

Doc. Ação Católica  
J.E.C. BRASIL

conta corrente .....	1.415.161.065,70
Depósito no Banco do Brasil .....	2.330.000,00
Depósito na Caixa Econômica .....	1.415.161.065,70
Depósito em espécie .....	889.455.354,00
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>6.088.965.666,30</b>

Fundo de ...  
Outras reservas

RECEITAS	
Contribuição dos membros .....	3.054.000,00
Contribuição dos pais .....	69.000,00
Contribuição das escolas .....	142,00
Contribuição das famílias .....	146,60
Contribuição de C. Própria .....	13.241,00
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>8.145.204.573,60</b>
Despesas no País .....	291.273.859,10
Despesas no Exterior .....	437.096.025,40
Despesas em Moeda Estrangeira .....	104.493,00
Realizar .....	278.250,00

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# A CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION

Dialogues on Social Justice and Democracy Between Europe and the Americas (1945-1965)

Edited by Marta Busani - Paolo Valvo

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...	189.207.461,00
...	7.910.602.356,50
...	54.491.288,20
...	285.081.969,70
...	632.972.076,80
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>19.890.464.193,10</b>

...	367.230,00
...	807.800,00
...	24.500,00
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>1.199.530,00</b>

OUTRAS RESPONSABILIDADES

1961

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edizioni



MARTA BUSANI – PAOLO VALVO (EDS.)

# A Christian Revolution

*Dialogues on Social Justice and Democracy Between  
Europe and the Americas (1945-1965)*

Studium  
edizioni

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to Manuel Ceballos Ramírez (1947-2022),  
*in memoriam*

## INDEX

- A World Fit for the Gospel 7  
*Marta Busani - Paolo Valvo*
- I. The «Solidarity-State». Università Cattolica, a post-World War II Think Tank on Social Thought 25  
*Maria Bocci*
- II. Catholic Social Action in Post-War Germany: Pius XII and the Creation of Christian Trade Unions in the Federal Republic, 1948-1959 55  
*Simon Unger-Alvi*
- III. The Catholic Corporative Project in Cold War America. The Debate on the Industry Council Plan, 1940-1960 83  
*Susanna De Stradis*
- IV. American Catholics and Religious Intolerance in Franco's Spain 107  
*Rafael Escobedo Romero*
- V. The Networks of the Economy and Humanism Movement Through the Trajectory of Juan Pablo Terra, 1947-1957 133  
*Lorena García Mourelle*
- VI. Between Civitas and Polis: Carlos Alberto Siri's neo-Thomist Approach for Democracy in Latin America 153  
*Yves Bernardo Roger Solís Nicot*
- VII. Jesuit Intellectual Networks and Socio-political Renewal in Latin America: About a Magazine, 1949-1959 171  
*Paolo Valvo*

VIII.	From Maritain to the «Brazilian Revolution»: the Social Thought of the <i>Juventude Estudantil Católica</i> (JEC) and <i>Juventude Universitária Católica</i> (JUC)	193
	<i>Marta Busani</i>	
IX.	Efraín González Morfín, Intellectual and Promoter of the Social Doctrine of the Church	221
	<i>Laura Alarcón Menchaca</i>	
X.	Beyond the Social Doctrine of the Church. The Contribution of Sergio Méndez Arceo to the Second Vatican Council	247
	<i>Tania Hernández Vicencio</i>	
	Abstracts	271
	The Authors	277
	Index of Names	281



#### IV.

## AMERICAN CATHOLICS AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE IN FRANCO'S SPAIN RAFAEL ESCOBEDO ROMERO

### 1. *Introduction*

Roman Catholics in Francoist Spain and in the United States share a common faith, but the history of Catholicism in these two countries followed very different paths. Before key transformations that the Second Vatican Council ushered in, Catholic attitudes towards religious freedom in these two countries were sharply divergent. Each nation's political system, with its own historical circumstances, was also very different. The United States, for its part, was a democracy in which religious freedom had become a substantial part of its own political tradition. Francisco Franco's Spain was instead a military dictatorship that some critics mocked as a "National-Catholic" state<sup>1</sup>, if not a "clerical-fascist" regime, as the famous American anti-Catholic author Paul Blanshard once put it<sup>2</sup>. As a result, Catholics in Spain and the United States approached the matter of religious freedom, as well as the closely related issue of the separation between church and state, very differently. However, Vatican II crucial changes radically transformed Spanish Catholics' attitudes, which eventually resembled American ones.

The Second Vatican Council put an end to centuries-long Roman Catholic reluctance toward, if not harsh condemnation of, the idea of religious freedom as a human and civil right<sup>3</sup>. The profound impact of totalitarianism and of World War II on the Western mind entailed a renewed concern for human rights as the very core of all human society. The intrinsic and inviolable dignity of the individual, regardless of any

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<sup>1</sup> A. BOTTI, *Cielo y dinero: El nacionalcatolicismo en España, 1881-1975*, Alianza, Madrid 2008<sup>2</sup>, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> P. BLANSHARD, *Freedom and Catholic Power in Spain and Portugal: An American Interpretation*, Beacon, Boston 1962, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> II VATICAN COUNCIL, *Dignitatis humanae*, 7 December 1965, § 2.

other considerations, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights solemnly proclaimed in 1948, was enshrined as an inalienable principle<sup>4</sup>. The conciliar fathers clearly expressed a concern for excessive state power, which was part of the common experience of the postwar generations. This basic stance completely changed how human rights were understood as they concern individuals' religious beliefs and practices. Thus, although until just a few short centuries ago, most Westerners saw religious pluralism as, at best, an evil to be "tolerated" and esteemed religious unity of the social body as a foremost common good, religious freedom as a fundamental human right quickly became an ethical imperative that left little room for the restrictions and coercions that Christian nations up to then considered natural.

