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A hemispheric moral majority: Brazil and the transnational construction of the New Right

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Abstract

This essay posits Brazil as one critical locus for gestating the New Right. Often conceived of as a conservative reaction to the U.S. Civil Rights movement, the New Right actually developed transnationally, with determinative participation from Brazilian activists. In this article, I focus on a revelatory subset of those activists, who demonstrate collaboration that (1) linked elite reactionaries in Brazil, the United States, and elsewhere; (2) facilitated the rise of conservative Christianity as populist groundswell; and (3) transformed these two countries into power centers of a Right that adheres to the now-familiar Brazilian moniker “Bible, Bullets, and Beef.”

Keywords: New Right; Brazil; Neoconservatism; Religious Right; United States.

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Introduction

In 2018, as misgivings about the viability of democracy unsettle many in Brazil and the United States, the power of conservative Christianity - linked to a formidable evangelical Right, to neoliberal austerity policies, and to broad notions of traditional culture (rural, religious, and rifle-toting) under attack – is no longer “news.” Indeed, despite inherent contradictions, we have come to take for granted the marriage of social, religious, and cultural reaction with renovated and radical doctrines of deregulation, triumphalist self-reliance, and laissez-faire capitalism — in other words, a so-called New Right, which seems to have outlived the modifier. Awareness of the United States as an epicenter of both Neoliberalism itself and of Christian neoconservatism as its comrade-in-arms has spanned the globe, if only because of United States hegemony and the long arm of

imperialism¹. Lesser-known are the longer and broader histories of these phenomena — especially the foundational role played by Brazil and its Christian conservatives. My research illuminates that role — and while its full elaboration would exceed the parameters of the current essay, I will begin to address it here.

Awareness of right-wing Christianity in Brazil, it must be said, has slowly grown of late. Even the staidest of media outlets in the United States appear to have joined what has grown into a years-long litany of journalistic marveling at the “sudden” prospect of an Evangelical Right in “Catholic” Brazil. More attuned constituencies, of course, have for decades charted and analyzed that prospect as a shadow haunting Brazil’s democratic and pluralistic politics. If, in one sense, the history of conservatism in Brazil traces an unyielding arc of patriarchalism, authoritarianism, and elite intransigence, a canon of scholarship now indicates the ways in which new forms of politicized Christianity redefined the contours of Brazil’s Right in the aftermath of the dictatorship². Such scholarship thus contributes to the body of knowledge on a Brazilian New Right resembling, yet distinct from, variants of this construction in other countries³. I have elsewhere written of the rise of Brazil’s Evangelical Right as a domestic result of the confluence of moralism, anticommunism, and politicization via friendliness with Brazil’s military regime (1964–1985). In this article, I seek to begin sketching a key related process that is part of my larger effort to understand the origins of the New Right, and its rise to power despite the contradictions referenced above. In broad terms, my research interrogates how Western democracies arrived at their present, often eerily consonant configurations of Left and Right —neither of those platforms (in the current battle between “small” fiscal government and “big” moral government versus “liberal” cultural pluralism repeal of moral strictures and

¹ It is worth noting that the term “neoconservative” itself, like most references to right-wing ideology and politics, suffers from some difficulties of definition – indeed, decisive scholarship on the topic indicates that “one might well argue that neoconservatism doesn’t even exist, that it is a misleading shorthand” (Vaïsse, 4). Moreover, that scholarship tends inevitably to define neoconservatism via its emergence from US-specific historical and ideological contingencies. Kristol (1995, x-xi); Friedman (2006); *Neoconservadorismo, educação, e privação* (2017). I hew to a middle-ground here, using the term in its post-1980 sense to refer to a combination of renewed economic liberalism; resistance to social welfare and egalitarianism; anticommunism, nationalism, and reaction against the cultural pluralism and the modernization (real and perceived) of the 1960s. For an exploration of the perception of cultural (and especially sexual) revolution in this period in Brazil, see Cowan (2016, Chapter 2). Eduardo Fagnani’s influential schematic of post-dictatorship politics in Brazil avoids the term “neoconservative” entirely, opting instead for “conservative counter-reform,” though my use of “neoconservative” might easily be applied to the processes he describes Fagnani (1997, 220).

² This process directly shaped Brazil’s current political configuration, despite noticeable diversity among evangelical politicians and the ongoing relevance of conservatism that do not make Christianity a central axis. Baquero Jacome (2003); Baptista (2009); Burity and Machado (2006); Machado (2012); Fonseca (2009); Mariano (2015); Mariano (1999); Tarouco and Madeira (2013).

³ The term “New Right” (*nova direita*) itself obscures critical differences between variants of certain late - or post-cold war conservatisms and runs the risk of conflating parts that exist in a shifting matrix of reactionary or anti-democratic alliances. This is, of course, the risk of any attempt to parse political and ideological platforms, especially (1) in an era of the fragmentation and “pluralization of political cultures” (Burity 2002, 23); and (2) when it comes to those of the Right, so often denominated by their antagonisms rather than their proposals. No single New Right can be said to hold exclusive sway in Brazil or the United States, as is evident in scholarly disagreements about the boundaries between new and “old” Rights in each place and the relationship of Christianity to each (Bolognesi and Codato (2016); Freston 1994, 82; Pierucci (1989, 107). For our purposes, however, “New Right” will refer to a broad coalition of actors whose principal concerns include some combination free-market capitalism and deregulation (with variations in specific attitudes toward neoliberalism, ranging from a revived, self-reliant Gospel of Wealth to some advocacy for labor and working-class welfare); nationalism and anti-communism; and a reactionary renovation of traditional morality and values, perceived to have lapsed. For one example of meditation on neoliberalism, Pentecostalism, and neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil, see Burity (2002, 28).

advocacy of “big” state welfare programs) quite cohere, much less merit the naturalized character with which our political discourse endows them.

As part of this investigation, I argue that Brazil formed one of several critical *loci* in the gestation and organization of the New Right as a transnational phenomenon. Historians have often conceived of the New Right as an episode of conservative renewal that followed upon the Civil Rights movement in the United States, predicated upon the racial and cultural politics of that country⁴. National histories of twentieth-century conservatism in Latin America, meanwhile, have tended to grant only passing mention to ideologues’ and activists’ international positionality⁵. As I seek to demonstrate, the New Right, in fact, arose transnationally, in circuits that transcended borders and were peopled by activists who trotted the globe. This argument troubles logics that understand conservatism and particularly neoconservatism as bound (by their notable patriotism) to national contexts; and illuminates the extensive late Cold War currency of certain forms of anti-modern reaction. Brazilian activists participated actively and very effectively in those circuits and forms, from resisting the “innovations” of the Second Vatican Council to supporting authoritarian anticommunism across the hemisphere. In this essay, I will elucidate a revelatory subset of those active participants: the International Policy Forum (IPF), Tradition, Family, and Property (*Tradição, Família e Propriedade* (TFP)), the World Anticommunist League (WACL), and the individuals who founded these organizations and worked to link their constituencies across borders. Catholic conservatism plays a prominent role in this portion of the story of the New Right; yet here we find organizations and forums that demonstrate the enthusiastic, cross-border cooperation that linked elite reactionaries of various religious stripes in Brazil, the United States, and further afield; facilitated the rise of conservative Christianity as a populist groundswell; and explain, at least in part, why these two countries have become power centers of a Right whose tenets are best summed up by the moniker given them in Brazil’s national debates: Bible, Bullets, and Beef (Cowan 2016a).

Gatherings of People of Real Substance: The International Policy Forum

The heavy lifting of constructing a transnational New Right happened in organizations specifically dedicated to this purpose. A constellation of institutions, new and old, layered individual connections atop a sort of clearinghouse approach to right-wing organizing: activists seeking to combat the threat of global Marxism, moral dissolution, and modernism looked to extant organizations and leaders from around the world, including standout connections in Brazil. The

⁴ See, for example, Williams (2012); Carter (2008); this applies equally to neoconservatism, as outlined in note 1.

