

THE MANY SHADES OF THE RIGHTIST SPECTRUM. NOTES ON FASCISM AND THE RIGHT IN ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, AND CHILE AFTER 1945 *

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Abstract. The author analyzes the three texts above, highlighting the important contributions that these studies brought to the understanding of certain far-right movements in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, especially in the period after 1945.

Keywords: Fascism; Far Right; Latin America.

AS DIFERENTES TONALIDADES DA EXTREMA DIREITA. NOTAS SOBRE O FASCISMO E A DIREITA NA ARGENTINA, BRASIL E CHILE APÓS 1945

Resumo. O autor analisa os três textos acima, destacando as importantes contribuições que estes estudos trouxeram para entender alguns movimentos de extrema direita na Argentina, Brasil e Chile, sobretudo no período pós-1945.

Palavras-chave: Fascismo; Extrema direita; América Latina.

LOS DIFERENTES MATICES DE LA EXTREMA DERECHA. NOTAS SOBRE EL FASCISMO Y LA DERECHA EN ARGENTINA, BRASIL Y CHILE DESPUÉS DE 1945

Resumen. El autor analiza los tres textos anteriores, destacando las importantes contribuciones que trajeron estos estudios para entender algunos movimientos de extrema derecha en Argentina, Brasil y Chile, principalmente, después de 1945.

Palabras clave: Fascismo; Extrema derecha; América Latina.

It is highly appropriate that this panel, "Shades of the Right after 1945," has been classified as one of eight "Mellon-LASA Seminars" for the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Conference in Rio de

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Janeiro. The three excellent studies presented in this session truly conform to the classification's requirement to address cross-regional comparisons that shed light on important aspects of the human condition in Latin America. The works on post-1945 Fascist and rightist groups by Sandra McGee Deutsch on Chile, João Fabio Bertonha on Brazil, and Daniel Lvovich on Argentina open exciting comparative perspectives among those cases and in relation to broader historical and ideological frameworks, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the tumultuous history of postwar Latin America.

In the past, debates on the history of ideas in Latin America were frequently framed within essentialist boundaries, with the goal of distinguishing "national" from "foreign" ideologies. Such discussions, in large part motivated by political and cultural projects, assumed a particular urgency in Latin America after the Second World War and were fostered by the rise and fall of populist regimes, the Cuban revolution, the emergence of leftist guerrilla groups, and the military dictatorships of the 1960s-1980s. In the scholarly field, those attempts informed, for example, dependistas' analysis of the historical inception of liberalism in Latin America. In turn, this situation refers to a recurrent problem in the field of history of ideas in Latin America that Elias Palti notes in his thoughtful analysis of the debates surrounding Roberto Schwarz's influential 1973 paper, "As idéias fora do lugar:" the "heuristic strictures of the scheme of 'models' and 'deviations' as a grid for understanding the erratic evolution of ideas in Latin America" (PALTI, 2006, p. 166).

The three studies in the panel avoid this trap by combining a solid knowledge of wider theoretical frameworks on Fascism and the historiographical debates on their particular objects of study with in-depth and historically-grounded analysis. This approach makes complete sense as it is applied not to the study of an abstract ideology – Fascism – but to groups who were not only interested in theoretical discussions but also, and mainly, in political action. Thus, the three essays use theoretical insights on Fascism to explore its influence and characteristics in specific actors and particular historical contexts. In this line McGee Deutsch applies Stanley Payne's and Roger Griffin's definitions of Fascism as well as her own to explore the trajectory of Chilean Nacistas and other extreme rightist groups between 1945 and 1985. Lvovich uses Griffin's and Robert Paxton's works to conceptualize the ultra-rightist, category-challenging group Tacuara in Argentina in 1958-1966. More focused on the quest for achieving power by former Integralistas and members of the

Partido de Representação Popular between 1945 and 1985, Bertonha's analysis nevertheless speaks to the theoretical issues raised by the other two papers, such as the desired political order by Integralistas and perrepistas and their use of violence, influence, or electoral politics to achieve power.