During those years, between the end of the war and the beginning of the Council, Catholic theologians, bishops and priests, as well as lay leaders, increasingly persuaded themselves of the Church's urgent need to openly endorse this human right<sup>5</sup>. Even Pope Pius XII's teachings expressed a growing benevolence towards the idea of religious freedom<sup>6</sup>. However, for most churchmen, sharp anathemas fulminated against religious freedom during the previous century hindered their immediate assimilation of the idea. *Dignitatis humanae* succeeded in making a fine distinction between the moral duty of all men to seek truth and to make their lives conform to it, on the one hand, and the right to not be coerced by any human power, particularly the state, in matters of religion and conscience, on the other. However, previous papal statements, such as Gregory XVI's *Mirari vos* or Pius IX's *Syllabus*, seemed to condemn both altogether. Reaching the concept and its appropriate wording were not easy tasks, although not any easier than convincing the reluctant. Few Catholics in the world were more concerned than those who lived in the United States about the troublesome relationship between civil liberties and their

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<sup>4</sup> See P.G. LAUREN, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2011<sup>3</sup>, pp. 137-226.

<sup>5</sup> S. SCATENA, *La fatica della libertà. L'elaborazione della dichiarazione Dignitatis humanae sulla libertà religiosa del Vaticano II*, il Mulino, Bologna 2003, pp. 7-16.

<sup>6</sup> His address to Italian Catholic jurists on December 6, 1953 is especially remarkable (*Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Roma 1954, vol. XV, pp. 477-492).

Church's teachings, precisely because their historical experience with liberty contradicted the bad omens that they learned from the official Church's teachings. It is not an accident that the most influential theologian in the *Dignitatis humanae*'s drafting process was John Courtney Murray, an American clergyman<sup>7</sup>.

## *2. American Catholics and religious freedom: a troublesome relationship*

American Catholic history is the history of a big success. Catholics were just a tiny minority when the constitutional declaration of religious freedom and church-state separation was enacted, but during the following century and a half, millions of Irish, German, Italian and Polish Catholic immigrants made their way to the United States and completely transformed its human landscape. They distinctively shaped the great American cities on the East Coast and the Midwest, and their thriving communities were a shining example of the American dream<sup>8</sup>. However, in spite of this auspicious legal framework, American Catholics still faced important challenges from the time of independence all the way up to John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign. The growth of the Catholic population awoke strong feelings among the Protestant majority of the land. Therefore, during the nineteenth century, movements such as nativism or the Know Nothings blended traditional Protestant antipopery discourse with the social, political and cultural unease that provoked the deep and rapid transformations of American industrial cities, where

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<sup>7</sup> See D. GONNET, *La liberté religieuse à Vatican II: La contribution de John Courtney Murray*, Cerf, Paris 1994, or P.A. FERNÁNDEZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Iglesia católica y libertad religiosa: El papel de John Courtney Murray en la Declaración Dignitatis humanae del Concilio Vaticano II*, Edicep, Valencia 2014.

<sup>8</sup> See, among many others: J.P. DOLAN, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1992, pp. 101-417; C. GILLIS, *Roman Catholicism in America*, Columbia University Press, New York 1999, pp. 48-94; J.M. O'TOOLE, *The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2008, pp. 1-198.

Catholic immigrants played a decisive role<sup>9</sup>. Ultimately, the biggest indictment against American Catholics was that they were not good Americans because their religion was fundamentally incompatible with the great principles at the core of the American Constitution<sup>10</sup>. Protestants – and later also secularists – were wary of the Church’s reluctance to allow Catholics to intermingle with their fellow Americans in a variety of settings, especially with the hierarchy’s emphasis on obliging Catholic parents to exclusively send their children to Catholic schools. Beyond this and other specific reproaches, they especially highlighted the fundamental incompatibility between the First Amendment and the Church’s teachings on religious freedom and the separation of church and state.

The harsh words of the nineteenth century Catholic hierarchy in Rome and in many other countries – including, of course, Spain – strongly contrasted with the vehement statement made in 1948 by archbishop John McNicholas, president of the American bishops conference, to «The New York Times»: «We deny absolutely and without any qualification that the Catholic bishops of the United States are seeking a union of church and state by any endeavors whatsoever, either proximate or remote»<sup>11</sup>. Certainly, he said so in the midst of the late-1940s wave of anti-Catholicism, as we will see later. But what is more interesting about such a declaration is that its wording was actually very similar to many previous stances by American prelates since the times of John Carroll, the first bishop of the primatial see of Baltimore and brother of one of the signatories of the

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<sup>9</sup> See M.S. MASSA, *The Last Acceptable Prejudice: Anti-Catholicism in America*, Crossroads, New York 2003, pp. 18-39.

<sup>10</sup> P. BLANSHARD, in *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (Beacon, Boston 1949), conspicuously portrayed this view. See also J.P. DOLAN, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension*, Oxford University Press, New York 2002, and J.T. MCGREEVY, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, W. W. Norton, New York 2003, pp. 91-126 and 166-215.

<sup>11</sup> THE NEW YORK TIMES, *Denies Catholics Oppose Separation*, in «The New York Times», 26 January 1948.

American independence<sup>12</sup>. Religious freedom and church-state separation was repeatedly endorsed by the Catholic Church in the United States<sup>13</sup>.

