novenas, devotions to the saints; in a word, the stuff from which popular religiosity, the Faith of the People, draws its strength, as the Pope’s visit to Brazil made clear. Moreover, that kind of religion is purportedly on the rise. Never before have Catholic publishing houses sold more pamphlets about the lives of the saints.⁵⁰ Never before has Pentecostalism had more converts (to the point that even the Vatican has had to request Brazil’s bishops to help discern precisely what religious needs are going unanswered).⁵¹ Finally, even the CEBs have recoiled

from their earlier “political road” and reverted to the biblical circles and discussion groups from which they originated one or more decades ago.⁵²

But perhaps the greatest strength of the “conservative restoration” lies in its ties to the transnational Euro-Latin Alliance; to the latter’s access to European Catholic money; to the expertise of the new “movements” on the rise in an essentially conservative Europe (such as Opus Dei or the Italian-based Communione e Liberazione),⁵³ and to the alternative “models” to poverty developed in India (which for the last several years has had the highest number of vocations in the entire Catholic world) as exemplified by Mother Teresa’s “apolitical,” “integral and charitable” approach to the dying.⁵⁴

Increasingly, it is the Euro-Latin Alliance that is appropriating Pope John Paul II as the pilot of their project—and with his apparently, enthusiastic support. One of a series of conferences held around the world to “explicate” the Pope’s thinking and theology was convened in Rio de Janeiro in October 1984. Theologians from several countries and from the Vatican took part, as did a select group of local Catholic clergy and laymen. Presided over by Cardinal Sales, the conference was apparently intended to confer upon him and his archdiocese a place of pre-eminence in “interpreting” the Holy Father’s thought and theology within Brazil.⁵⁵

One last source of strength is worth mentioning: the “conservative restoration” resides squarely within the hierarchical structure of the Brazilian Church at the very moment, as Perani has noted, that the episcopacy is in full expansion and repossession of those tasks once reserved for clergy and laity. Unlike previous conservative movements within Brazilian Catholicism (such as the Society for Tradition, Family and Property or the intellectual grouping headed by the late writer Gustavo Corção and journalist Leonildo Tabosa Pessôa, who briefly edited *Hora Presente* during the height of repression),⁵⁶ the “conservative restoration” cannot be easily dismissed as can a primarily lay movement (as was indeed the fate of TFP and HP in the seventies or specialized Catholic Action in the sixties).

But if this “conservative restoration” is only at the beginning of a clearly uncertain future, its recent past alone would require us to examine it with care. Its historical place is in the Euro-Latin Alliance, more particularly among the cadres of Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, today the Cardinal Archbishop of Medellín. Its historical task has been to dismantle the hegemony of the People’s Church. To that task, it has assiduously architected “the theory of the Two Churches,” the one in communion with Rome and the other, the People’s Church, a potential danger to orthodoxy, truth, and piety.

The leading exponent of the theory is the recently consecrated bishop, the Brazilian Franciscan, Frei Boaventura Kloppenburg. Former editor of the respected quarterly *Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira*, former apologist of Catholicism against spiritism, Afro-Brazilian sects and Pentecostalism, former advocate of ecumenism after Vatican Council II, former official of CELAM

under Lopez Trujillo and editor of CELAM's monthly, *Medellín*, Frei Boaventura is also the former professor of his younger confrère, Frei Leonardo Boff.

Kloppenburg's attacks on the People's Church date back to 1971 and 1972, the most vicious to 1977 (entitled in Spanish *Iglesia Popular*, in which he "confirmed" for the dictatorial regimes of the day that there are "Marxists" and "subversives" among the clergy).⁵⁷ His attacks on his disciple began in Brazil in 1982 shortly after his return from CELAM and his elevation to the episcopacy. They were expanded in 1983 with a Brazilian edition of his 1977 work, *Igreja Popular*, and continued through 1984 when, in September, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (the former Holy Office or Inquisition) summoned Frei Boff to Rome.⁵⁸

Space does not permit a lengthy analysis of the theological issues in dispute.⁵⁹ In fact, what was utterly surprising about the initial charges of the Congregation contained in the so-called "Ratzinger Document" of August 1984 was the lack of reference to either the theologians or the titles of their texts that had given such offense. Only with the subsequent Vatican clarification in March 1985 was the public to understand that neither Frei Boff's ecclesiology nor Liberation Theology stands condemned.⁶⁰

Then what is this controversy all about?