From the confrontation of theories on Fascism with these case studies, what emerges is not, as Palti cautions, "deviations" from European "models." Rather, it becomes clear the complex evolution of groups who, while embodying certain Fascist characteristics, at the same time responded to their peculiar national contexts. This perspective helps McGee Deutsch trace the continuities and differences between pre-1945 Nacista ideology and followers, with a variety of organizations and individuals such as the Estanquero group, the Partido Agrario Laborista (PAL), the Partido Nacional, Jaime Guzmán, and Augusto Pinochet's regime. In the case of Argentina, Lvovich shows how Tacuara could not escape the profound divisions created by Peronism in Argentine society and politics. This context led to numerous secessions of splinter groups from Tacuara, and a filiation with Fascism that did not preclude other political and ideological influences common to Peronism and leftist and rightist groups. In the case of Brazil, Bertonha convincingly demonstrates that the strategies to achieve power by Integralistas and the PRP -- which oscillated between insurrection, electoral participation, and influence on non-elected governments like Getulio Vargas' Estado Novo and the 1964 military regime -- closely followed the changing environment of Brazilian politics.

Interestingly, this shared approach to the study of rightist and Fascist groups is related to the recent scholarship on Latin American liberalism. Florencia Mallon's seminal book on popular liberalism in Mexico (MALLON, 1995) paved the way for a growing body of literature that modified the study of liberalism, traditionally understood as an upper-class, conservative, and exclusionary ideology. While accepting some of those tenets, the new scholarship nevertheless focused on the adoption, adaptation, and transformation of liberalism by lower class groups in their own terms and for their own purposes². Influenced by social history and gender, subaltern, and post-colonial studies, those works provide a social history of the liberal ideology, further decentering

² Among the extensive list of works on popular liberalism in Latin America, see Thompson and LaFrance (1999); Larson (2004); Green (2003); Sanders (2004); Chernick and Jimenez (1993).

liberalism from their international and national scope to regional, communal, ethnic and gender levels.

The three studies under consideration follow the same path, as they deconstruct the analysis of postwar neo-Fascism and rightist groups from a Eurocentric perspective to specific national contexts. Very much like the new works on liberalism, they also suggest that the most fruitful approach to study any particular ideology is not through rigid conceptual frameworks but, rather, through a flexible understanding of its actual historical and social inceptions. Ernesto Lacalu had already pointed out this direction in his classical study on populism in Latin America, in which he theorized on the elusive topic of populist ideology and the fact that the most diverse political groups could appeal to similar symbols and elements. For Laclau, the answer was that populism did not have a consistent, rigid, and clearly organized discourse and ideology but was composed of different elements that acquire their true meaning and sense in relation to the whole and to class discourses (LACLAU, 1977). From different perspectives, Eric Hobsbawm, Partha Chatterjee, and Clifford Geertz, among others, additionally theorized on the creation of traditions, ideologies, and culture through a complex process of selection and articulation (HOBBSAWM, 1983; CHATTERJEE, 1993; GEERTZ, 1968).

In the three cases analyzed by Bertonha, Lvovich, and McGee Deutsch, there is no question that there were central Fascist and rightist elements, providing a more solid ideological core to the heirs of Nacismo, Integralismo, and Argentine nationalism than to Laclau's populism. At the same time, they clearly incorporated new ideas and tactics that defied easy conceptualization but that acquired sense within their broader political and historical context. Such is the case, for the example, of the reluctant support for democracy and electoral politics by former Integralistas and Nacistas in Brazil and Chile. Laclau's argument on class finds confirmation in the acceptance of neoliberal economics by the Chilean extreme rightist and Fascist groups detailed by McGee Deutsch, whose vocal nationalism eventually saw no conflict with their support for opening the Chilean economy to world capitalism. Lvovich also provides another example of this complexity in the case of Tacuara, whose multiple ideological filiations from the right, the left, and Peronism could only find articulation and be explained in the violent political landscape that followed Perón's overthrow in 1955.