Why did the American Catholic hierarchy display such a different approach to these matters since so old times? One answer points to a disparity of historical experience. In spite of the abovementioned difficulties, the experience of American Catholics with freedom and separation was very different from that of the Church in Europe or in Latin America, where liberal governments struggled with Church hierarchy in overwhelmingly Catholic countries like France, the Italian states, Mexico or Spain. The American experience had been different and, in some ways, unique in the world. There, freedom of worship and church disestablishment was not born of a secularist inclination against a dominant religion, but rather flowed from a wise solution to deal with religious pluralism and individual freedoms. In the United States, both religious freedom and church-state separation were never understood as a weapon against any particular denomination. The First Amendment meant therefore for the Catholic Church the best deal for its growth and flourishing. Although, ultimately, Pope Leo XIII acknowledged this, at the same time he also specifically warned American Catholics that they could not claim their way as a universal solution<sup>14</sup>. In other words, it was a good hypothesis for the United States' specific situation, but not the ideal situation, which was, in the end, the Catholic state.

This corresponds to a conspicuously casuistic distinction between the thesis and the hypothesis. As an Italian Jesuit exposed just a year before Pius IX's famous *Syllabus*, pontifical condemnations of religious freedom and church-state separation should be interpreted as «universal principles regarding human nature in itself and to the divine order», i.e., as a thesis, «but considered as hypothesis, i.e. as provisions appropriate to the special conditions of this or that people, they can be legitimate; and Catholics can

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<sup>12</sup> C. O'DONNELL, *John Carroll and the Origins of an American Catholic Church, 1783–1815*, in «William and Mary Quarterly», LXVIII:I, 2011, p. 121.

<sup>13</sup> J.T. ELLIS, *Church and state. An American Catholic tradition*, in «Harper's», November 1953.

<sup>14</sup> LEO XIII, *Longinqua oceani* (1895) and *Testem benevolentiae* (1899). See J. HENNESEY, *American Catholics: A history of the Roman Catholic community in the United States*, Oxford University Press, New York 1981, pp. 196-203.

love and defend them, doing beautiful and useful work, when they use them, as effectively as they can, in the service of religion and of justice»<sup>15</sup>. Charles de Montalembert, a French Catholic liberal writer, mocked this kind of reasoning by summarizing it as follows: «when I am weaker, I demand liberty because it is your principle; but when I am stronger, I take it away because it is not my principle»<sup>16</sup>. According to that perhaps pretty unscrupulous logic, non-Catholic Americans were right to question what might happen if Catholics one day became the majority in the United States. Considering demographic trends, the likelihood of a Catholic majority in America was a very reasonable supposition during the postwar years, as was the concern that such a majority could «use freedom to overthrow freedom»<sup>17</sup>.

This charge became commonplace in American anti-Catholic discourse and, of course, it turned into an almost daily slogan when, as periodically happened, the so-called Catholic question made the headlines. Late 1940s and early 1950s was one of these moments when Catholicism in America became a prominent matter of public discussion, as happened in 1947 with the landmark decision of the Supreme Court that declared that some public financing programs that benefitted parochial schools do not violate the First Amendment<sup>18</sup>. The controversy became truly heated and the debate went further, digging up old and new polemics surrounding the Catholic Church and the role it played in American society<sup>19</sup>. Shortly thereafter, backlash to the parochial school controversy propelled the creation of the influential advocacy group Protestants and Other Americans United for

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<sup>15</sup> C.M. CURCI, *Il Congresso Cattolico di Malines e le libertà moderne*, in «La Civiltà Cattolica», V/VIII, 1863, pp. 129-149, as translated in M. RHONHEIMER, *The Common Good of Constitutional Democracy*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C. 2013, p. 387.

<sup>16</sup> C. DE MONTALEMBERT, *De l'appel comme d'abus et des articles organiques du Concordat*, in «Le Correspondant», April 1857, pp. 652-653. Unless otherwise noted, translations of quotes are mine.

<sup>17</sup> THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY, *Exceptionable Intolerance*, in «The Christian Century», 12 August 1953.

<sup>18</sup> D.L. DRAKEMAN, *Everson v. Board of Education and the Quest for the Historical Establishment Clause*, in «American Journal of Legal History», IL: CXIX, 2007, pp. 127-135.

<sup>19</sup> J. HENNESEY, *American Catholics*, cit., pp. 294-300.

Separation of Church and State<sup>20</sup> and made Paul Blanshard's *American Freedom and Catholic Power* a real bestseller, which, according to a Catholic journalist, is one of the most influential anti-Catholic books ever written<sup>21</sup>. The tide seemed to ebb during the mid-1950s, but it vigorously resurged when John Fitzgerald Kennedy, a Catholic Senator, started his race towards the White House. Before that, the only Catholic to run for the presidency was Democratic New Yorker Al Smith. The Republican candidate Herbert Hoover defeated him and, admittedly, being Catholic was one of Smith's major handicaps<sup>22</sup>. The presidential campaign of 1928 became a bitter national debate not just about the fitness of a Catholic president, but also about Catholic citizens' loyalty to the Constitution, democracy and all in all to the American people. Three decades later, things were very different on the American political scene. Of course, the debate was milder and, in the end, his Catholicism did not impede the young Kennedy's victory<sup>23</sup>. While the controversy was indeed milder, it was still in the air. The Church's teachings on religious freedom and church-state separation, although increasingly nuanced, were still in force, and thus Protestant uneasiness toward Catholicism's progress remained.

### 3. *Franco's Spain, the Catholic dictatorship*

As if all this were not enough, another contentious issue came to complicate matters for American Catholics during those turbulent times.

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<sup>20</sup> That organization's advocacy – nowadays just known as Americans United for Separation of Church and State – eventually involved issues concerning many denominations, often setting them against Evangelical Protestantism and conservative politicians. However, their first steps were absolutely determined by the confrontation between Protestants and secularists against Catholics (see the available online description of the organization's records at Princeton University Library Department of Rare Books and Special Collections website: <https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/MC185#description>). All internet links are retrieved on 2023, March 2.