Two highly speculative assumptions must here be interjected. Let us assume that the People's Church's "calculated judgment" at Puebla and after the papal visit to Brazil—that progressives could constitute the "party of the Pope"—has simply ceased to prevail. No longer is the Pope, at that time hardly in office a year, to be contemplated as allied with a faction or party potentially at odds with the Curia. To the contrary, he must now be viewed as one with the Curia, if we mean by "Curia" the far larger, new Euro-Latin Alliance that has been restructuring itself within world Catholicism since the closing of Vatican Council II in 1965. For the moment, let us leave the reasons—historical, philosophical, and of political actuality—in abeyance.

But let us make the second assumption: that somewhere at the highest levels of Vatican government—as befits the world's oldest, most continuous transnational society—in the Papacy itself, but not in isolation from world events and key churchmen throughout that world, a fundamental policy decision was made about the shape of John Paul II's papacy.

Precisely what that decision or set of decisions encompasses lies beyond the detailed understanding of anyone not privy to them. But without a doubt, the reaffirmation of papal authority in all matters and on all levels was, in my opinion, central to the shape of things to come: papal centralism is now both an end and a means to all other policies. In contrast to the ambivalence of his next-to-last predecessor, Paul VI, this Pope does not vacillate. Nor does he see theology as a field of inquiry free to take on debates, invent new relationships, and (least of all) submit them to popular approval. Nor does he acquiesce, as did Paul VI, in a kind of Catholic "polycentrism," a policy by which national churches (or regional ones, as is the case in Latin

America or Africa) take on qualities and autonomy of their own. Finally, whatever the long term goals of this new papacy are, they will clearly be achieved with new forces, new cadres, new directions.

To accept the above is to give an order to what otherwise appear to be haphazard and inexplicable incidents.

Thus the rebuke to Leonardo Boff stands in a succession of rebukes—to Hans Küng and Edward Schillebeeckx and many others. That rebuke declares that theology is no longer speculative, while it is the Pope alone who will mark the time of Liberation Theology.

To intervene in the naming of reactionary bishops to the progressive Dutch Church, to detain under Roman house arrest the “witch-doctor” Bishop of Lusaka (Zambia), to pit the “conservative restoration” against the People’s Church in Brazil (or in Nicaragua), to withdraw support from Solidarity in favor of a Vatican-sponsored agricultural bank in Poland, all these are consecutive affirmations of the new centralism that the Papacy is eagerly restoring.

Finally, to admonish the Jesuits, historically the “Pope’s Shock Troops” since the sixteenth century, to elevate Opus Dei to an unassailable “personal prelacy,” to exalt Mother Teresa as the exemplary servant of the poor and Italy’s Communione and Liberazione as the face of world youth, and finally to invoke a mythic Christian Europe bound by Marian shrines from the Urals to Hadrian’s Wall, are part and parcel of the new forces, cadres, and directions now emerging (with no preordained guarantee, or course, that they will meet their goals).

And speaking of goals, what are the Vatican’s for Latin America where at the end of this century three in every five Catholics in the world will reside? And for Brazil, where the People’s Church—still a vital, living force of countless believing militants—has evidently and irreversibly come into conflict with this Papacy’s “grand design”?

Here I recall that unnamed analyst who earlier in this text denied that a Papal visit could change the Church of Brazil or that transnational conservative cadres could crush the intimate ties of the lower classes to the resourceful, even if besieged, hegemonic cadres of the People’s Church.

Caution! Anything is possible. Especially with the major shift now underway within the Papacy. In the case of Brazil, a key determinant in resisting this shift, which would silence not only the People’s Church but also their socialist ideal for Brazilian society as a whole, is—as this essay suggests—the *comunidades eclesiais de base*. Only in probing their real strength, can the People’s Church really measure the chances of survival.

Endnotes

This paper grew out of an oral presentation I prepared for the Conference on "The New Catholic Church in Latin America," convened by the Kellogg Institute. Two years later, after further fieldwork, it seemed at last opportune, or actually necessary, to alert wider audiences to my concern about the Vatican offensive, by then in full course, against the progressive elements in the Brazilian Catholic Church.