⁵ Gisele Zanotto’s excellent history of the TFP, for example, touches only briefly on its founder’s role in the IPF; while Rodrigo Coppe Caldeira’s equally impressive history of Brazilian bishops’ activism at Vatican II considers—by dint of its scope—international connections only within the institutional perspective of the Church. I do not seek to diminish the critical contributions of these authors; just to point out that the history of the Right in Brazil (as elsewhere) has not accounted for imagining and strategizing beyond the bounds of national identities and politics. See Zanotto (2012, 72; Caldeira (2009, 238).

International Policy Forum was one such organization, perhaps the example par excellence. As it was deeply interconnected with other New Right groups via its leadership and membership, the IPF demonstrated the collaborative process of constructing a new mode of reaction, one which, to quote IPF's founder, found its "most extraordinary" partnerships among Brazilian arch-conservatives. The IPF has received comparatively little scholarly attention, yet this group brought together a hemispheric coterie of right-wing celebrities and power-brokers and created the space in which these actors could draft a common agenda.

The IPF came into being in 1982 as the brainchild of activist Paul Weyrich, a vital but relatively unsung hero of the Reagan-era Right in the United States. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the burgeoning Christian Right made something of a darling out of Weyrich, a tireless and seemingly omnipresent force which secured the various ideological and operational joists of the New Right. Far-right celebrities appeared to depend on him, and conservative publications of the 1980s fairly worshipped him. By his own account, Weyrich had arrived in Washington in 1966 and noted with dismay that "contrary to what I had assumed, conservatives here showed almost no sign of being organized." As a result, he took the task upon himself, and with great success. By 1986, "Free the Eagle," a far-right publication founded by eccentric Mormon economist and author Howard J. Ruff, proclaimed Weyrich a hero: "Americans all owe him a great deal"⁶.

A Catholic, Weyrich became a major supporter of evangelical conservatives, offering advice, moral and tactical support, and even financial assistance to fundamentalists (Williams 2012, 135)⁷. As such, he virtually brokered the unorthodox collaboration necessary to link conservatives (generally anti-ecumenists) across the lines of faith in the United States. This was so much the case, in fact, that Weyrich is in some sense responsible for the emergence of Jerry Falwell's (in)famous Moral Majority, a landmark coalition that heralded the ascendancy of the North American Religious Right. When Falwell balked at joining hands across denominational lines (doctrinal differences worth, in Falwell's words, "shedding blood"), it was Weyrich who suggested to the Baptist leader that he must lead an interdenominational "moral majority" of Americans (Williams 2012, 174).

Weyrich's vision of this North American "majority" mirrored, as we shall see, those of like-minded collaborators in Brazil and elsewhere. At the heart of this vision lay the topics that would bind the transnational New Right together. Weyrich admired libertarians' commitment to economic liberalism but wished to wed that ideology to a social, cultural, and religious arch-conservatism. Limning Reagan and his ilk as "establishment" conservative disappointments, Weyrich ferociously opposed homosexuality and abortion; liberation theology; "neo-modernists" within and outside the Catholic Church; the weakening of faith and of mysticism brought on

⁶ "FTE Focus: Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress (1984). Library of Congress, Paul M. Weyrich Scrapbooks (hereafter LOCPMWS), Box 13.

⁷ By 1987, Weyrich's Free Congress Foundation (via its Catholic Center) was sponsoring interfaith cooperation in the name of fighting homosexuality—and doing so in so exalted an *evangelical* forum as *The 700 Club*. (Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, Inc., 1987 *Annual Report*, LOCPMWS, Box 17.

by modernization; women who did not “put the family first”; and a host of other perceived ills⁸. These issues, of course, now constitute familiar planks in a right-wing platform. Weyrich in some ways pioneered that list, putting in place those individuals, think-tanks, and publications which would launch, for example, the New Right’s attack on homosexuality.⁹ Founder of the United States’ most important New Right organizations — the Heritage Foundation and the Free Congress Foundation (FCF), among others — Weyrich served as something of a domestic clearinghouse, uniting titans of the North American neoconservative pantheon, such as Phyllis Schlafly, Fred Schwarz, John Singlaub, Morton Blackwell, Ronald Reagan, Enrique Rueda, Connie Marshner, Tim LaHaye, and — as indicated above — Jerry Falwell.¹⁰ Weyrich’s Free Congress Foundation represented the point of the spear, operationalizing his goals of reinvigorating conservatism in a new form that took sexual morality, cultural traditionalism, fiscal austerity, religious rigidity, and supernatural mysticism for its interrelated cores. Echoing, as I have elsewhere shown, Brazilian evangelical operatives in the 1960s and 1970s (Cowan 2014). The FCF called upon the right-leaning faithful to overcome apoliticism, “to match the demands of faith with the pressures seemingly inherent in the political arena” and to overcome the “almost instinctive reaction [...] to hide from political responsibility lest one contradicts the call of holiness.”¹¹ And like Brazil’s conservative Catholics and its staunchest authoritarians (Cowan 2016a; 2016b), Weyrich and the FCF popularized the central goal of fighting the “leftward drift” of the Catholic Church and of Christians in general. Within FCF, Weyrich developed an aptly named “Catholic Center for Free Enterprise, Strong Defense, and Traditional Values.” Claiming to be “known to Catholic activists throughout the United States,” the center sought to combat “the progressive movement to the left [...] of the Church” — principally by mobilizing the conservative faithful. Via publications, public programs, and workshops, the Center would “prepare the average conservative Roman Catholic to change from a passive complainer to an activist capable of helping to reverse the leftward drift of the Church,” of Christianity, and of pluralistic Western democracies.¹²

Weyrich’s remarkable career as a — if not the — lynchpin of the North American New Right lies beyond the scope of this article. That career, though mentioned by certain scholars, has remained mired in some historiographical shadow. Yet more shadow covers Weyrich’s direct facilitation of a transnational neoconservative movement. Alongside his better-known projects, Weyrich founded the International Policy Forum, designed explicitly to consolidate

⁸ “What Conservatives Think of Ronald Reagan,” *Policy Review* 27 (Winter 1984), 19; “Women spokesmen training conference” *The Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, Inc., Annual Report, 1983* (hereafter “FCF1983”), 25; “Sex and God in American Politics,” *Policy Review* 29 (Summer 1984), 11; “Interview with Paul Weyrich,” *Forerunner* (September 1984), 10; Paul Weyrich, “Thoughts at Easter,” *The Remnant* (30 April 1984), 6, LOCPMWS, Box 13.

⁹ On Enrique T. Rueda’s 1982 *Homosexual Network* (in some sense Weyrich’s project as much as it was Rueda’s) as a key invent in “launching the New Right’s anti-gay campaign,” see Hardisty (2000, 101).

¹⁰ “The Five Minute Report,” 22 January 1988, LOCPMWS, Box 17; “Women spokesmen training conference.”

¹¹ “The Morality of Political Action,” FCF1983, 36.

¹² “The Catholic Center,” FCF1983, 33.

right-wing leaders across national borders in just the way Weyrich had sought to unite them domestically. From Weyrich's point of view, disunity on the Right constituted the most pressing problem, and the IPF would address that problem hemispherically, if not globally. Gathering in Washington in January 1985, the group's Board of Governors tellingly titled their meeting "Liberty in the World: Can the Forces of Freedom Cooperate?" — combining hawkish New Right anticommunism with an expanded geographical scope. A prospectus from the previous year made the group's objectives plain, again signaling the notion that right-wing forces must unite against a powerful leftist threat. "The Problem: Our Lack of Solidarity" presented IPF as a much-needed solution:

For two centuries the world's *leftist* intellectuals and activists have built their own global networks [...] This international solidarity is a source of enormous advantage to the Left [...] Conservatives, on the other hand, are woefully ignorant of each other across the world [...] What should be a worldwide conservative movement is almost totally divided by national boundaries [...] IPF proposes [...] to get key conservative leaders and activists meeting and working together on a regular basis (International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985 [n.d.], 1).

