

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN STATE AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE BRAZIL (1942-1979)

Admar Mendes de Souza¹

Following a set of theoretical reflections (theological and politics), catholic sectors during the Brazilian military regime, assumed that the action politics was a way to overcome the social political problems of the country.

Such position provided a conflict between the State and the Catholic Church. In one side, the State, particularly the Military Regime of 1964, attempted to keep the order by limiting, at times, in a violent way, all forms of social plea and politics. On the other hand, some members of the Catholic Church did not accept the dissolution of the religious sphere in a resigned positioning in the face of the social political conditions.

Thus, my presentation, as a part of my doctorate project aims to study this tension found at or recorded on the documents produced for the Departamento Estadual de Ordem Política e Social de São Paulo (DEOPS/SP). These documents catch the political, social and religious perspectives of both institutions, the Church and the State.

The documented data results from the continuous practice of monitoring this repressive apparatus agency of the State ad considers that the dangerous sectors were within the Brazilian society. The mapping showed that this documentation enormously augmented the military blow of 1964².

As one of the subdivisions that compose this documented data is called the “Dossiers” Series³. A great mass of documents has been produced and stored since 1940 by the Private

¹ This work reflection is part of the my doctorate project in which I study the relationship between the Church and more specifically Church: the social movement of the Christianity and its representation by the DEOPS/SP - by the Archives of Sao Paulo State. Of release under the look of the DEOPS/SP.

The project is developed under the orientation of the Profa. Dra. Maria Aparecida de Aquino at the Department of History of the University of Sao Paulo supervises this project. (FAPESP), the Foundation of Support to the Research of the State of Sao Paulo provides the financial support of this PhD study.

² The necessity to understand this documentary typologies to become it accessible the public took to the creation of the project of Mapping and Systematization of Quantity DEOPS/SP - Series Dossiers (1940-1983). The project had the coordination of the Dra Teacher. Aparecida Maria de Aquino, of the Department of History of the USP and the financing of the FAPESP. More information and results of this research: **No Coração das trevas: o DEOPS/SP visto por dentro/** Maria Aparecida de Aquino et al. São Paulo: Arquivo do Estado, Imprensa Oficial, 2001.

³ Each folder/Dossiers possess an alphanumeric code of identification, being that the three elements that compose it form a set that, in turn, has one meaning (number-letter-number, for example: 10-A-5). The first element of the code is divided in five distinct sets of ten: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, that they are subdivided. Each set of ten of this presents an ample subject, for example: set of ten 10 deals with the general subject “Context of the World War II”. The letter of the code represents the “environment-social one” of which it treats the folder, and is represented by, B, C, D, and, F, G, H, I, J, L, and Z. For example, “military” letter “D” means the environment social. The third number has a chronological direction of formation of the folders. Idem, pp. 29-30.

Service. Later on, documents have been produced based on a variety of information of the observed sectors⁴ for the Division of Information.⁵

The Dossiers series have a set of folders in an alphanumeric code with the letter “G”, which means that the religious sectors of the Brazilian society are mentioned and because of that they constitute the main source of my research. I present briefly, the chronological way the documentation of this research is organized as well as a small reflection on the observed quantitative data.

Chronologically, this research focuses on the folders “G” from 1954 and 1974. However, there is a great emphasis on the year of 1964 as some specificities in the constitution of the documentation had changed from the initial proposal. The first studied folder was 30-G-000, and it was observed that the first document was dated 1944, and the last one 1968. In other words, these folders had a great amount of documents exceeding the previously established period.

Our analysis adjusts chronological landmarks of the documentation and established the years of 1942 and 1979 as starting points⁶. The interest still relies on registering the relation between the State/Church Catholic. Therefore, all documents of this folder were identified and mainly constitute the subject of this work.

Although I have not checked all folders yet, it is possible to state about the quantitative meaning of the documentation.

A first survey showed that there are 97 folders to be searched⁷. These folders refer to 37 years so that this great time line is documented by its variation through the volumes which present the police repression. I believe that this panorama shows what characterizes the Church in the mid of the twentieth century after the military blow of 1964.

Only 30 folders do not have Catholicism⁸ as a subject of investigation. Among 67 folders with some reference to Catholicism, I realize that 31 folders were produced 22 years before the military blow. Thus in the following 15 years, the number went up for 36⁹.

⁴ To see: Aparecida Maria de Aquino/ **Mapeamento e Sistematização do Acervo DEOPS/SP: Um Projeto Pioneiro/** Revista Histórica 2 (2000), pp.43-48.

⁵ To see: Aparecida Maria de Aquino/ **Mapeamento e Sistematização do Acervo DEOPS/SP: Um Projeto Pioneiro/** Revista Histórica 2 (2000), pp.43-48.

⁶ Respectively first and the last year of production of the documentation wants to be analyzed, understood between the folders 30-G-000 and 50-G-036 (2)

⁷ This documentation is constituted, over all for: interrogations and depositions; fiche summarized of suspected; clippings of periodicals etc. One is about a documentation that not yet was investigated in its particularities.

⁸ Understood here as the community of fiduciary offices, religious laypeople and, and the subjects in general related with Church Catholic.

⁹ This data result of the comparison with the result gotten for the work of research carried through for the team of the Profa. Dra. Maria Aparecida de Aquino next to Series Dossiers.

Although these data show a small variation, I believe that they promote the increase of the clash between State and Church Catholic. This scenery is strengthened when I consider the absolute number of the documents which compose the folders.

97 folders possess about 4100 documents¹⁰. Of this total, I evidence that more than 80%, around 3200, were produced in 1964. In other words, more than what the increase in the number of folders, had, in special during military regimen, a document increase by volume stored in each one of them.

As it was mentioned, this numerical increase has already been seen in the Dossiers¹¹ Series. In this case, at a first moment, our research strengthens this agreement and demonstrates the increase of the tension and the conflicts of the repressive apparatus of the State with the religious field of the Brazilian society as a whole. As most of the documentation mentions, this change reflects, in a certain way, the tension of the political scenario of the State, the clashes between the military regime and the Church, especially with the progressive catholics.

The analysis of the material confirms it a trend: the increase of the conflict between State and Church catholic during the Brazilian military government.

The majority of the Brazilian population is catholic so that this view is easily understood. This, however, does not disclose the reason of the conflict.

The documentary analysis comes to demonstrate the different motivations surrounding both sectors. The analysis of the documents shows that different motivations surround both sectors.

When reading the documents I observe that deep tensions between the state and the church are very much present on them so that different political projects, social as well as religious were acclaimed by each sector in the Brazilian society. Although society has been shaped by modern capitalism, there is a counter effort to establish projects which enhance social justice and integral humanism.

Therefore, this work aims to understand the dynamics of these projects provide and their direction within Brazilian society.

¹⁰ I am considering each stamp rank for the DEOPS as a new register, that is, a new document. The total document number, even so the research is in its end, results of a numerical survey, that still lack of the final verification, document for document.

¹¹ Cf.: *A alimentação do Leviatã nos planos regional e nacional: mudanças no DEOPS/SP no pós-64. Família 50* / Maria Aparecida de Aquino, et Al – São Paulo: Arquivo do Estado/Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 2002.