

## **BRAZILIAN INTEGRALISM AS A VARIANT OF FASCISM: The ideology of the leaders of the Brazilian Integralist Action**

### **O INTEGRALISMO BRASILEIRO COMO UMA VARIANTE DE FASCISMO: A Ideologia dos Líderes da Ação Integralista Brasileira**

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**Abstract:** In spite of all the recent studies about “generic fascism” in different countries, they did not exhaust the pertinence of an analysis of the Brazilian AIB as a permutation of fascist ideology. Thus, the goal of this essay is to establish in a more thorough way which were the components that allow for us to insert the AIB in the wider phenomenon of fascism, as well as the elements that made it a variety with unique characteristics. Using the conceptual morphological approach, this essay presents an ideological pattern of “generic fascism” composed of six core concepts (nation, state, synthesis, revolution, authority and violence), and then proceeds to a close reading of texts by Salgado, Miguel Reale and Gustavo Barroso.

**Keywords:** Fascism; Integralism; Ideology.

**Resumo:** Apesar dos estudos mais recentes sobre “fascismo genérico” em diferentes países, estes não esgotaram a pertinência de uma análise da AIB brasileira enquanto variante da ideologia fascista. Assim, o objetivo deste ensaio é o de estabelecer de forma mais concreta quais eram as componentes que permitem que inseramos a AIB no fenômeno mais alargado do fascismo, bem como os elementos que a tornavam uma variante com características únicas. Fazendo uso da abordagem morfológica conceptual, este ensaio apresenta um padrão ideológico do “fascismo genérico” composto por seis conceitos centrais (nação, estado, síntese, revolução, autoridade e violência), e procede depois para uma análise de textos de Plínio Salgado, Miguel Reale e Gustavo Barroso.

**Palavras-chave:** Fascismo; Integralismo; Ideologia.

#### *Introduction*

The idea that fascism as a generic phenomenon might have existed outside the European continent was initially met with some resistance among some experts. That was the case, for instance, of Stanley Payne, who stated that it is “doubtful that a typology derived from European fascism can be applied to non-European movements or regimes with full accuracy or specificity” (Payne, 1995, p.354), and who used, at most, the word “protofascism” to refer to some non-European movements. However, in the last decade, thanks to researchers like Stein Larsen (2001), or even to the work of Roger Griffin (2013) on “generic fascism”, it became less controversial to assert that some manifestations of fascism did appear outside the boundaries of Europe and that their scrutiny is as important as that of the more commonly studied permutations of Italy, Germany or other European countries. Thus, one of the most frequently mentioned examples is that of Brazilian

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fascism, which manifested itself in its most completed form in the movement known as Brazilian Integralist Action (Ação Integralista Brasileira- AIB), led by Plínio Salgado between 1932 and 1937. Even if authors like José Chasin (1999) initially denied the fascist character of this movement, instead seeing it as a reactionary phenomenon, the work of Hélió Trindade (1974), and others who followed him, helped establishing the view that AIB exhibited the main features of the ideology whose core was shared by Mussolini's movement and Hitler's Nazism, thus being a variant of "generic fascism".

Nevertheless, the research that has recently been done has not yet exhausted the pertinence of a study that seeks to insert more thoroughly the ideology of the AIB in the broader phenomenon of fascism. Which were, after all, the features of Integralist ideology that allow us to conclude that it was a variety of fascism? Which features did it have in common with other main variants, like the Italian and German one? In which ways did it differ? And which were its unique features (if it had any), that is, the characteristics that, while not precluding its inclusion in the generic phenomenon, still give it a distinctive character? A study that tries to address some of these questions could be fruitful in two ways: 1- it could give us a more detailed understanding of the nature of Integralist ideology and the way how the Brazilian variety connected with the ideological content that was then being put forward in other countries; 2-conversely, it could also give us a better understanding, not just of this specific local fascism, but of the generic phenomenon as a whole, since the study of the diverse permutations of fascism (even the ones which at a first glance might seem unimportant) can be helpful to get to know the multiple ways in which a fascist ideological content could be rearranged and redefined, as well as the extent of different meanings that it could encompass in distinct social contexts.

Having said all that, this essay aims to study the ideology of the AIB as a manifestation of "generic fascism" by using political concepts as its main unit of analysis. We will thus approach fascism as an ideological pattern composed of political concepts that interlink between each other, thus creating a specific meaning that is different from that of any other ideological pattern. In order to proceed to this analysis, we will present a conceptual pattern that represents the core of "generic fascism" and, after that, we will scrutinize the specific permutation of this ideology in the ideological content of Brazilian Integralism. This will be done through a close reading of some of the most important texts written by the main figures of the AIB: Plínio Salgado; Miguel Real; and Gustavo Barroso (the reason why we chose these figures will be discussed later in this essay). In this close reading, we will look for the core concepts (and interlinkages between concepts) that are present in the generic configuration, while at the same time paying attention to concepts

and interlinkages that do not appear in it and represent an originality. Thus, it will be possible to enunciate in a more concrete way both the reasons why Brazilian Integralism is a permutation of fascism and in which ways it represents a unique variety of the ideology, with specific components.