Weyrich and Morton Blackwell (the IPF's first President) planned to include business and religious nabobs, prominent lobbyists, politicians, as well as "media leaders" and "intellectual leaders." These members would meet twice a year — once in the United States, and once in another country. As the plan made clear, the core values established as common ground for all members would mirror the neoconservative platform then developing among activists like Weyrich and his counterparts in Brazil and elsewhere. The IPF would oppose welfare states, communism, immorality, and secularism, and would provide a communicative space in which members could train together and share tactics. The bi-annual meetings would "provide members with information to help them combat excessive government in their own countries. Attendees will learn from each other new ways to halt the spread of Marxist totalitarianism." (International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985 [n.d.], 2). A list of "principles and beliefs" included "limited government," "limited taxation," "free enterprise," "traditional family moral values" as "God-given rights... not government-given." Each of these, like anticommunism itself, seemed threatened by "secular humanism in education."¹³

From its early days, the IPF was designed to impress and even intimidate potential members and enemies alike, using a combination of calculated exclusivity, propagandistic promotional material, and associations with power and influence. As the organization's 1984 plan put it, "the IPF Board of Governors meetings will be gatherings of people of stature and real substance." Members will personally get to know international leaders with major resources who share their values. No one will be involved who is not a real 'mover and shaker' in his or her own

¹³ "International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985," LOCPMWS, Box 13.

country. We are an organization of movement-oriented, conservative leaders.”¹⁴ In its “Benefits to Members” section, the IPF promised that those who joined would “develop personal friendships with pro-freedom leaders” would “gain advance knowledge of business trends and political prospects in other countries,” “keep abreast of the problems of conservatives in other countries,” and would “plan joint action with like-minded people from other countries.” All of this, the leadership clarified, would be by invitation only: “Invitations to membership are extended only by the IPF Executive Committee upon nomination by IPF members.” (International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985 [n.d.], 3). Those who “did” join would face a U.S. \$5,000 membership fee, making the elite and exclusive feel of the organization more pronounced — and more profitable.

Membership was advertised as an entrée to glamorous, elite jet-setting and hob-nobbing; this networking, in other words, could scratch ideological itches alongside those of social and political ambition. The board of governors’ meetings sought to entice those who wished to “travel abroad” and “meet in renowned hotels and excellent conference facilities in the United States and abroad.” (International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985 [n.d.], 3) To embellish this luxury approach to transnational lobbying, all travel arrangements would be made by the IPF itself, whose annual budget for the meetings was a dazzling \$250,000.¹⁵ The organization billed these summits not just as meetings of like minds, but as star-studded influence mills. The “people of stature and real substance” honored with invitations would encounter famous IPF leaders and collaborators from North America, among them Weyrich himself, alongside some of the most celebrated and notorious of conservative organizers and heroes: Phyllis Schlafly, V. Lance Tarrance, Reed Larson, Congressman Vin Weber, Oliver North, and former Ku Klux Klan leader Richard Shoff.¹⁶ Beneath, a large photo of IPF president Morton Blackwell with Ronald Reagan, the group’s literature touted the former’s appointment to the White House Office of Public Liaison, where, as a Special Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, he had “he helped thousands of conservatives get jobs in the Reagan administration.” (Figure 1).¹⁷

Whatever the dubious merits of consecutive lunches with Vin Weber, the IPF reaped early rewards from its efforts to link like-minded conservatives “of substance” across the world, especially in the Americas. “Conservative and pro-freedom leaders outside the United States are enthusiastic about the IPF concept,” (International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985 [n.d.], 4) boasted one report. “In recent months, IPF has received pledges or cooperation from prominent leaders

¹⁴ “International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985,” LOCPMWS, Box 13

¹⁵ “International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985,” LOCPMWS, Box 13

¹⁶ IPF literature described Shoff as “a great fighter for freedom all over the world; particularly in Central America, where he assists the freedom Fighters of Nicaragua.” “The Short Forum,” Vol. II, No. 8, December 1988, LOCPMWS, Box 17. On Shoff and the KKK, see Bellant (1991, 38).

¹⁷ IPF literature described Shoff as “a great fighter for freedom all over the world; particularly in Central America, where he assists the freedom Fighters of Nicaragua.” “The Short Forum,” Vol. II, No. 8, December 1988, LOCPMWS, Box 17. On Shoff and the KKK, see Bellant (1991, 38).



Fig. 1: Morton Blackwell posing with President Reagan in IPF Promotional Literature. Source: International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985 [n.d.], 5.

and key activists” (International Policy Forum Prospectus, 1984-1985 [n.d.], 4) in nearly a dozen countries. By 1984, the group was active in Argentina, Canada, Brazil, Guatemala, El Salvador, Israel, Austria, France, Great Britain, Taiwan, and Australia. Schlafly herself addressed an audience of some 200 at a meeting in Australia that year; in the coming half-decade, the group would hold meetings in Buenos Aires, Santiago, Córdoba, São Paulo, and Bern, and establish a Paris-based “school” for direct mail programs. Bernard Cardinal Law, Richard J. Neuhaus, John Singlaub, and Australian-born Fred Schwarz all addressed the group, alongside Reagan administration functionaries, including Ambassador Faith Whittlesey; these Americans were joined by an ever-increasing coterie of international speakers from the Americas, Europe, and eventually the Middle East and Asia.¹⁸ The IPF also partnered with foreign think-tanks to achieve the central goal of fostering an international conservative “movement.” In Córdoba, the IPF joined the Institute of Contemporary Studies (Instituto de Estudios Contemporaneos (IDEC)) in welcoming 170 members from across the Americas and as far away as Monaco, South Africa, South Korea, and

¹⁸ Meeting Minutes, International Policy Forum, Executive Committee Meeting, 14 January 1988; Program, IPF Board of Governors Meeting 2-4 July, 1988; IPF, “The Short Forum” 19 February 1988; “The Five Minute Report,” 22 January 1988, LOCPMWS, Box 17.

China.¹⁹ The conference aimed to induct members into means of utilizing modern mass-media techniques for conservative goals—exploiting, that is, “*las más modernas técnicas y organización de campañas políticas*” (*Técnicas de Campaña y Organización Política* [n.p.], 1988, 2). In fact, this had by this point become the IPF’s principal pedagogical focus. The group’s leadership, rather in keeping with its alliance with the likes of John Singlaub and other counterinsurgency hawks, saw themselves as a “school” for conservative mobilization. To promote “internal strength and international cooperation among freedom-loving people,” the “faculty of each Understanding Politics Conference consists of experts in the main areas of modern democratic political technology, e.g., direct mail, media relations, and polling analysis.” At the Córdoba conference, the “faculty” covered topics ranging from “Mobilizing the Business Community” to “Organizing Young People” and “Creative Use of Radio, Newspapers, Television, and Video Cassettes.”²⁰

Beyond the IPF meetings, Weyrich and Blackwell trotted the globe as individual foot-soldiers of right-wing visibility and coalition-building. Weyrich gave interviews, made speeches, and arduously courted the far-right groups of the Americas, including Brazil. In Argentina, he told journalists of the need for a sharp, domestic and international turn to the right. Weyrich described the “so-called conservative revolution” as “exaggerated” and complained of Reagan’s complacency. He insisted that “very few fundamental reforms have been made” and thus “much remains to be done on the conservative agenda,” especially when it came to government spending, the Great Society, anticommunism, abortion and “those who propitiate policies favorable to the growth of state functions.” Blackwell, meanwhile, led a delegation of IPF observers to Chile, where they alleged that “leftist” counterparts were seeking to pervert the 1988 referendum on the Pinochet regime. “To counteract the leftist bias against Chile” and “the anti-communist Pinochet” IPF sponsored a “high-level delegation” that included Senator Carl Curtis and Ambassador David Funderburk.²¹ Via the Council for National Policy (CNP), Blackwell and Weyrich (a founding member) fostered hemispheric right-wing women’s cooperation. At a forum in Guatemala in September of 1988, “more than 40 women” from the United States and Central America gathered for “Women in the Hemisphere Achieving Together,” an event attended by a delegation of women referred to as “CNP wives.” Blackwell also operationalized plans to internationalize the Right by a different route—ironically, via “big government” itself—seeking to flood the foreign service with right-minded acolytes. He offered what he called a “Foreign Service Opportunity School (FSOS)” which was “designed to help young conservatives pass the Foreign Service exams.”²²

¹⁹ *Instituto de Estudios Contemporáneos* and International Policy Forum, “*Técnicas de Campaña y Organización Política*” (1988), LOCPMWS, Box 17.