This text alone, written in March and revised in September 1985 after consultation with Brazilian colleagues, should be considered the complete and definitive edition of my views. Excerpts have appeared in Portuguese translation, and an English-language version (containing numerous additions and deletions) will appear in December 1988 as "The 'People's Church,' the Vatican, and *Abertura*" in *Democratizing Brazil: Problems of Transition and Consolidation*, edited by Alfred Stepan (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

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1 One of the more creative theoretical works is Vanilda Paiva, "A Igreja Moderna no Brasil," *Igreja e Questão Agrária*, Vanilda Paiva (ed.), Seminários Especiais-Centro João XXIII de Investigação e Ação Social (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1985; originally written in 1983), pp. 52-67. The most empirically comprehensive study of the Church during the last decade is Scott Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), parts of which have appeared in the journals *Síntese* and *Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira* (hereinafter cited as *REB*); his bibliography is indispensable. A useful (and sympathetic) account of the Church's role in recent politics is Maria Helena Moreira Alves, *Estado e Oposição no Brasil, 1964-1984*, (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1984).

A favorable view of the "progressive" Church is Helena Salem (ed.) "A Igreja dos Oprimidos," *Brasil Hoje* No. 3 (São Paulo: Editora Brasil Debates, 1981). The most hostile view of the same "progressive" Church is Plínio Correa da Oliveira et al., *As CEBS...Das Quais Muito Se Fala, Pouco Se Conhece—A TFP as descreve como são Comunidades Eclesiais de Base* (São Paulo: Editora Vera Cruz, n.d.; likely date of publication was 1982). Its bibliography, however, is impartial and extensive.

Two of the earliest critical views of the entire corpus of literature on the Church in Brazil are Roberto Romano, *Brasil: Igreja Contra Estado* (São Paulo: Kairos, 1979), and Vanilda Paiva, "Anotações para um estudo sobre populismo católico e educação popular," *Perspectivas e Dilemas de Educação Popular*, Vanilda Paiva (ed.) (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1984), pp. 227-266.

2 A conservative apologia for the military regime is TFP [Sociedade para a Defesa da Tradição, Família e Propriedade], *Méio Século da Epopéia Anticomunista* (São Paulo: Ed. Vera Cruz, 1980; 2nd edition). The charge that one conservative Catholic group went so far as to sanction torture is found in Charles Antoine, *O Integralismo Brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Civilização Brasileira, 1980; the original French edition was published earlier).

- 3 For an account of this period, see Thomas Bruneau, *O Catolicismo brasileiro em época de transição* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1974). The English version is entitled *The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974).
- 4 I first heard this viewpoint expressed in a talk given by Alfred Stepan at a graduate seminar on the history and politics of Brazil, held at Columbia University on 28 February 1985; it was subsequently published in *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). Also see Ralph Della Cava, "The Military, the Opposition, and the United States: Three Forces Shaping the Future of Brazil," *The Brasilians* (New York), April-May-June 1978; also published in a shorter version as "Democratic Stirrings," *Journal of Current Social Issues* (Summer 1978), pp. 22-28. A Portuguese version appeared in the *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro) in a March or April 1978 Sunday supplement.
- 5 Two English-language accounts of this episode are "Brazil: The Sealed Coffin," *New York Review of Books*, XXII: 19 (27 November 1975), p. 15; and Ralph Della Cava, "Brazil: The Struggle for Human Rights," *Commonweal*, CII: 20 (19 December 1975), pp. 623-626.
- 6 Archdiocese of São Paulo, Peace and Justice Commission, *São Paulo: Growth and Poverty* (London: Bowerdan Press, 1978); originally published as *São Paulo 1975: Crescimento e Pobreza* (São Paulo: Loyola, 1976).
- 7 There is no study of the demise of specialized Catholic Action nor of the "trial and error" catechetics of the period as a whole. The *cursilho* movement was especially "successful" during the period as were local youth movements, especially in the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro.
- 8 On the initial primacy of CEBs in the Northeast, see Affonso Gregory (ed.), *Comunidades Eclesiais de Base* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1973), pp. 46-96, esp. p. 49. The best succinct overview of the CEBs is Cândido Procópio Ferreira do Camargo, B. Muniz and A.F. de Oliveira Pierucci, "Comunidades Eclesiais de Base," in *São Paulo: O Povo em Movimento*, P. Singer and V. Caldeira Brant (eds.) (Petrópolis: Vozes/CEBRAP, 1980), pp. 59-81. The most recent comprehensive treatment is Marcello de Azevedo, S.J., *Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil: The Challenge of a New Way of Being Church* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1987).
- 9 On the Two-Year Plans, see Thomas Bruneau, *The Church in Brazil—The Politics of Religion* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 91; especially useful is Chapter 5, "Current Church Responses and Strategies."
- 10 There is an extensive literature, but the critical Catholic "revision" is partly published in "Catolicismo Popular," the special issue devoted to the subject of *REB* 36: 141 (March 1976); an initial attempt to take stock of the question is Ruben César Fernandes, "'Religiões Populares,' Uma Visão Parcial da Literatura Recente," *BIB (Boletim Informativo e Bibliográfico de Ciências Sociais*, 18 (1984), pp. 3-26.
- 11 The notion of a "process" is found in C. Procópio Ferreira do Camargo et al.'s article on the CEBs cited in n. 8.