<sup>21</sup> R.P. LOCKWOOD, *The Five Most Influential Anti-Catholic Books*, in «This Rock», May 2007.

<sup>22</sup> J. HENNESEY, *American Catholics*, cit., p. 246. See also R.A. SLAYTON, *The Rise and Redemption of Al Smith*, The Free Press, New York 2001, pp. 259-328.

<sup>23</sup> See T.J. CARTY, *A Catholic in the White House?: Religion, Politics, and John F. Kennedy's Presidential Campaign*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2004.

«[I]f Roman Catholicism continues to grow», claimed a Presbyterian theologian in 1949, «the situation of Protestants everywhere will be as it is in Spain»<sup>24</sup>. This certainty was widely shared among American non-Catholics, especially when the public's concern for the so-called Catholic menace escalated. Spain's situation showed that the thesis of a Catholic state, which then suppressed religious rights, could be real and could exist in the twentieth century. In the English-speaking world, Spain represented the archetype of Catholic intolerance, a portrayal that was intermingled with the Black Legend<sup>25</sup>.

The United States' relationship with Francoist Spain was additionally troublesome<sup>26</sup>. Franco's regime was a nasty military dictatorship that ominously collaborated with Hitler and Mussolini during World War II. After the war, the Allies considered overthrowing Franco, but fear of a Communist takeover dissuaded them. The regime remained a pariah, diplomatically isolated and condemned by the United Nations, but its luck began to change as the Cold War worsened. The Pentagon asked with increasing insistence for a rapprochement with Spain due to its geostrategic value. Relations with the Spanish regime steadily improved until the two countries signed a defense agreement in 1953. The United States thus became the main foreign ally of Francoism. The *Caudillo's* gloomy recent past was the bitterest pill to swallow, as was the regime's roughly undemocratic features. But lack of religious freedom awoke strong feelings too. However, this lack of religious freedom was not just part of a general suppression of civil rights, as could happen in other dictatorships, but rather was the distinctive feature of a genuine Catholic dictatorship. Protestants and secularists found this aspect of the friendly dictatorship to which the United States was pouring millions of dollars most outrageous, while American Catholics found it most troublesome and embarrassing.

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<sup>24</sup> M. CLARK, *Reformed Church Hears Franco Hit*, in «The New York Times», 17 February 1949.

<sup>25</sup> See P.W. POWELL, *Tree of Hate: Propaganda and Prejudices Affecting United States Relations with the Hispanic World*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque 2008<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> For a comprehensive bibliography of Spanish-American relations during Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975) see L. DELGADO-D. CORRALES, *Relaciones entre España y los Estados Unidos en el siglo XX: Bibliografía orientativa*, Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, Alicante 2016, pp. 14-29.



Paradoxically, the Spanish regime felt more indifference than hostility towards religious minorities. Of course, they were not seen with sympathy, but they were not considered a danger either, and therefore the repression they suffered cannot be compared with what the real enemies of the regime went through. In Spain a big religious question certainly loomed, but as happened in many other Latin countries, it amounted to a conflict between Catholics and secularists, not among different religions. Spaniards who practiced non-Catholic faiths constituted just a few thousand people and they were politically peaceful with no intention of challenging the regime. Estimations of their numbers vary. There were about 30,000 Protestants of different denominations<sup>27</sup> – most of them descendants of people who converted during a brief period of religious freedom from 1868-1874<sup>28</sup>, in addition to alien residents – plus an even smaller numbers of Jews and Muslims<sup>29</sup>. Although persecution against Spanish Protestants was not seriously oppressive, they certainly were aware that the only way to avoid further problems was to extensively disseminate the abuses they could suffer in order to mobilize foreign protest<sup>30</sup>. In this way, the United States and other Western countries widely knew<sup>31</sup> of Spanish Protestants' plight<sup>31</sup>.

While Protestants and other religious minorities were not criminally persecuted as, for example, Communists were, they still did not enjoy full

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<sup>27</sup> That was the figure estimated by a memorandum from the Spanish Diplomatic Information Office, April 6, 1960 (Universidad de Navarra General Archive, Marcelino Oreja Aguirre Papers, box 36, doc. 9). Most newspapers, both at home and abroad, echoed this figure during the 1960s (press kit for the Spanish minister of Foreign Affairs, January 2, 1965, *ibid.*, box 35, doc. 1).

<sup>28</sup> See J.B. VILAR, *Intolerancia y libertad en la España contemporánea: Los orígenes del protestantismo español actual*, Istmo, Madrid 1994.

<sup>29</sup> S.F. WEXLER, *Rights for Spanish Protestants?*, in «The Christian Century», 7 July 1965; T. SZULC, *Jews Return to a Synagogue in Spain*, in «The New York Times», 17 October 1966; E.K. CULHANE, *Religious Freedom in Spain*, in «America», 13 January 1968.

<sup>30</sup> M. LÓPEZ RODRÍGUEZ, *La España protestante*, Sedmay, Madrid 1976, pp. 38-42 and 62-65.

<sup>31</sup> As an example, «The New York Times» mentioned the lack of religious freedom in Spain up to 84 times from 1945 to 1965. The abovementioned 1965 press kit (Universidad de Navarra General Archive, Marcelino Oreja Aguirre Papers, box 35, doc. 1) gathered an impressive amount of press stories from European, North American and Latin American newspapers about the situation in Spain when the government announced a draft for a new religious tolerance law.

religious freedom. What, then, was their exact legal status in Franco's Spain? What could they do and not do? In July 1945, a few weeks after the end of the war in Europe, Franco passed a bill called *Fuero de los Españoles*, literally Charter of the Spaniards, a kind of bill of rights aimed to wither the authoritarian face of the regime<sup>32</sup>. Article 6 thereof declared that, «no one shall be disturbed for his religious beliefs or the private exercise of his worship. No ceremonies or external manifestations shall be permitted except for those that pertain to the Catholic Religion»<sup>33</sup>. As detailed below, this wording is almost identical to that of article 11 in the 1876 Constitution, when, after the revolutionary period of 1868-1874, religious toleration was seen as a good middle ground between the complete religious freedom of the previous years and the absolute intolerance once practiced. Theoretically, non-Catholics in Francoist Spain could therefore worship privately inside their temples, though they could not appearing as such from outside; they could contract civil marriage, bury their dead in civil cemeteries and manage their own schools. In turn, they could not publicly display their faith or acts of worship and they were strictly prohibited from proselytizing.