²⁰ IPF “Understanding Politics Conference, Córdoba, August 26-28, 1988” (Program, 1988), LOCPMWS, Box 17.

²¹ International Policy Forum, “The Short Forum,” Vol. II, no. 6, 30 September 1988, LOCPMWS, Box 17.

²² “Paul Weyrich: El conservadurismo norteamericano, una revolución inconclusa?” *La voz del interior* (Córdoba) 12 Sept 1988, 3; “The Five Minute Report,” 23 September 1988; “The Five Minute Report,” 7 October 1988, LOCPMWS, Box 17.

Significantly, for our purposes, Weyrich represented himself (and was received) abroad as the point of the New Right spear—an innovator and a pioneer, but also a collaborator. As he told Argentine journalist Luís Álvarez Primo in 1988, “in general we think of the North American conservative movement as a movement of people who believe in limited government, free enterprise, strong national defense, and traditional values. “I like to believe that we were the ones who added the concept of ‘traditional values’ to that equation.” (Álvarez Primo [n.d.]) In what may have been one of the earliest articulations — certainly the earliest transnational articulation — of “I want my country back,” Weyrich told Álvarez that he and his partners wished “to recuperate the type of country that made the United States a great nation.”²³ With the support of the Reagan administration, Weyrich traveled as far afield as Bahrain, where he addressed a group of “senior members” of the government, apparently winning them over. As U.S. Ambassador Sam Zakhem rhapsodically recapped, Weyrich “represents the caliber of speaker that is needed at this post—and, I will presume, most posts in this area—in addressing political concerns.”²⁴ The IPF founder combined “academic” knowledge of the Right with his role as a “practitioner.” He thus, in Zakhem’s words, “brings a wealth of experience, enhanced by knowledge, to his audiences. The audiences note and appreciate the difference.”

TFP: Brazil’s own IPF?

Weyrich established an especially fond and productive relationship with his Brazilian counterparts in TFP – a Brazilian and eventually worldwide organization founded in 1960 by Brazil’s own savant of Catholic conservatism, Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira (Cowan 2016a; Zanotto 2012). A veteran proponent of Catholic reaction in Brazil, Oliveira held a critical position within the country’s Right for decades and had by this point built the TFP into a transnational system of organizations, distributed across the hemisphere and the Atlantic — a rather breathtaking initiative whose contours and implications we shall explore presently. All the more salient, then, that almost from its inception he and his followers played a prominent role in Weyrich’s IPF. This relationship is remembered with particular warmth by *tefepistas* (TFP members) in Brazil and abroad. Upon Weyrich’s death in 2008, the American TFP (TFP-USA) remembered him as an “outstanding leader and mentor of the conservative movement” whose “efforts were of paramount importance in uniting conservatives for many decades.” Weyrich, as TFP-USA rather bluntly put it, “moved moral issues into the forefront of the Cultural War.” In this work, he collaborated closely with TFP in its various national and domestic iterations:

²³ “El movimiento conservador norteamericano en la opinión de Paul M. Weyrich,” *La Nueva Provincia* (Bahía Blanca), 6 October 1988, Ideas y Imágenes Section, 2-3; Luís Álvarez Primo, “El movimiento conservador norteamericano en la opinión de Paul M. Weyrich” (Buenos Aires: Fundación Adolfo Alsina: s/d [1988?]), LOCPMWS, Box 17.

²⁴ Dr. Sam Zakhem, U.S. Ambassador to Bahrain, to Secretary of State (telegram), 18 October 1987. LOCPMWS, Box 17.

Mr. Weyrich was also a good friend of the American TFP. Since the early eighties, he regularly met with Mr. Mario Navarro da Costa of the TFP Washington Bureau, with whom he traveled on several occasions to Latin America and Europe, visiting the local TFPs and being introduced to their networks of friends. He also visited the Brazilian TFP in 1988 and met with its founder Prof. Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira. Over the years, Mr. Weyrich had proven to be an invaluable friend.²⁵

Weyrich had, as early as 1985, traveled to Brazil to give what would become a series of talks to the parent cell of all the TFPs in São Paulo; the global TFP's official history recalled him as “*um dos principais estrategistas políticos da ‘Nova Direita’ Americana*” (one of the main political strategists of the American ‘New Right’).²⁶ In August 1988, Weyrich returned (for at least the fourth time) to Brazil, this time as part of an IPF delegation intended to increase collaboration with Brazilian IPF members, who were in fact the leaders of TFP: Plínio Corrêa de Oliveria, Mario Navarro da Costa (the TFP's man in Washington) and Adolpho Lindenberg. Blackwell and Weyrich, along with Henry Walther, each addressed some 1000 assembled TFP members in São Paulo. The TFP magazine “*Catolicismo*,” evincing major enthusiasm, published what it called “significant excerpts” of Weyrich's speech. Weyrich hit on the salient, current points of American neoconservatism, from pointing out the strategic importance of “appointing conservative Federal Judges” to discrediting “the terrible liberal Michael Dukakis” (in the United States, liberal in politics is equivalent to leftist) to complaining of a legislative deck stacked against the Right, such that “Congress has many communist sympathizers.” If *Catolicismo* loved Weyrich, the feeling was mutual — the latter heaped special and particular praise on his Brazilian collaborators. Indicating the success of the effort to link arms ideologically across the hemisphere, Weyrich remarked,

Allow me to say, in conclusion, that I consider it a great privilege to be here. *The conversations I have had with your leader have been the most extraordinary of my entire political life.* And I thank you for being here because you all honor me with your presence. In our battles, both the United States *and in the world*, the TFP is one of the few trustworthy and truly coherent organizations with which we can associate. And we thank God for your existence and hope that you continue in this great struggle. And we will continue to collaborate with you in our country.²⁷

As Margaret Power has pointed out in her landmark study of American links to the TFP, Weyrich was matched on this front by Blackwell, whose ties to the organization in the United States and Brazil developed both breadth and depth. Loath to acknowledge the capabilities of foreign conservatives (at least relative to those of himself and his compatriots), Blackwell nevertheless deemed Brazilians peculiarly impressive. Convinced that “what they [TFP in Brazil] were doing

²⁵ “Mourning the Death of Paul M. Weyrich,” *The American TFP*, December 19, 2008. <http://www.tfp.org/mourning-the-death-of-paul-m-weyrich/>, last access on 20 March 2018.

²⁶ “Norte-americanos fazem conferências,” *Catolicismo* (December 1986); *Um homem, uma obra, uma gesta*, 350, 444.