- 12 The phrase “People’s Church” is borrowed directly from the title of Cândido Procópio Ferreira do Camargo’s “A Igreja do Povo,” *Novos Estudos-CEBRAP*, I: 2 (April 1982), pp. 49-53. The author *may* have purposely used this phrase in contradistinction to “Popular Church” (*igreja popular*), a term that since about 1982 is largely employed by critics of the progressive Church. Consequently, “People’s Church” struck me as a politically neutral expression, which nonetheless conserved the quintessential outlook of the progressives and so is the preferred usage here.
- On the emergent hegemony of the progressives, see the largely schematic work of Luís Gonzaga de Souza Lima, *Evolução Política dos Católicos e da Igreja no Brasil* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1979) and the recent (and first) overview by Scott Mainwaring, “The Catholic Left, 1958-1964,” Chapter 5 of *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985* cited in n. 1. Monograph sources include Emanuel de Kadet, *Catholic Radicals in Brazil* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) and Luís Alberto Gomes de Souza, *A JUC: Os Estudantes Católicos a Política* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Civilização Brasileira, 1984) and Scott Mainwaring, “A JOC e o surgimento da Igreja na base,” *REB*, 43: 169 (March 1983), pp. 29-92.
- 13 The concept of a transnational cadre remains to be elucidated and empirically anchored. Obviously, religious orders, congregations and some lay institutes—terms for relatively autonomous, usually self-governing groupings within the Church—have almost always been “transnational” and international. But the sense of “transnational cadre” in this essay refers to no nominal grouping per se. Such cadres, as I employ the term, constitute an “informal” network of like-minded activists; this less restrictive sense is adumbrated to some extent in successive paragraphs of the text.
- 14 Other important groupings might have been included such as CEHILA (Comissão de Estudos de História da Igreja na América Latina), ITER (Instituto de Teologia, Recife), and the recently established IBASE (Instituto Brasileiro de Análise Social e Estatística).
- 15 On the CNBB, see Paulo. J. Krischke’s forthcoming “Igreja e Populismo: A Crise da Democracia no Brasil,” originally submitted as a doctoral dissertation in political science at York University (Canada), September 1981.
- 16 See *Estudos da CNBB*, No. 2, “Igreja e política: subsídios teológicos,” 4.^a ed., 1980 (orig. 1974) and No. 24, “Subsídios para uma política social,” 4.^a ed., 1982 (orig. 1979); also *Documentos da CNBB*, No. 8, “Comunicação pastoral ao povo de Deus,” 3.^a ed., 1977 (orig. 1976) and No. 10, “Exigências cristãs de uma ordem política,” 9.^a ed., 1981 (orig. 1977).
- The CNBB assemblies are extensively reported in the daily press of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro; official texts can be found in the monthly *SEDOC*, an information bulletin published by Editora Vozes.
- 17 A brief sketch of these three institutions can be found in Joao Batista Libânia, *O Quo É Pastoral?* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1982), esp. pp. 96-120. On CIMI, see Fany Ricardo, “O Conselho Indigenista Missionário, 1965-1979,” *Cadernos do ISER*, No. 10 (Rio de Janeiro: ISER, 1980); on the National Encounters (*encontros*) of CEBs, consult the appropriate issues of *SEDOC*; on the CPT, see the official publication of the CNBB, *Pastoral da Terra* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1976) and a follow-up, *Pastoral da Terra: Posse e Conflito, Estudos da CNBB* No. 13 (São Paulo: Paulinas, 1976).
- 18 The CIMI and CPT have recorded these events in their own publications, respectively *Porantim* (Brasília) and *Boletim* (Goiânia); the CEBs have no central office, but their several