Things were not so clear, however, in everyday life and the Protestant experience very much depended on the personal whims of officials and on the local clergy's anti-Protestant zeal. In 1950, several Spanish Protestant leaders wrote to Franco asking for a clarification of their rights and duties, according to the framework of *Fuero's* article 6. They pled for specific provisions on many issues: reopening and inaugurating places of worship and schools, printing Bibles, hymnbooks and other religious literature for their use only in churches, respect for the conscience of children and students at both public and private educational institutions, lifting hindrances to civil marriages when one or the two parties were baptized as Catholics, right to claim public social assistance without the imposition of conditions which it would be impossible or grievous to the Protestant

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<sup>32</sup> E. ÁLVAREZ CORA, *La constitución postiza: el nacimiento del Fuero de los Españoles*, Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid 2010, pp. 23-28.

<sup>33</sup> *Fuero de los Españoles*, 17 July 1945, published in the Spanish official gazette «Boletín Oficial del Estado», 18 July 1945, pp. 358-360. The drafting process is analyzed in E. ÁLVAREZ CORA, *La constitución postiza*, cit., pp. 185-209.

conscience to accept, exemption from Catholic practices for those subjected to military or penal jurisdiction, as well as extension of the right to receive spiritual assistance from their pastors. They also petitioned for guarantees not to be disrupted while in services and for appropriate burials where civil cemeteries did not exist<sup>34</sup>. Ultimately, they besought a generous interpretation of the abovementioned article that in many instances – perhaps most of them, but not always and consistently – was what local authorities actually applied. It was not just a matter of little legal certainty. The limited tolerance that existed in Franco's Spain was the result of an uneasy and unstable balance between the fundamental principles that shaped the regime's identity, the "National-Catholic" zeal of some of their social supporters, and the need to appease Western powers. Without the latter element, religious suppression would have been harsher and more thorough, and tolerance, if it existed, would have been more narrowly applied.

By doing all this, Franco was simply fulfilling what the Church required of Catholic rulers of Catholic countries. Although certainly just a few countries still fulfilled these requirements, Spain was, according to the traditional Catholic view, an example of the "thesis", the ideal situation for a Catholic country. Of course, this was the most worrying part of the problem both for Catholics and non-Catholics in the United States. However, in order to thoroughly understand the complexity of the question, it is important to note that restricting religious freedom was not just the result of strict obedience to the Church's teachings on the Catholic state, but also corresponded to a comprehensive interpretation of the very essence of Spain as a nation. According to a consolidated narrative, Spain was a Catholic nation and its Catholicism – its Catholic unity – shaped its nationality and defined the most intimate nucleus of its historical

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<sup>34</sup> Besides newspapers pieces, the list of disabilities can be found in several books published for the American reader, such as: R. PATTEE, *The Religious Question in Spain*, National Council of Catholic Men, Washington D.C. 1950, pp. 40-46; J.D. HUGHEY JR., *Religious Freedom in Spain: Its Ebb and Flow*, Broadman Press, Nashville 1955, pp. 140-143 and 155-161; J. DELPECH, *The Oppression of Protestants in Spain*, Beacon, Boston 1955, pp. 58-91; C. IRIZARRY, *The Thirty Thousand: Modern Spain and Protestantism*, Harcourt, Brace, and World, New York 1966, pp. 92-204.

existence<sup>35</sup>. The regime that the Civil War gave birth to represented itself as a phoenix-like resurrection of the eternal Spain. There was of course a great deal of disagreement among the Civil War's victors and they fiercely competed for shares of power under the undisputed leadership of Generalissimo Franco. Their approaches to the Catholic identity of the state and the nation were not always identical, but all of them certainly agreed upon the ongoing revival of a Catholic Spain that went beyond a mere emendation of the anticlerical Second Republic. Rather, all the nineteenth century should be rectified. The Civil War was read as the grand failure of a misguided modernity and Spain needed to recover her genuine soul, that which made her great during the Habsburgs times. In this larger discussion over what Spain was and what she ought to be, the matter of what to do with tiny religious minorities was just a collateral aspect. For Liberals, and of course for all further left, without religious freedom, Spaniards could not really be free and Spain remained a stranger to modern and progressive nations. For Catholics, recognizing religious freedom meant giving up Catholic unity and thus depriving Spain of its very identity, as Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo famously averred late in the nineteenth century, «Spain, evangelizer of half of the world. Spain, hammer of heretics, light of Trent, sword of the Pope, cradle of Saint Ignatius. That is our greatness and our glory: we have no other»<sup>36</sup>. Given these views, Spaniards frequently and bitterly quarreled over this issue for more than a century. Actual implications, that is, the specific situation of religious minorities, barely mattered beside the titanic struggle for the Spanish identity, for the national soul<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> A. BOTTI, *Cielo y dinero*, cit., pp. 69-80; M. SUÁREZ CORTINA, *Entre cirios y garrotes: política y religión en la España contemporánea, 1808-1936*, Universidad de Cantabria-Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Santander 2014, pp. 73-121; J. LOUZAO, *Nación y catolicismo en la España contemporánea. Revisitando una interrelación histórica*, in «Ayer», XC, 2013, pp. 65-89; J. ÁLVAREZ JUNCO, *Mater Dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX*, Taurus, Madrid 2015<sup>13</sup>, pp. 396-464.