²⁷ “*Catolicismo* Outubro/October 1988” (photocopy), LOCPMWS, Box 17.

was compatible with what we were doing — building a conservative movement in the United States,”²⁸ Blackwell visited Brazil “hoping” to adopt the Brazilian TFP’s techniques. Particularly taken with TFP’s recruitment and training programs, he became close with Mario Navarro da Costa. Blackwell even became something of an operator in the Brazilian TFP’s campaign to expand across the world:

I do training programs abroad, and Mario would keep track of where I was going and in a number of countries... he would ask me if I would be willing to meet and talk with TFP members in that country. In several countries, I think I did it... Let’s see. In the early days, I did it in England, and Scotland, and France, and Spain, and South Africa... I’ve done it in Argentina... when I took my wife to Buenos Aires, and I talked to some of the Argentine TFP people.²⁹

Following in the footsteps of the Schlaflys, Blackwell offered advice and support to TFP in Brazil, which he also visited and addressed.³⁰

IPF and its strong connections to Brazil are indicative of how major figures in the conservative movement actively built transnational linkages as a means of simultaneously strengthening domestic efforts and constructing international coalitions in defense of traditional Christianity. Brazil’s centrality, whose full dimensions I explore in my broader research, surfaced here in Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira’s position on the IPF Board of Governors – a position which the TFP gleefully touted, just as Weyrich and his associates publicized “his” connections with the TFP in Brazil and the U.S..³¹ When Oliveira, at the 1985 IPF board meeting in Dallas in 1985, spoke on the importance of Latin America in resisting global Marxism, TFP crowed that “the eminent Brazilian Catholic thinker made a profound impression on the participants.”³²

Nevertheless, my excursus above on IPF in some ways constitutes a feint, as the Brazilian TFP itself acted with equal eagerness and alacrity to create a transnational web of anticommunist neoconservatism, one that overlapped and interlinked with the work of people like Weyrich and Blackwell in the United States and elsewhere.³³ Readers who are familiar with the TFP will recognize it as one of several important variants of Catholic reaction in the late twentieth century, positioned somewhere in between moderate Catholic conservatives and more extreme

²⁸ Morton Blackwell, interviewed by Margaret Power, 7 August 2009, 6. Dr. Power’s interview with Blackwell is one of a kind— I thank her for creating and for allowing me to consult this invaluable source.

²⁹ Morton Blackwell, interviewed by Margaret Power, 7 August 2009, 6. Dr. Power’s interview with Blackwell is one of a kind— I thank her for creating and for allowing me to consult this invaluable source., 7.

³⁰ Power, “Transnational, Conservative, Catholic,” 98.

³¹ Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, “A importância do fator religioso nos rumos de um bloco-chave de países: a América Latina,” *Catolicismo* (June 1985), 3.

³² “Ao leitor,” *Catolicismo* (June 1985), 2.

³³ I have used the term “neoconservative” to refer to the TFP here based on its admiration, ideological coincidence (and, indeed, alliance) with the likes of Weyrich, not to mention Ronald Reagan. This, of course, points again to the trouble with right-wing terminologies, as Oliveira himself came from an Old Right tradition and evolved over the course of the Cold War, but combines neoconservative elements with previous iterations of reaction.

traditionalists like the Society of Saint Pious X. (As Marcos Paulo dos Reis Quadros aptly puts it, the TFP preferred “resisting” the Vatican’s authority to outright “disobedience” in the face of reforms.) The TFP fought, sometimes bitterly, with other organizations of a fragmented Catholic and non-Catholic Right; and the Brazilian TFP itself suffered a major schism after the founder’s death (Zanotto 2012).³⁴ Nevertheless, the group’s first four decades saw it proliferate physically and geographically, establishing chapters across the Atlantic world, as I and others have elsewhere elaborated. Even today, the TFP remains a source of inspiration and a model for arch-conservative Catholics outside its ranks (Quadros 2013; Cowan 2016a; Cowan 2017; Zanotto 2012). More remarkably for our current purposes, the TFP cultivated and maintained relationships with the most active global New Right and extremist organizations of the 1980s and 1990s, placing itself at the center of various efforts to foster cooperation. Oliveira himself traveled and spoke abroad, but the organization also dedicated particular agents to planting its seeds across the world. Among these was Mario Navarro da Costa, the TFP’s aforementioned agent in Washington, who still resided in the capital’s suburbs as of 2017. Navarro da Costa had counterparts elsewhere. Carlos Eduardo Schaffer, for example, served the TFP in Canada, Austria, Germany, and Lithuania. Born in Curitiba in 1942, Schaffer joined the TFP in 1961, then spent decades raising funds, visibility, and chapter presence for the organization. The TFP credits him with founding the Canadian and Austrian divisions, which he directed for some time in the 1970s and 1990s, respectively. True to form, he introduced direct mail systems similar to those promoted in the early 1980s by IPF. He also popped up as an “Austrian correspondent” for the American TFP³⁵. As of 2018, in fact, Schaffer was apparently living in Vienna, and still affiliated with the national TFP there³⁶.

Others also assisted in linking TFP to like-minded conservatives around the world — as far away as the Philippines, but particularly in the United States³⁷. TFP-USA became one of the organization’s strongest and most vocal chapters — surviving, in fact, the schism that rocked the Brazilian TFP in the 1990s. In part, this must have been because key players from Brazil visited and collaborated with the leadership and rank and file of TFP-USA. As early as 1966, as Weyrich was just arriving in Washington, D.C., the Brazilian TFP had already cultivated links with other rightist Catholics in the United States. That year, the group sent a representative to the five-hundred strong conference to promote conservatism sponsored by the traditionalist publication “The Wanderer.” TFP was “among the few foreign entities invited,” and a presentation sought to

³⁴ This rupture, essentially a dispute between generations of TFP members, led to the group’s division into two separate, reactionary organizations: the *Associação dos Fundadores da TFP* (the old guard) and the *Arautos do Evangelho*, a now stronger and more visible contingent of younger members led by João Clá Dias, who have sought official recognition by the Vatican.

³⁵ “Carlos Eduardo Schaffer: Former Guest Speaker at the Leadership Institute,” <https://leadershipinstitute.org/training/contact.cfm?FacultyID=679589>, last access on 21 March 2018; *Crusade* (November/December 2002), 2.

³⁶ His Facebook profile claimed he was the group’s deputy chairman. <https://www.facebook.com/ceschaffer>, consulted on March 21, 2018. TFP’s German chapter, still attracting participants as of 2018, now has links to the national, developing Christian Right, in the form of the “Alternative for Germany” (AfD) party. See Andrea Althoff, “Right-Wing Populism and Religion in Germany: Conservative Christians and the Alternative for Germany (AfD),” unpublished paper shared with the author, February 15, 2018, 20.

³⁷ Campos Filho (1980). The TFP sent Marcos Ribeiro Dantas to represent Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira at the V Plenary Congress of WACL, on which more below. Dantas frequently traveled as Oliveira’s representative, sometimes accompanying José Lúcio de Araújo Corrêa.

demonstrate a “living image” of TFP’s tactics and strategies in Brazil. Brazilian *tefepistas* were careful to note that this was important because the *forum* included “various personalities of distinction in North American conservatism.” Two years later, the TFP representative at this same annual gathering was José Lúcio de Araújo Corrêa, who led a delegation from the Rio TFP³⁸. By late 1971, Corrêa was on a tour of twenty Canadian cities, in each of which he addressed interested crowds of fifty to three hundred people; he capped his visit with an overture to nearly a thousand members of the Pilgrims of Saint Michael, a Catholic patriotic group.³⁹ Corrêa also visited Boston, promoting TFP-USA there in 1971 and 1972, and representing the Brazilian TFP at that city’s “Rally for God and Country,” which in 1971 “gathered nearly 1000 representatives of conservative and anti-communist organizations in Boston” (Campos Filho 1980). Corrêa stationed himself at the entrance to the rally, where he proselytized on behalf of the TFP as a worldwide effort.