In another point of contact with the theoretical works on popular liberalism mentioned above, the papers open interesting questions for the social history of Fascist and rightist groups in Chile, Brazil, and Argentina, although the different focus of each paper results in varying levels of analysis. The wider scope of McGee Deutsch's study is reflected not only in her broader theoretical framework of analysis and in the number of cases considered, but also by the inclusion of gender as an analytical category. Building upon her previous works on women and right-wing and anti-Fascist groups in Latin America (DEUTSCH, 2001), she convincingly shows that women and gender were at the heart of the ideology of Chilean Nacistas and their ideological heirs. The Partido Nacional and Poder Femenino mobilized women against Salvador Allende's government along clearly conservative, anti-leftist, and anti-liberal lines, an action later continued by Pinochet's regime. It would be interesting to know whether women and gender issues played a similar role in the groups studied by Lvovich and Bertonha, adding another dimension to the geographical and social analysis of their groups and to international comparative perspectives. Did Tacuara's extreme ideology and violent actions involve the organization of women in any form? The same question applies to Bertonha's description of Integralistas' political strategies and attempts at mobilization after 1945. By addressing these questions, the works on Argentina and Brazil could contribute to a fuller understanding of the relationship between gender, women, and right-wing ideologies in the Southern Cone, a topic already addressed by the scholarship on the patriarchal nature and discourse of the military dictatorships.

Besides the fruitful combination of broader theoretical frameworks and detailed case studies, these works also pay attention to another angle of transnational, cross-regional influences: the direct and actual relationship of foreign rightist individuals and ideologies with the groups analyzed by each study. Lvovich shows that Tacuara's admiration for Primo de Rivera, the Spanish Falange, and their "nacional sindicalista" model was also strengthened by the presence and influence of former *Action Française's* member, Jacques de Mahieu, in Argentina. In Brazil, and beyond changing political tactics, Salgado's deep and long fascination with Franco's and Salazar's regimes was certainly influenced by his exile in Portugal in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In the case of Chile, the PAL's alignment with the US in the Cold War also underlines the relationship between Guzmán, the Universidad Católica, and the University of Chicago.

These contacts suggest the existence of broader international networks in which Argentine, Brazilian, and Chilean rightists participated. While the connection of Chilean rightists to the University of Chicago's neoliberal economists has been explored, the analysis of those potential networks merits more attention and research. For example, a developed yet uneven body of scholarship has paid attention to the cultural institutions that the United States created as part of its Cold War strategy. The main institution was the Congress for Cultural Freedom, founded in Berlin in 1950 and that created branches in different countries, journals in different languages, and funded international meetings and events.³ The Congress also established branches in different Latin American countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico and funded one Spanish-language journal for Latin America in Spain and several other such journals in Latin America. Through all these venues, the Congress provided an ideological, institutional, professional, and personal network for Latin American intellectuals aligned with the American foreign policy.⁴

Certainly, nothing of similar scale can be found for the case of Fascist and rightist groups in Latin America after 1945, given the differences between the rise of the United States as a global power and the international discredit of Fascism -- a development that, among other consequences, led former Nazis and Integralistas to publicly distance themselves from their past and most extreme positions that had become less palatable to the wider public. On the other hand, the Chilean case not only makes clear the degree of adaptation of Fascist political ideology with neoliberal economics; it also raises the issue of whether Fascists and rightists maintained any relationship beyond their respective countries and whether they participated in any sort of international network. For example, did the Franco and Salazar regimes establish any form of international institutions to promote their cause, and did Latin American intellectuals and politicians participate in them? In fact, the sinister collaboration of the military dictatorships of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, among others, in the Plan Cóndor in the 1970s, aimed at repressing and

³ On the broader history of the Congress, see Saunders (1999); Scot-Smith (2002); Berghann (2001); Coleman (1989).

⁴ While a full exploration of the Congress' activities in Latin America has not been carried out, for general overviews see Franco (2002); Gilman (2003). More detailed studies of specific publications and associations supported by the Congress are available in Mudrovic (1997); Vanden Berghe (1997); Cancelli (2008).

killing those considered dangerous subversives, suggest that those networks were possible and could indicate a broader framework in which to locate the particular national trajectories of Fascist and rightist groups in Latin America.