<sup>36</sup> M. MENÉNDEZ PELAYO, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, Linkgua, Barcelona 2017 [1882], book 8, p. 238.

<sup>37</sup> M. SUÁREZ CORTINA, *Entre cirios y garrotes*, cit., 33-71 and R. ESCOBEDO, *Las dos Españas y la libertad religiosa (1812-1978): breve balance historiográfico*, in «Historia Actual Online», XXXV/III, 2014, pp. 67-75.

Religious freedom was openly and widely discussed for the first time during the constitutional assembly of 1854-56. Catholic unity had not been seriously challenged up until then, even during revolutionary periods in the first half of the nineteenth century, although the case for religious freedom had been steadily gaining ground among far-left liberals. Whereas conservatives staunchly opposed any breach in Catholic unity – as did the Church hierarchy, wider Catholic opinion and, of course, absolutist traditionalists of the Carlist party – center-left liberals instead proposed a halfway solution: religious tolerance. Here, linguistic distinction is relevant. According to it, freedom can only recognize the good; it can never be assigned to an evil, which can only and at most be tolerated, as was the case, for example, with prostitution. For the very few non-Catholics that could exist in Spain at the time, private worship barely modified their clandestine religious life. Nevertheless, discussions were extremely heated. Although eventually such a constitution was never enacted, a few years later, in 1868, a new revolution ousted queen Isabella II and a new constitutional assembly was summoned. Again, the most controversial issue was religious freedom. Liberals across the board – from center-left to radical far-left – fully resolved to enact religious freedom and many of them advocated indeed for church-state separation. The Church triggered an unprecedented and massive nationwide Catholic mobilization. The question of religious freedom became indeed more controversial than discussions surrounding establishing a monarchy or a republic. Finally, the 1869 Constitution recognized the right to religious freedom for the first time in Spanish history.

The 1868 revolution inaugurated six years of political turmoil that eventually paved the way for the return of the Bourbon dynasty with the enthronement of Isabella's son Alfonso XII in 1874. The restored parliamentary monarchy relied on bipartisan politicians that learned valuable lessons from both those revolutionary six years and the authoritarian drift of Isabella's last years. The 1876 Constitution succeeded in gathering wide national consensus and solidified a long period of stability and progress – indeed, the longest up to now in our modern history. Yet, as happened before in 1854-1856 and in 1869, dispute grew around religious freedom. More left-wing Liberals struggled to keep the so

recently conquered freedom, while Catholic masses rallied again for the nation's religious unity. The government's proposal, as seen above, thus became such a good deal – halfway between both maximalist positions – that even Franco's regime opted for it. No liberty, no persecution, just tolerance for strictly private worship. For the third consecutive time, a constitutional assembly had devoted a disproportionate share of discussions to this very issue, but it had been perhaps the most pragmatic solution for the real country. Although certainly most Spaniards were probably not ready enough for very visible displays of "foreign" religions, that same social majority was not likely to bear an Inquisition-like persecution of dissidents, especially considering the increasing numbers of secularized and even non-believing locals. Conservative politicians succeeded in convincing an important part of those who doggedly battled religious tolerance. An unfaltering faction held out and called themselves *integristas*, that is, those who followed the "*doctrina católica íntegra*" or the whole Catholic doctrine. Their intransigence meant they only recognized Carlist party supporters as true Catholics, that is, the ultra-right wing Absolutist party twice defeated on the battleground. Fearing a kind of schism among Spanish Catholics, Leo XIII forced them to reconcile and *integrismo* eventually faded away<sup>38</sup>.

At the same time, little by little, the Spanish left detached from religion. Little by little too, they began to see religious freedom not just as a human right, but also as the first step in emancipating mankind from an essentially alienating and oppressive reality. Left-leaning Republicans viewed the Catholic religion as the main stumbling block toward progress in Spain<sup>39</sup>, and Socialists and Anarchists of course saw all religions as a tool of class dominators, as did their fellow comrades around the world. Religion became an increasingly dividing matter for a more and more polarized society. Eventually, the Restoration system failed to evolve into a modern

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<sup>38</sup> V. CÁRCEL, *Historia de la Iglesia en la España contemporánea*, Palabra, Madrid 2002, pp. 113-116.

<sup>39</sup> J. DE LA CUEVA, *Movilización política e identidad anticlerical, 1898-1910*, in «Ayer», XLI, 2001, pp. 101-125; M.P. SALOMÓN, *El discurso anticlerical en la construcción de una identidad nacional española republicana (1898-1936)*, in «Hispania Sacra», LIV, 2002, pp. 485-497; M. SUÁREZ CORTINA, *Entre cirios y garrotes*, cit., pp. 125-184, 215-222 and 231-240.

democracy without being surpassed either by a military dictatorship or by a new revolutionary turmoil. Therefore, Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship failed to avoid the advent of a left-wing Republic and the Republic failed to avoid the Civil War and the ultimate collapse of parliamentary government. The 1923-1930 military dictatorship did not emphasize religious features and followed the line of the Restoration system<sup>40</sup>. On the contrary, the religious question became a real cornerstone for the Republic. Not only religious freedom was recognized and church and state were separated, but also a complete array of anticlerical legislation was passed during the new regime's first months. At the same time, government anticlericalism was accompanied by an increasingly popular and street anticlericalism<sup>41</sup>. The political and social atmosphere worsened going forward and, when the 1936 military coup ended in wholesale civil war, left-leaning militias let loose a genocide-like persecution of clergymen, while lay Catholics and right-wing rebels rechristened the war as a Crusade<sup>42</sup>. The stakes could not have been higher between total suppression of Catholicism and a theocratic-like system. As we know, the latter prevailed.