Encounters are documented in *SEDOC*. A dated but now classic account of struggles along the Indian frontiers—with reference to the role of several CIMI activists such as the bishop of Araguaia, Dom Pedro Casaldáliga—is Shelton Davis, *Victims of the Miracle: Development and the Indians of Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

- 19 Three starting points to this debate are: Luiz Gonzaga de Souza Lima, *Evolução...* (cited in n. 12); Souza Lima's important article, "Comunidades Eclesiais de Base," *Revista de Cultura Vozes*, 74: 5 (June-July 1980), pp. 61-82; and Frei Betto, *O Que É Comunidade Eclesial de Base* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1981), 2.^a ed.
- 20 This is the conclusion of Vinícius Caldeira Brant, "Da resistência aos movimentos sociais: a emergência das classes populares em São Paulo," in *São Paulo: O Povo em Movimento* (cited in n. 8), pp. 9-28, esp. p. 14.
- 21 Letter from Paulo J. Krischke, São Paulo, February 25 1985: "inicia-se agora um estudo sobre a influência de setores ligados à igreja nos movimentos sociais urbanos de São Paulo na última década"; the project is centered in CEDEC, São Paulo.
- 22 Souza Lima, "Comunidades..." (cited in n. 19).
- 23 Leonardo Boff, *Igreja—Carisma e Poder* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1977); this contains a number of previously published articles.
- 24 The "embrace" of democracy as a permanent value of politics is expressed in a number of works which appeared after 1979: Carlos Nelson Coutinho, "A democracia como valor universal," *Encontros com a Civilização Brasileira*, 9 (November 1979), pp. 33-48; "Democracia: Metas e Caminhos," *Cadernos de CEAS* (Salvador; hereafter cited as *CEAS*), 79 (May-June 1982), pp. 8-13; and Francisco Weffort, *Porque Democracia?* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1984).
- 25 The regime's motives are exposed in Joviniano de Carvalho Neto, "Os Partidos Políticos no Brasil: de 1945 aos nossos dias," *CEAS*, 73 (May-June 1981), pp. 7-20; also see M.H. Moreira Alves, *Estado...* (cited in n. 1), pp. 269-288.
- 26 See n. 4.
- 27 Albert Hirschman talks about "voting with your feet." On the strikes, see the various writings of José Alvaro Moisés and on elections, those of Bolívar Lamounier. On the "direct elections, now!" campaign, see *Tempo e Presença*, 191 (April and May, 1984), (São Paulo: CEDI), entitled "Igrejas, sindicatos, universidades e as eleições diretas," pp. 4-8.
- 28 The "swing to the right" within the Latin American Church has been no secret. It is documented in, among other sources, Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the People* (New York: Penguin, 1982, orig., 1979); another side of the question is presented in José Comblin, "A América Latina e o presente debate teológico entre neo-conservadores e liberais," *REB*, 41-164 (December, 1981), pp. 790-815.
- 29 Enrique Dussel, "A Igreja Latino-Americana na Atual Conjuntura (1972-1980)" in *A Igreja que surge da Base*, Sergio Torres et al. (eds.), (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1982), p. 160.