Perhaps most impressively, Corrêa’s legwork saw the TFP seeking to take the lead in establishing transnational and trans-denominational linkages. In 1974, some years before Weyrich’s outreach to Jerry Falwell and before the recognizable rise of a religious Right in the United States, Corrêa initiated contact with one of the pioneers of that Right: Carl McIntire. McIntire was an inflammatory, even infamous figure in the United States and (as we shall see) in Brazil. The founder of several far-right organizations and a succession of fundamentalist Presbyterian communities, he represented a fringe in American religious politics that, in part because of McIntire’s own antics, grew closer and closer to the mainstream and helped create the modern Religious Right (Ruotsila 2016; Fea 1994; Hendershot 2007)⁴⁰. Most strikingly for our current purposes, McIntire had built a reputation as a ferocious anti-Catholic. Yet in May 1974, Corrêa wrote him a letter in McIntire’s native tongue, enclosing a glossy pamphlet (also in English) plugging TFP’s achievements as a transnational organization. Such propaganda was critical, as Corrêa aimed to expand the TFP’s reach and its global leadership of “the” conservative movement — expand it, that is, to include “evangelicals.” He flattered McIntire, indicating at the outset that he “would like to congratulate with you [*sic*] for publishing such an interesting and informative Newspaper” (McIntire’s incendiary “Christian Beacon,” a mouthpiece for his brand of Evangelical arch-conservatism). The letter introduced TFP as a “network of loyal patriots who got together to defend our menaced Christian Civilization,” then immediately acknowledged, and explained away, the potentially insurmountable difference between writer and recipient: “We are militant Catholics,” Corrêa admitted to the ferociously anti-Catholic McIntire, “but we are firmly opposed to the rampant liberalism going on in the Church.”⁴¹ Essentially he proposed an alliance with McIntire, despite their presumed enmity,

³⁸ Campos Filho (1980).

³⁹ “Enviado da TFP faz conferências em vinte cidades, no Canadá” *Catolicismo* (March 1971).

⁴⁰ Daniel K. Williams argues that facing the relative calm of Southern fundamentalism and anticommunism before World War II, McIntire successfully inflamed Southern fundamentalists, touting the “gravity of the internal communist danger and the necessity of supporting right-wing anticommunist politicians” (2012, 39).

⁴¹ José Lúcio de Araújo Corrêa to Carl McIntire, International Council of Christian Churches, 30 May 1974, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, Carl McIntire Collection (hereafter PTSLCMC), Box 37; “Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property,” (pamphlet, 1974), PTSLCMC, Box 37.

in the name of a new, common platform designed to combat progressive Christianity, secular modernization, and — principally, though inextricably — communism. As we shall see below, the letter enumerated precisely the building blocks which were fast becoming the pillars of the religious Right: nostalgia for a mythic (sometimes medieval) past; mysticism/supernaturalism; anticommunism; antimodernism; moralism; anti-ecumenism; defense of hierarchy; and anti-statist dedication to private property and free enterprise. Remarkably, too, Corrêa presented a further element of commonality between himself, McIntire, and their respective organizations. In Corrêa's vision, TFP was a lead player in the promotion of the conservative, fundamentalist cause across the region and the world; therefore, it must seek partners in like activists and organizations. As the founder and near-sacrosanct leader of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), McIntire was just such a potential partner.⁴² In the same way that the ICCC sought to transnationalize McIntire's version of Christian fundamentalist traditionalism, TFP kept its finger on the pulse of religious, cultural, an anti-communist politics throughout the Americas. If the pamphlet did not make this clear, Corrêa made reference to TFP's recent intervention in Venezuelan elections, to elect "the lesser evil."⁴³

McIntire's response to Corrêa appears cordial, if not enthusiastic. Nearly a month later, through his secretary, the New Jersey firebrand replied to the Brazilian leader that "we are happy to know that you enjoyed reading the 'Christian Beacon'" and suggested that they exchange publications. Corrêa would subscribe to "Christian Beacon" and would, in turn, send to the São Paulo branch of ICCC copies of "*Catolicismo*." More interestingly, Corrêa received an invitation to the next meeting, that July, of ALADIC — the right-wing network that McIntire and his U.S. and Brazilian allies had successfully spawned in Latin America.⁴⁴ The cordiality and the willingness to welcome not only "*Catolicismo*" but Corrêa himself, constitute a surprise in and of itself, given that most fundamentalists' (but "especially" McIntire's) vitriolic anti-Catholicism should have meant an utter rejection of TFP based on doctrine and denomination alone (McIntire, it must be said, had a strong, perhaps predominant streak of opportunism).

From the TFP's perspective, however, McIntire's opportunism, opposition to Roman Catholicism, and even the sluggishness of his response did not seem to constitute major stumbling blocks. McIntire, in fact, was only one of many avenues that the organization pursued in its drive to transnationally lead a united religious Right. TFP agents like Mario Navarro da Costa and Carlos Eduardo Schaffer fanned out across the hemisphere and the globe, and created links with other countries and with other organizations, some of them notable — or notorious. Active in

⁴² Founded in 1954, in direct opposition to the World Council of Churches, the ICCC represented McIntire's and his allies' most visible and wide-ranging efforts to combat ecumenism, progressive Christianity, and doctrinal "modernism." English Consultative Committee of the ICCC, "What is the difference between the International Council of Christian Churches and the World Council of Churches?" (London: ICCC, 1958[?]).

⁴³ José Lúcio de Araújo Corrêa to Carl McIntire, International Council of Christian Churches, 30 May 1974, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, Carl McIntire Collection (hereafter PTSLCMC), Box 37; "Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property," (pamphlet, 1974), PTSLCMC, Box 37.

⁴⁴ Ruth Trato to José Lúcio de Araújo Corrêa, 10 July 1974, PTSLCMC, Box 33. I was unable to find any evidence that Corrêa or any other *tefepista* ever attended a meeting of the ICCC or ALADIC.

the United States, Canada, and Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, Brazilian *tefepista* Nelson Ribeiro Fragelli made speeches in New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Miami, Toronto, Berlin, Baden, and elsewhere. He also reached out to Catholic organizations where he might find a sympathetic ear, from the Pilgrims of Saint Michael to groups of Catholic refugees from Eastern Europe (American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family & Property 1981). By 2006, Fragelli had taken charge of Italy's Luci Sull'Est (a Marian brainchild of Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira) and was, along with Luiz Antônio Fragelli and Prince Bertrand de Orleans-Bragança, a regular fixture at TFP events in the United States.⁴⁵ Luiz Antônio Fragelli and his wife and son had, in fact, left Brazil to serve TFP-USA as early as 1974; Fragelli served as the North American chapter's director.⁴⁶

These men were Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira's close, even intimate, collaborators. Nelson Fragelli, at the least, was among the "slaves" of Oliveira, the secret society known as *Sempre Viva* (members of TFP who left their given names behind upon joining an inner sanctum which worshipped the master himself and his mother).⁴⁷ These individual ambassadors notwithstanding, TFP also sought to establish links with various right-wing institutional allies abroad. By the 1980s, these included Italy's Alleanza Cattolica, a lay organization founded in 1960 which has sought to combat the "modern secularization process that is society's estrangement from God and His law."⁴⁸ In France, the group partnered with *Lecture et Tradition*, a self-described "humble army of the soldiers of Christ, in those Legions of the Counter-Revolution that Heaven is preparing for the hour of triumph."⁴⁹ *Lecture et Tradition* shares Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira's vision of a grand "Counterrevolution" to restore traditional, medieval Catholicism. In keeping with this global vision, Oliveira and the French organization maintained a mutual refusal "to enter the partisan and fratricidal struggles that have divided 'the Right'" (*les lutes partisans et fratricides qui déchirent "la droite"*).⁵⁰ An ocean and a continent away, California-based John Steinbacher had gained national fame for his opposition to sex education in schools, which he denounced as a communist plot in his "factual exposé of America's Sexploitation conspiracy." (Martin 2005, 113). To TFP, Steinbacher was a valued ally, "the well-known North American writer" whose preface to the 1972 English edition of Plínio's *Revolução e Contra-Revolução* "honored" the latter in ways that could hardly be matched)⁵¹. The translation was published by far-right Educator Publications in Fullerton, California, whose list included several of Steinbacher's own works

⁴⁵ "Getting Back to Basics: 2006 TFP National Conference," 5 October 2006, <http://www.tfp.org/getting-back-to-basics-2006-tfp-national-conference/> last access on 28 March 2018.