As mentioned before, Franco eventually chose the 1876 Constitution's milder formula. Some Catholics in 1945 – though certainly not as many as in 1876 – resented the *Fuero's* tolerance. Among them, Pedro Cardinal Segura most loudly voiced his disappointment<sup>43</sup>. The archbishop of Seville invoked the blood that soldiers and martyrs spilled during the “Crusade”

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<sup>40</sup> Notwithstanding the minor brushes studied in A. QUIROGA, *La trampa católica. La Iglesia y la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera (1923-1929)*, in *Católicos y patriotas: Religión y nación en la Europa de entreguerras*, ed. por A. Botti, F. Montero y A. Quiroga, Sílex, Madrid 2013, pp. 161-192.

<sup>41</sup> See M. ÁLVAREZ TARDÍO, *Anticlericalismo y libertad de conciencia: política y religión en la Segunda República Española (1931-1936)*, Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, Madrid 2002, and J. DE LA CUEVA, *El laicismo republicano: tolerancia e intolerancia religiosa en la Segunda República española*, in «Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez», XLIV-I, 2014, pp. 89-109.

<sup>42</sup> See G. REDONDO, *Historia de la Iglesia en España, 1931-1939*, Rialp, Madrid 1993, vol. 2.

<sup>43</sup> S. MARTÍNEZ SÁNCHEZ, *Los papeles perdidos del cardenal Segura*, Eunsa, Pamplona 2004, pp. 644-646.

to restore the nation's Catholic unity<sup>44</sup>. Surely, many more Catholics than those who aired their disagreement did not like *Fuero's* article 6. However, they surely preferred being silent or just moderately complaining partly because they weighed how the religious situation had improved with the new regime as well as because, of course, protests are not welcome in dictatorships. Certainly enough, Segura's positions and the way he uttered them far exceeded the mainstream traditionalist stance, even for Spanish standards<sup>45</sup>. As remarked before, a balance was needed: a balance between the prevailing mood on the international scene after the world war and diehard intolerants at home. The *Fuero de los Españoles* worked as a reasonable status quo although it certainly did not satisfy more intransigent stances or international public opinion. In any case, only full American-style religious freedom would work for American Catholics in order to shake off the heavy burden of Spanish intolerance that accompanied them everywhere.

However, this situation did not last forever. Surprisingly, it did not even last until the end of the dictatorship. In 1967, *Fuero de los Españoles'* article 6 was modified and a law ensuring religious liberty was passed<sup>46</sup>. What had happened? The answer is easy: *Dignitatis humanae*. This may sound too much simplistic, as Church documents rarely have such an effect so quickly, and the times certainly were already ripe in Spain for religious freedom, but the Vatican declaration made the change simply inescapable. As a Catholic state, Spain had no choice but to change its legislation to conform to the Church's teachings. The Fundamental Principles of the National Movement, a kind of basic law of Franco's regime, compelled Spanish nation to «[observe] the Law of God according to the Holy Catholic Church's doctrine»<sup>47</sup>. And Church teachings then commanded

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<sup>44</sup> F. GIL DELGADO, *Pedro Segura: un cardenal de fronteras*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid 2001, p. 607.

<sup>45</sup> S. MARTÍNEZ SÁNCHEZ, *Los papeles perdidos*, cit., p. 812.

<sup>46</sup> Ley orgánica 1/1967, del Estado, de 10 de enero, published in «Boletín Oficial del Estado», 11 January 1967, pp. 466-477, and Ley 44/1967, de 28 de junio, regulando el ejercicio del derecho civil a la libertad en materia religiosa, published *ibid.*, 1 July 1967, pp. 9191-9194.

<sup>47</sup> Ley fundamental de 17 de mayo de 1958, por la que se promulgan los principios del Movimiento Nacional, published *ibid.*, n. 119, 19 May 1958, pp. 4511-4512.



recognition and protection of religious freedom. Moreover, after the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic confessional state ceased to be a desirable model even for the Church itself. The Council and especially its declaration on religious freedom entailed a thorough anthropological, theological and ecclesiological delegitimization of National Catholicism<sup>48</sup>. The regime would endure until the dictator's death in 1975, but it dramatically lost one of its main legitimating features. Few could ignore this, thence the stern resistance of some Francoist politicians, whose (literally) more-Catholic-than-the-pope stance was not as much religious as it was political. However, this is also one of the reasons why a certain kind of democracy seemed the only possible evolution for the regime, especially for the youngest among its ruling class<sup>49</sup>.

#### 4. *Conclusion*

After the Second Vatican Council, Protestants and secularists were no longer able to accuse Catholics of yearning for a kind of undemocratic regime like the Spanish one. But, in the meantime, between 1945 and 1965, Spain became a heavy burden, a worrisome source of embarrassing news that complicated their cultural battles. Secular and Protestant press seldom failed to recall the discrimination suffered by the Protestants each time Spain was mentioned, regardless of the specific topic in question. Therefore, Catholic periodicals were often compelled to reply to indictments and to nuance reports on the situation of non-Catholics in Spain, as well as to point out mirror instances of the ways Catholics were hindered in certain European Protestant countries. Yet, beyond its constricted religious tolerance, the fact that the Spanish Catholic state was a ruthless military dictatorship nearly unanimously displeased American audiences.

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<sup>48</sup> A. ÁLVAREZ BOLADO, *Los ecos de la Dignitatis Humanae en la Iglesia y la sociedad españolas*, in "*Dignitatis Humanae*". *La libertad religiosa in Paolo VI*, a cura di R. Papetti e R. Rossi, Istituto Paolo VI, Brescia 2007, p. 157.