- 30 My account rests on Penny Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," pp. 3-27, esp. p. 23, and Moisés Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," pp. 28-43, both in John Eagleson and Philip Scharper (eds.), *Puebla and Beyond* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979). Another useful American source on Puebla prior to its originally scheduled dates, 12-28 October 1978, is the entire issue of *Cross Currents*, 28: 1 (Spring 1978).
- Position papers of the conservative churchmen are contained in a very early work, *Teología de la Liberación* (Burgos: Ed. Aldecoa, 1974); this includes the revealing analysis of Mons. Lopez-Trujillo, "Panorama de la Liberación en América Latina," pp. 295-326, which argues first that liberation is "integral and universal" and, second, that it is a gratuitous gift of God; he then concludes: "Una liberación que, si bien tiene incidencias en lo social-económico-político-cultural, no se agota en ellas, y adquiere plena significación humana y cristiana a partir de la liberación en Cristo," p. 326. This has been the basic (rather reasonably formulated) position of the otherwise aggressive campaign against the Liberation Theologians.
- 31 See Frei Betto, *Diário de Puebla* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Civilização Brasileira, 1979) and the popular account in cartoons, *Puebla para o Povo* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1979).
- 32 M. Sandoval, *Puebla...* (cited in n. 30), pp. 32-34.
- 33 "Scherer critica o livo de Boff," *Estado de São Paulo* (hereinafter cited as *ESP*), August 29 1972; "Núncio ignora punição de teólogo," *ESP* December 23 1979; "O teólogo brasileiro se defende e avisa: se fôr punido...", *Jornal da Tarde* (São Paulo) December 24 1979; "CNBB nega debate sobre Boff," *ESP* December 29 1979; "No Vaticano, o 'dossié Boff,'" *ESP* January 20 1980.
- 34 Interviews conducted in São Paulo, July-August 1981.
- 35 Luís Alberto Gomes de Souza, "E agora, depois da visita?," *O Povo e o Papa*, A.L. Rocha e L.A. Gomes de Souza (eds.) (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Civilização Brasileira, 1980), pp. 210-215; an earlier and slightly different version appeared as "Balanço da Visita do Papa," *REB*, 40: 159 (September 1980). Other accounts of the papal visit to Brazil are Joviniano Soares de C. Neto, "O Papa no Brasil: Impacto e sentido de uma viagem," *CEAS*, 69 (September-October 1980), pp. 9-24; and Rubem César Fernandes (ed.), "O Papa no Brasil, Aspectos Sociológicos," *Cadernos do ISER*, 11 (Rio de Janeiro: ISER, 1980).
- 36 José Oscar Beozzo, "Religiosidade Popular," *REB*, 42: 168 (December 1982), pp. 744-758.
- 37 Gomes de Souza, "E agora..." (cited in n. 35), p. 213.
- 38 See "A Carta de João Paulo II aos bispos do Brasil" (10 December 1980) in *REB*, 41: 161 (March 1981), pp. 152-157, esp., pp. 153-154.
- 39 Luís Alberto Gomez de Souza, "A política partidária nas CEBs," *REB*, 41: 164 (December 1981), pp. 708-727; a substantially similar version also appeared in *CEAS*, 76 (November-December 1981), pp. 36-49.
- 40 Gomes de Souza, "A política..." (cited in n. 39), p. 724.
- 41 *Ibid.*, pp. 724-727.