One interesting comparative theme raised by the studies under consideration is the economic ideas espoused by rightist groups in each country after 1945. In the postwar period, these groups had to not only devise new political strategies but also address a difficult economic situation characterized by the crisis of the populist model, stagnation, inflation, the mobilization of middle and lower classes, uneven industrialization, and the rising economic power of the United States and multinational corporations. In the case of Argentina, Lvovich uses Paxton's concept of the selectivity of Fascist "anti-capitalist rhetoric" to reveal the changes and continuities of rightist groups before and after 1945 as embodied by Tacuara. From this perspective, Tacuara's ideology combined old rightist and nationalist ideas -- such as anti-imperialism, economic nationalism, and social justice -- with the concept of a corporatist state as a guarantor of social peace and a selective criticism of capitalism in terms of liberal individualism and materialism. Although the latter elements can be also identified within the Peronist regime in 1946-1955, Tacuara's "nacional sindicalismo," based on state-controlled capitalism and a corporatist model derived from social Catholicism and de Mahieu's communitarian doctrines, clearly responded to the context of the mobilization of the Peronist working class that Daniel James thoroughly explored in his classic work (JAMES, 1988).

In the Chilean case, McGee Deutsch shows the diverse economic programs embraced by different rightist groups after 1945. Very much like Tacuara and the previous nationalist groups in Argentina, Nacistas had also embraced a selective criticism of capitalism that mixed private property with economic nationalism, state economic intervention, and a corporatist social model to reduce social conflict. Many of these ideas still influenced the rightist groups after 1945, but the situation seems to have been more complex. Indeed, the most striking feature is the degree of acceptance of private property, free markets, and classical economic liberalism among Chilean rightist groups and individuals, which McGee Deutsch traces in Von Mareés, Estanquero and PAL and which would culminate in the neoliberalism of Jaime Guzmán and Pinochet's regime. The conservative approach to Catholic doctrines and its mixture with free-market ideologies, radically different from Tacuara's economic

program, is particularly captured by Guzmán's ideas. In this sense, if Tacuara was responding to the reality of the mobilization of the Peronist working class, McGee Deutsch's analysis of the rise of Chilean "market Fascism" –using Paul Samuelson's characterization of Pinochet's economic and labor policies – was born out of the radicalization of the Christian Democracy and the rise of the left in Chile in the 1960s and 1970s.

Bertonha's study on Brazil, by contrast, focused as it is on strategies to reach power, does not directly address the issue of economic ideas, although he suggests some lines that open good comparative perspectives. For example, by making reference to the PRP's embracement of a "Christian conception of democracy," he highlights the influence of Catholic and corporatist doctrines as well as the rejection of a materialistic and individualist democracy that were also evident in Tacuara and Chilean rightists. Further analysis would shed light on the social and economic platforms that, in the context of the crisis of populism in Brazil and besides political ideas or tactical alliances with other forces, created the PRP's social base in southern Brazil and Espírito Santo and made it attractive to small farmers and sections of the middle class. It will also help locate more precisely the economic ideas of Brazilian rightist and Fascist groups regarding their Argentine and Chilean counterparts. For example, it is well known that unlike the brutal free-market ideology of the Chilean right and the Pinochet dictatorship, the Brazilian generals favored a developmentalist and industrial model presided over by the state, with the Argentine dictatorship of the 1970s somehow located between those positions – opening the country to the world economy but with the state retaining ownership of a broad range of companies, especially public utilities. Therefore, identifying the reaction of the PRP or other Brazilian rightist groups to those developments would significantly enhance the comparative understanding of the right in South America.

Another relevant comparative perspective among the three cases is suggested by Bertonha's organizing theme: Integralistas' and PRP's strategies to seize power. The comparison, which also shows the deep influence of the national context in each of the analyzed cases, leaves Argentina and Brazil as polar opposites and Chile in an intermediate place. Tacuara's ideological constructions, trajectory, and embracement of violence clearly reflect Argentina's post-1955 turbulent period. In an illegitimate political system based on the exclusion of Peronism that

would culminate in the military dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s, there were even fewer available options for legitimate political participation for groups like Tacuara. In this sense, the resort to violence and the attempt to mobilize the Peronist masses with a “nacional sindicalista” model show, in Lovich’s words, that “las posiciones frente al peronismo organizaban el campo político con mayor potencia que las tradicionales divisiones entre izquierdas y derechas.” Furthermore, Tacuara and its splinter groups, which variously drifted to the ultrarightist Guardia Restauradora Nacionalist, Peronist rightist union movement, Montonero’s Peronist left, and ERP’s revolutionary leftism mirrored the profound tensions that affected Argentina’s broader political dynamics.