<sup>49</sup> M. BLANCO FERNÁNDEZ, *La primera ley española de libertad religiosa: Génesis de la ley de 1967*, Eunsa, Pamplona 1999.

Hence, the Catholic press strove to polish what it deemed as a more accurate narrative. Accordingly, it claimed that, although Franco was a dictator, he was not the worst dictator ever and it was inexact to call him a Fascist, actual liberties in Spain were broader than those found behind the Iron Curtain, stories of oppression were grossly exaggerated, and so on. Conversely, Catholic periodicals paid much attention to the positive sides of life in Spain, highlighting the achievements – real or alleged – of Franco’s social policies. In any case, criticism also found its way onto the pages of the Catholic press, not only in «The Commonweal», a magazine that since the times of the Civil War departed from the mainstream pro-rebel and pro-Franco stances found in the Catholic press, but also among editors that were otherwise benevolent toward the Spanish dictatorship.

Reporting on Spain followed the pace of both Spanish and American course of events. Scrutiny of Spain intensified during United Nations debates on its reintegration into the international community or when American-Spanish cooperation agreements were discussed in Washington. Of course, individual events of mob violence or outrages against Protestants were inevitably followed by renewed commentary on the Spanish question. In addition, any domestic controversy related to Catholicism, such as the school bus issue, included the not-so-friendly reminder of the existence of a National-Catholic dictatorship in Spain. Interestingly enough, Spain’s frequent appearance in the papers stimulated deeper concern for Spanish – and Hispanic – culture. An effort to understand Spanish intolerance in the framework of its historical peculiarities emerged, as did a genuine interest in the very valuable contributions of a civilization that, as previously discussed, owes an outsized share of its identity to the Catholic religion<sup>50</sup>.

Though very important and relevant, there was also an awareness that, at the end of the day, Spain was not the heart of the matter, which could rather be found in the fact that Catholicism needed a better understanding of the relationship between religious truth and human liberty, as well as of

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<sup>50</sup> R. ESCOBEDO, *Una narrativa católica sobre la España franquista para Estados Unidos: la revista America*, in *Narrativas en conflicto: libertad religiosa y relaciones Iglesia-Estado en los siglos XIX y XX*, coord. por R.D. García Pérez, Thomson Reuters Aranzadi, Cizur Menor 2020, pp. 341-361, plus other research from the same author, both in press and in progress.

the real nature of modern political communities. In short, an increasing number of voices clamored for a new Catholic approach to the issues of religious freedom and church-state relations. American bishops, priests, and theologians searched for answers a little more anxiously than in other countries, and Catholic journalists, op-ed columnists and lay leaders conjectured about a fair solution and did their best to refute the insidious charges of un-Americanism. But, as said above, the most mortifying aspect of these indictments was that American Catholics sincerely esteemed American liberties and strongly sensed that they were right in advocating for religious freedom and church-state separation not just for the United States, with its specific institutional history, but for all of mankind, Catholic Spain included.

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<sup>51</sup> All documents retrievable at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va), except Pius XII's address, which was published in *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Roma 1954, vol. XV, pp. 477-492.

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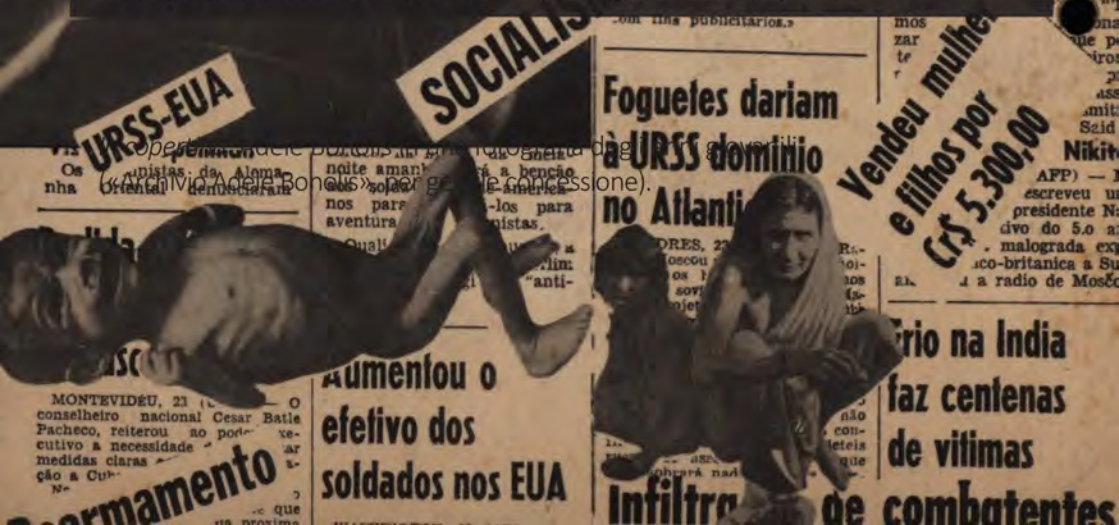




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This volume gathers together the fruits of the dialogue between ten European and American scholars aimed at exploring the transnational horizons of Catholic social action from the post-World War II period to the Council years. Through a plurality of approaches, some of the ways in which Catholics on both sides of the Atlantic, in a fruitful and ongoing exchange of views and experiences, have reflected on issues of social justice and democracy are examined. Their reflections were not abstract, but embodied in social, cultural and political experiences that have left their mark on the history and identity of local Catholicisms, helping to show the potential for change inherent in the Gospel and in the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Starting from these premises, this publication seeks to delve into ideal links and networks of relations that in the period following the Second World War have made the Atlantic a little narrower, highlighting the contribution of the Catholic world, in its different souls, to contemporary globalisation processes.



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