- 42 Frei Betto, *O Que É Comunidade Eclesial de Base* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1981), 2.^a ed. An earlier effort to examine the relationship between the CEBs and politics is Clodovis Boff, *Comunidade Eclesial, Comunidade Política: Ensaios de Eclesiologia Política* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1978), in which some essays date to the mid-seventies and thus constitute an important document for a more detailed historical examination of the evolving political perceptions of the CEBs' Church architects.
- 43 The primer was published as Arquidiocese de São Paulo, *Fé e Política: Povo de Deus e Participação Política* (São Paulo: Comissão Arquidiocesana de Pastoral dos Direitos Humanos e Marginalizados de São Paulo, 1981); the relevant slides-sketches are number 23 and 24 (p. 17).
The primer's publication caused an uproar that was recorded in the daily press; see "CEBs de São Paulo ensinam ao povo como deve votar," *Jornal do Brasil*, August 2 1981 and "Igreja lança curso de política," *Folha de São Paulo*, August 2 1981. Even earlier, criticism of the Archdiocese's use of graphics to instruct the popular classes on current political issues was widespread; symptomatic was "Assim atua a 'ala progressista' da Igreja," *ESP*, September 27 1981.
- 44 Joviniano de Carvalho Neto, "Os Partidos Políticos..." (cited in n. 25); pertinent is the author's observation: "O PT surgiu e cresce como uma perigosa aliança de operário e Igreja de base, uma rebelião apoiada pela igreja" (p. 19). This is but one of many affirmations of the alliance, frequent assertions to the contrary notwithstanding.
Interpretations of PT's electoral performance differ radically; two contradictory views are José Oscar Beozzo and Apolo Meringer Lisboa, "PT: Avaliação Eleitoral," parts I and II, *Revista de Cultura Vozes*, 77: 4 (May 1983), pp. 18-36.
- 45 Cláudio Perani, "Comunidade Eclesial de Base e Movimento Popular," *CEAS*, 75 (September-October 1981), pp. 25-33; also see Roseli Elias, "CEB's: movimento de base da Igreja," *CEAS*, 69 (September-October 1980).
- 46 Cláudio Perani, "Pastoral Popular: Poder ou Serviço?," *CEAS*, 82 (November-December 1982), pp. 7-19.
- 47 Cláudio Perani, "A Igreja no Nordeste—Breves Notas Histórico-Críticas," *CEAS*, 94 (November-December 1984), pp. 53-73.
- 48 See "Testemunho dos bispos em apoio das CEB's," issued on the occasion of the Fifth Inter-Ecclesial Encounter held in Canindé, Ceará, in July 1983, in *REB*, 43: 171 (September 1983), pp. 595-597.
- 49 Luís Gonzaga de Souza Lima, "A visita do Papa: a versão das elites e as classes populares," in *O Povo e o Papa* (cited in n. 35), pp. 11-14.
- 50 "A moda do povo: católicos veneram santos como no passado," *Veja* (March 13 1985), p. 75.
- 51 "Vatican Asks Bishops' Advice on Countering Sects," *New York Times*, March 17 1985, and "Atuação dos novos missionários preocupam a Igreja," *Folha de São Paulo*, March 3 1985; the latter refers to a CNBB study of the situation which was recently dispatched to the Secretariat of Christian Unity.

- 52 Perani, "A Igreja..." (cited in n. 47).
- 53 José Comblin, "Os 'Movimentos' e a Pastoral Latino-Americana," *REB*, 43: 170 (June 1983).
- 54 Sometime between 1981 and October 1984, Mother Teresa was invited to the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro. In some quarters the prospect of her establishing a house there was perceived as a challenge—in practice and conception—to the CEBs and their approach to the "oppressed."
- 55 This was held in Rio de Janeiro in October 1984.
- 56 On *Hora Presente*, see Antoine, *O Integrismo...* (cited in n. 2) and the unpublished paper by Samyra B.S. Vieira, "Integrismo Católico X Conservadorismo Político: Os intelectuais da revista *Hora Presente*" (mimeo, report on postgraduate research, Universidade de São Paulo, June 1983); on the TFP, see Thomas Niehaus and Brady Tyson, "The Case of the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP)," *Religion in Latin American Life and Literature*, L.C. Brown and W.F. Cooper (eds.) (Waco, Texas: Markham Press Fund, 1980).
- 57 There are the charges which Leonardo Boff brought against his former professor in "Igreja: Carisma e Poder—uma justificação contra falsas leituras," *REB*, 42: 166 (June 1982), pp. 227-260.
- 58 One of the important polemics arose after the publication of L. Boff's *Igreja: Carisma e Poder* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1981). See Boaventura Kloppenburg, "A Eclesiologia militante de Leonardo Boff," *Jornal do Brasil*, June 27 1982 and Boff's reply, "Segurança eclesial e a eclesiologia militante," *Jornal do Brasil*, July 25 1982.
- 59 I made a partial attempt in an interview entitled "Liberation Theology on Trial," *Abigarrada* (Queens College), 6: 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1984); a Portuguese translation by Paulo Henrique Brito was published as "A Teologia da Libertação em julgamento," *Comunicações do ISER*, 4: 14 (May 1985), 62-66; earlier Brazilian efforts can be found in *Comunicações do ISER*, 3: 11 (November 1984).
- 60 "Vatican and Friar: Not a Judgment on New Theology," *New York Times*, March 22 1985. The "Ratzinger Document" is formally titled "Instruction on Certain Aspects of Liberation Theology"; it was released to the public by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in August 1984.