⁴⁶ "Today, June 10, is the birthday of a great man," *The America Needs Fatima Blog*, 10 June 2009. <http://americaneedsfatima.blogspot.com/2009/06/today-june-10-is-birthday-of-great-man.html>. Accessed 28 March 2018.

⁴⁷ Letter, *Folha da Manhã* (Campos dos Goytacazes), March 14, 1985; Folena (1997).

⁴⁸ The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property and The Canadian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property, *Let the Other Side Also be Heard: The TFP's Defense Against Fidelity's Onslaught* (Pleasantville, NY: TFP, 1989), 88; "Presentazione di Alleanza Cattolica," <http://alleanzaccattolica.org/presentation-ac/>, last access on 29 March 2018.

⁴⁹ <http://lecture-et-tradition.info/qui-sommes-nous>, accessed March 29, 2018.

⁵⁰ <http://lecture-et-tradition.info/qui-sommes-nous>, last access on 29 March 2018.

⁵¹ "Revolução e Contra-Revolução: Elevação de Pensamento—Eficácia na Ação," *Catolicismo* (April 1999) http://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info/BIO_199904_RCRrepercussoes.htm (Last access on 29 March 2018).

(including “The Child Seducers, his magnum opus.” as well as titles like Erica Carle’s “The Hate Factory” (which attacked godlessness in public education) and Joseph Bean’s “Source of the River Pollution” (appreciated by one right-wing pamphleteer as a denunciation of public schools as “body snatchers” and of a “war against society, which is directed by the federal government”)⁵².

TFP and Beyond: WACL and Brazil’s Far Right

Perhaps TFP’s most sensational alliance, however, was with the fearsome World Anti-Communist League, or WACL, whose activities in the second half of the twentieth century ranged from panic-mongering to covert and overt support for right-wing terrorism. Secretive and often disreputable, the League has been alternately fueled by and the subject of (divergent) conspiracy theories across the decades. WACL maintained ties with some of the world’s most notorious extreme rightists — from neo-fascists to anti-Semites to counterinsurgent war criminals — as part of a network that also centrally featured the TFP and its globe-trotting ambassadors. By 1979, WACL chapters were active in scores of countries, and TFP members working with WACL rubbed shoulders with the most notorious of right-wing activists from several continents: John Singlaub (implicated in the Phoenix Program and the Iran-Contra affair), Suzanne Labin, Phyllis and Fred Schlafly, Jesse Helms, Roger Fontaine, Billy James Hargis, Carlos Penna Botto, and former Ambassador to Brazil Vernon Walters. Institutionally, WACL was associated with (or synonymous to) Interdoc, the Inter-American Confederation of Continental Defense, The Latin American Anti-Communist Confederation (CAL), Singlaub’s Western Goals Foundation, the American Council for World Freedom, Le Cercle Pinay, with Mexico’s Los Tecos and eventually FEMACO — all extremist organizations sharing TFP’s flair for anti-Semitism, anticommunism, and medievalist nostalgia. By the 1980s, WACL had become an avenue for supporting Central America’s brutal dictatorships, with money and tactical aid coming from as far afield as Mexico, Argentina, and the Knights of Malta⁵³.

Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira and the Brazilian TFP cultivated alliances with WACL and with several of its disreputable members. As Margaret Power has noted, the Brazilian and Argentine TFPs sent delegations to WACL’s 1971 conference in Manila⁵⁴. In 1974, the São Paulo headquarters of the TFP held a special event to welcome “anticommunists from various parts of the world,” who came to fraternize and exchange speeches, audiovisual presentations, and tactics. The attendees included Fred Schlafly, then president of WACL and of the associated American Council for World Freedom (ACWF);

⁵² *The Journal* (Summit Ministries, Manitou Springs, CO), April 1999, p. 2-3. <https://www.summit.org/archives/journal/1999-04-Summit-Journal.pdf> (last access on 29 March 2018).

⁵³ Pierre Abramovici, “The World Anti-Communist League: Origins, Structures, and Activities,” in Van Dongen, “*Transnational Anti-Communism*,” 118-124; Adrian Hänni, “A Global Crusade against Communism: The Cercle in the “Second Cold War” in Van Dongen, “*Transnational Anti-Communism*,” 164; Anderson and Anderson, *Inside the League*, 74, 109, 152, 183; *Réplica* 44 (March 1973), 34; *Réplica* 45 (April 1973), 17. See also López (2016, 286); Weinberg (2002, 354).

⁵⁴ Power, “Transnational, Conservative, Catholic,” 98; Campos Filho (1980)

Suzanne Labin herself, and Shim Hyunjoon, WACL's Secretary General⁵⁵. Brazilian participation swelled to proportions significant enough that WACL's 1975 annual meeting was held in Rio. For the occasion, the TFP provided key logistical support: Plínio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira (a close friend of Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira's, something of a TFP co-founder, and another "slave" of the founder) helped secure visas for the international crowd of right-wing celebrities descending on the Marvelous City⁵⁶. This relationship did have its limits — as if to validate Weyrich's dire diagnosis of right-wing disjointedness, TFP apparently refused to participate in a 1972 meeting of a WACL affiliate group because of a difference of opinion about the proto-fascist Argentine priest Julio Meinvielle⁵⁷.

In the absence of TFP, however, other extremists were quite willing to represent Brazil. As assiduous members of a transnational far-right community, Brazilians had been key WACL activists even before its inception, via the institutions that preceded it. Suzanne Labin—French, but a regular in Brazilian anticommunist circles, whose exploits I have detailed elsewhere — organized the meeting which "prefigured" WACL itself; and Brazilian Carlos Penna Botto (whose very name, to quote historian Rodrigo Patto, became a "synonym for fanaticism, for exaggerated and irrational anticommunism" (van Dongen et al. 2014, 119)) was present at each of these, in 1960 and 1961. Perhaps most mysterious among those Brazilians supporting WACL was *paulista* Carlos Barbieri Filho. Rumors continue to swirl around Barbieri, whose entanglements seem to have ranged from São Paulo banking scandals to WACL itself to Central America's civil wars and even to Operation Condor⁵⁸. By some accounts, Barbieri, who was reputed to tote a pistol on his hip at all times, struck even *tefepistas* as too "volatile" (Anderson and Anderson 1986, 141). Yet, when he was not serving as the treasurer for Condor — a fearsome cross-border kidnapping operation shared between several South American dictatorships — Barbieri maintained contacts with some of the Brazilian dictatorship's highest authorities, and successfully founded and presided over right-wing institutions of his own. Barbieri served as a Latin American agent for WACL, thus connecting it with the most shadowy of anticommunists in the hemisphere. He traveled the world to its conferences, including the Mexico and Taipei meetings; founded Brazil's own WACL chapter, SEPES (which did, at least occasionally, collaborate with the TFP); and was instrumental to the development of WACL's Latin American regional subsidiary, whose 1974 conference he organized and supervised at the Copacabana Palace Hotel⁵⁹. The following year, he would serve as WACL President. By 1976, the *Serviço Nacional de Inteligência* (SNI, National Intelligence

⁵⁵ Power, "Transnational, Conservative, Catholic," 98; Campos Filho (1980); "TFP participa de Congresso mundial anticomunista nas Filipinas."

⁵⁶ Adolpho Corrêa de Sá e Benevides, Memorandum, 10 October 1974, Arquivo Nacional, Coordenação Regional no Distrito Federal (hereafter AN/COREG), BR-DFANBSB-Z4-DPN-PES-VIS-0076.

⁵⁷ DSI/MRE, "Informação No. DSI/195," 18 January 1974, AN/COREG, BR-DFANBSB-Z4-DPN-ENI-0044-edit2, 16.