In the case of Brazil, Bertonha’s analysis shows a different political landscape. Between 1946 and the early 1960s, Salgado and the Integralistas renounced insurrection and military coups as the strategy to gain power and actively participated in elections, revealing a relatively less fractured and violent political system. If in Argentina Tacuara’s positioning with respect to Peronism generated tensions and divisions, in the case of the Integralistas and the PRP those tensions were caused by decisions to “integrar ao sistema democrático (defendendo uma democracia orgânica) e o abandono de perspectivas issurreccionais,” as Bertonha explains regarding the PRP’s 1957 Congress. Even when Salgado and perrepistas collaborated in the 1964 coup, the eventual participation of former Integralistas like Admiral Hasselmann in some violent actions does not compare to Tacuara’s open violence. Indeed, the Brazilian tradition of political accommodation and negotiation is captured by the inclusion of Salgado and many PRP members in the party of the military government, Arena, after the military regime dissolved the PRP and the other political parties in 1965.

The Chilean case, as presented by McGee Deutsch, stands between Argentina and Brazil. Similar to Brazil, and reflecting the relatively solid bases of the Chilean constitutional democratic system between the 1930s and early 1970s, former Nacistas abandoned their insurrectional tactics after 1945. They became members of established parties – such as González von Marées’ move into the Liberal party--, created new parties such as the PAL in 1945, or united with other rightist parties in the Partido Nacional in 1966. While they rejected the use of violence until the 1960s, the country’s political polarization under Eduardo Frei’s and Salvador Allende’s administrations and the rise of the

left dramatically increased the appeal and mobilizing capacities of these rightist groups. Rightist groups in Chile thus achieved a broader social and political support when compared to the PRP in Brazil and Tacuara in Argentina. The closest Chilean version of Tacuara's open resort to violence would be Patria y Libertad -- the Fascist terrorist group that McGee Deutsch rightly notes that needs more study. On the other hand, it is undeniable that the right's actions contributed to the violent environment leading to Allende's fall and the installation of Pinochet's brutal regime.

Despite the different trajectories, which derived from their particular national contexts, a key similarity is that the rightist groups analyzed in these studies never actually reached power by themselves and that some of their ideas and projects could only find broader diffusion through other groups. In the case of Brazil, Bertonha shows that Salgado and the PRP failed to gather a large electoral base in 1946-1964. Even when they supported the military coup in 1964, they were eventually caught off guard by the dissolution of the political parties in 1965, and their degree of influence in the military regime was actually quite limited. For Argentina, Lvovich's analysis of Tacuara's divisions makes clear that its extreme ideas could only gain a larger audience through their assimilation to and combination with other rightist, leftist, and Peronist groups, a process in which the approach to Peronism, either in its rightist syndical or leftist guerrilla versions, played a major role. In the case of Chile, McGee Deutsch indicates that the Pinochet regime shared continuities with radical rightist and Fascist precedents in terms of ideas and mobilizing strategies. At the same time, she argues that it does not "fit the fascist label" in several aspects, such as its "lack of populist tone" and embracement of economic neoliberalism.

Thus, these cases suggest that Fascist or neo-Fascist parties and groups were actually quite weak as autonomous political forces, as they were not able to develop truly popular roots by themselves. On the other hand, the groups analyzed in these studies certainly contributed to the dissemination of rightist and Fascist ideas that can be identified in the Brazilian and Chilean military regime and in different extreme groups in Argentina -- and, eventually, in the Argentine military regimes of the 1960s and 1970s. In this sense, the panel's title, "Shades of Fascism," nicely captures the concept of radical right-wing groups whose Fascist influences and characteristics coexisted with others derived from their specific historical circumstances. In the end, as McGee Deutsch

perceptively argues in her conclusion, the debate on whether “Fascism” or groups that resembled it had any significance after 1945 has been largely centered in Europe and is, therefore, ultimately irrelevant for Latin America. What actually matters is that those groups played a major role in the political and ideological conflicts that shaped the contemporary histories of Brazil, Chile, and Argentina.

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