⁵⁸ Rubens Valente, "Célula anticomunista atuou no Brasil durante a ditadura," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 15 November 2009, <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/brasil/fc1511200911.htm>, consulted on 4 April 2018; Rodolpho Costa Machado (2015). Mercedes Jansa, "Garzón reúne más datos de Pinochet," *El Periódico de Catalunya* (Barcelona), 4 December 1998.

⁵⁹ Carlo Barbieri Filho to Armando Falcão, 5 March 1975, AN/COREG, BR-AN-RIO-TT-0-MCP-PRO-0405; Rafael Rodríguez to Carlo Barbieri Filho, 30 October 1973, AN/COREG, BR-DFANBSB-Z4-DPN-ENI-0044-edit2; *Um homem, uma obra, uma gesta*, 196; Costa Machado (2015, 217); DSI/MRE, "Informação para o ministro Souto Maior," 20 May 1974, AN/COREG, Fundo SNIG, BR-DFANBSB-Z4-DPN-PES-VIS-0076-edit, 3.

Service) headquarters would describe him as “a democrat who enjoys an excellent relationship with national and international anticommunist organizations.”⁶⁰

In a sense, Barbieri’s “excellent relationship” was over determined — WACL, his pet project, made him a key player in and point of contact for an organization designed to connect extreme anticommunist activists from across the globe. Yet it also made him a focal point nationally, as right-wing Brazilians of various stripes flocked to the cause — demonstrating, if nothing else, the willingness of Brazil’s leading conservative activists to support network-building across national and denominational borders. When Barbieri organized a meeting of WACL affiliates in 1974, Geraldo Proença Sigaud (the reactionary Archbishop of *Diamantina*) was among those who answered the call to speak. Sigaud, whose connection with the TFP stemmed from his own penchant for medievaesque Catholicism, informed the gathered delegates that progressive Catholic enemies of his government (including high school students) were the enemies of all anticommunists⁶¹. Alongside the Archbishop, steadfast in his support of WACL and its subsidiaries, journalist Gustavo Corção stepped on the podium to denounce progressive Catholicism and doctrinal pluralism⁶². Ideologically aligned, Corção and Sigaud were not exactly friends – but as two of the most domestically celebrated of Brazilian conservatives, they provided powerful sanction for Barbieri’s open invitation to the region’s and the world’s extremists to come to Brazil. The 1975 WACL conference in Rio drew global right-wing celebrities like Jesse Helms and Fred Schläfly to the beaches of Rio, where the latter complained to his fellow WACL members about “the appropriation of funds, the elaboration of big social welfare programs, and the confiscation of private property and resources.”⁶³ Helms added, notably, that he and Billy Graham had privately agreed that South America alone contained the future’s promise when it came to evangelical conservatism: “Europe is, spiritually, almost dead,” while South America, “in a full process of religious awakening, produces the leadership of the strongest anti-communist movements.”⁶⁴

Helms, Schläfly, and Graham aside, the meeting also saw the participation of a motley crew of national conservative stars, including the two highest-ranking arch-conservative ministers: Armando Falcão and Alfredo Buzaid. The former considered delivering the meeting’s keynote speech and ended up delivering closing remarks, in which he expressed his and the President’s “obvious solidarity” with WACL. “The action of the World Anticommunist League,” he declared, “is very important because the democratic universe is poor in combat leadership.”⁶⁵ By the late 1980s, Falcão would have passed the baton to another rising star in Brazil’s government and its

⁶⁰ Serviço Nacional de Informações, Informação No. 244/16/AC/76 (14 June 1976), AN/COREG, Fundo SNIG, AC-ACE-97161-76.

⁶¹ CISA, Encaminhamento No 0027 (6 Feb 1974) AN/COREG, Fundo CISA, BR-AN-BSB-VAZ-118-0015.

⁶² “Informação para o Ministro Souto Maior,” 4.

⁶³ Íntegra do Discurso do Senadord Norte-Americano, Jesse Helms, Pronunciado no Encerramento do VIII Congresso da WACL, *Sepes Boletim* [n.d.], AN/COREG, BR-DFANBSB-Z4-DPN-ENI-0044-edit, 42

⁶⁴ “Íntegra do Discurso do Senadord Norte-Americano, Jesse Helms, Pronunciado no Encerramento do VIII Congresso da WACL,” *Sepes Boletim* [n.d.], AN/COREG, BR-DFANBSB-Z4-DPN-ENI-0044-edit, 42.

⁶⁵ Falcão to Senhor Presidente da República (13 March 1975) AN/COREG, BR-AN-RIO-TT-0-MCP-PRO-0405; “Liga Encerra Congresso,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 26 April 1975, 4.

renovated and re-energized conservatism: Daso Coimbra. In 1987, Carlos Barbieri Filho — the head at this point of the Latin American Democratic Federation (FEDAL), yet another regional right-wing alliance — represented Brazil at WACL's world conference in Taipei. Alongside him stood Coimbra — an ascendant celebrity of Brazil's fledgling democracy, and perhaps the most visible leader of a new crop of conservative evangelical politicians laying the groundwork for a Christian Right in the new Brazil⁶⁶.

Conclusion

Coimbra's inclusion proved a fitting indication of the religious politics of the next several decades in Brazil. The direction that was established by the transnational agenda-building of TFP and IPF, alongside other activists and their institutions, is certainly evident in the national and international politics of today's Christian Right. The connections I have sketched above show the ways in which the predominance of Evangelical neoconservatism — or of identitarian neoconservatism that counts on staunch Evangelical support even for a Donald Trump, a Michel Temer, or an Eduardo Cunha type — emerged from contexts that were cooperative and transnational. The current configuration of powerful religious conservatism stretching from Washington to Brasília is far from coincidental — it is the result, rather, of the strategizing, information-sharing, and politicking of a generation of canny right-wing activists from the United States and Brazil.

As noted above, this essay represents something of a case study, a window into a larger body of research, in which the kinds of relationships I have sketched here proliferate. Those relationships reveal the importance not only of a transnational perspective on recent conservatisms but of Brazil and Brazilians in their development. The “New Right” — if, indeed, we can consider unitary and/or, at this point, novel — has a history that stretches far beyond the racial and cultural politics of the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. The outrage of North American neoconservatives — from disaffected liberals to certain partisans of Goldwater and Reagan to, more pertinently, Weyrich and others who felt Reagan to have betrayed the “bright promise” of conservatism⁶⁷ — had analogues elsewhere, conservatives who may have differed in their religious and even ideological orientations, but who could look sympathetically on a common platform of issues such as that of the IPF. Those who began constructing this platform conceived of its broad appeal, and its potential for uniting the Right on a staggering scale. The imaginative leaps taken by José Lúcia de Araújo Corrêa in writing to Carl McIntire; by McIntire's own followers in Brazil and elsewhere; and by Paul Weyrich's multi-continental vision of his own brand of combining capitalism and old-fashioned values are a testament to that scale. The commonset of issues to which these men subscribed looks very familiar from the vantage point of today's Right, which likewise couples deregulation, near-

⁶⁶ “Participação de Ativistas Políticos Brasileiros em Reuniões Internacionais de Caráter Anti-Comunista na República da China, em Ago 87” (n.d.), AN/COREG, ASP-ACE-19806-87, 1.

⁶⁷ “Thunder from the Right,” *Conservative Digest*, May 1984. LOCPMWS, Box 13.

mythic individualism, and neoliberal dismantling of the state with social and moral issues (especially abortion and homosexuality) and various appeals to traditional culture and ethnocentric (Christian, middle-class, nationalistic) normativities (Chauí 2016). Where I and others have begun historicizing the “culture wars” as a Cold War phenomenon that structured anticommunism and state violence in the Americas, our cultural histories must also take into account the implications of such stories for the Right(s) of today. Those implications, as I have begun to elucidate here, encompass realignments and re-imaginings of conservatism that far exceed national parameters, and which saw Brazil and Brazilians sharing in the critical legwork that enabled the transnational articulation of a New Right.

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