### *The Conceptual Pattern of Fascist Ideology*

The conceptual morphological approach that we here adopt was famously put forward by Michael Freedon (1995) and it aims to decode the meaning of the content of different ideologies. It sees ideologies as a pattern composed of political concepts (each of them having a different prominence) that create a meaning that is very specific of a given pattern through the interlinkages that are established between them. Different weights given to concepts and different relations of proximity between concepts create, therefore, a meaning that serves to distinguish, for instance, the conceptual pattern of Liberalism from that Socialism. Likewise, it is possible to discern at least the following types of concepts: core concepts (the ones which are central to an ideology and are always present in its various permutations), adjacent concepts (which serve to and define the meaning of the core concepts in whose proximity they are placed) and peripheral concepts (which are secondary to the ideology and will not be included in our analysis, due to lack of space). Based on a reading of fascist sources as well as secondary sources, we previously presented a conceptual pattern of fascism with the following core (and adjacent) concepts:

**Nation**- one of the least controversial concepts that we here include, and one with which virtually every researcher would agree (Griffin, 2013, p. 38). In fact, it is generally acknowledged that all fascists highly valued the Nation and submitted all their other goals to the intention of magnifying the national community in a very intense way. Furthermore, fascists generally conceived the Nation in a spiritual fashion, surpassing the material conditions of the present and the lives of their current inhabitants. Besides, in the vicinity of this core concept, we can find the adjacent concept of “mission” (relating to a task that a given Nation was supposedly meant to fulfill and which separated it from every other Nation by giving it a distinctive feature), as well as that of “empire” (the construction or maintenance of which, in many cases, referred precisely to the mission that the Nation should accomplish), even if the latter might not be as relevant in some varieties or even occasionally seem to be absent. It is also relevant to point out the adjacent concept of “race”, even if not all variants make an explicit use of it (as it is generally known the permutation in which this concept was most important was the Nazi one), for it can be

easily argued that all forms of fascism are, in one way or another and to different extents, racists. After all, all of them viewed the inhabitants of their national community as somehow “superior” and different from the members of other Nations.

**State-**a concept whose importance becomes evident if one thinks that, as noted by Michael Mann, “fascists worshiped State power” (Mann, 2004, p. 21). Thus, the State is seen in fascist ideology as an instrument that is necessary to coordinate the social, political and economic life of the Nation, being thus necessary to create the conditions for the national community to regain its greatness. In some permutations, like the Italian one, the State could have a very evident prominence (being worshiped for its own sake), while in others (like German Nazism) it was a means to an end (in the case, create a racially pure community). The adjacent concepts that we find in its vicinity are, for instance, “order” and “harmony”, since the main goal of the State was to attain a community in which chaos ceased to exist.

**Synthesis-** a concept which refers to the goal of harmonizing the opposites and create a cohesive whole in which internal conflicts are no longer present. This idea, present in the fascist way of thinking (always prone to combine conflicting elements), can refer to what Roger Eatwell calls “holism” (2003, p. xxiv). In the context of the national goals of fascism, it is related to adjacent concepts like “unity” and, most importantly, “conciliation between classes” and “conciliation between the individual and the collectivity” (these last two referred precisely to the goals that fascists saw as crucial to create a cohesive Nation with no internal fights, a sort of “Nation-Synthesis”).

**Revolution-** a concept that is related to the total transformation that fascists wanted to perform in the national community, creating something radically “new”. The fascist Revolution thus refers to the coming of a “new era” in history, guided by new principles and a different economic and political system. Thus, the main adjacent concept that we can here refer to is that of “palingenesis”, which, as Roger Griffin famously stated, is related to the idea of the “rebirth” of the Nation and constitutes the main goal of the transformation of the Nation. Besides, the adjacent concepts of “new era” and “new man” are particularly relevant, the latter representing one of the most fundamental purposes of fascism: the creation of a new type of man that would reject the individualistic and materialistic notions of liberal society and recover the strength and virility that he had supposedly lost, thus being reinserted in the national community and achieving all his creative potential.

**Authority-** which represents a principle that, according to fascism, must be respected in all spheres of societies, as noted by Stanley Payne (1995, p. 12). In this

context, we find the concepts of “hierarchy” and “discipline” which are also principles highly valued by fascists. Furthermore, the concept of “elites” is a very important one and the way it is decontested can ultimately serve to distinguish a fascist conceptual pattern from the ideology of other right-wing reactionary phenomena. To fascists, these “elites” should represent a new class of leaders who, thanks to their deeds and abilities, stood out from other people and conquered the right to guide society and replace an old elite. Thus, we can also add in this context the adjacent concepts of “leader” and “heroes” (the latter referring to the new type of men that distinguished themselves and become the new guiders of the Nation). In this context, the “heroes” of fascism were usually seen as people capable of action and of great and virile deeds, as well as prone to sacrifice, martyrdom and, in the most extreme cases, even death, all t in the name of national “rebirth”.

**Violence-** lastly, we shall mention this core concept, which was also noted by Stanley Payne (1995, p. 11). Fascists valued Violence very positively and saw it as a force of creation and not just of destruction. It could thus be employed to purge the Nation of its supposed “alien” elements (for instance, racial “enemies”) and purify the community, therefore allowing for the intended “rebirth”. In this context, it is relevant to point out the adjacent concept of “cleansing”, which refers to the supposed “purification” of the Nation through violent means. Besides, Violence also represented a principle upon which fascists constructed their worldview: to this ideology, the world is like a place of constant struggle, a fight that is necessary to carry out and which the strongest people had to win in order to conquer their right to lead society. Within this scope, the adjacent concepts that are important to mention are “social Darwinism” and “vitalism” (referring to the revitalizing energy with which fascists should impregnate society through their virile actions). We shall also note that, for a number of reasons (that could include the necessity of presenting a more palatable face to the public), fascists sometimes tried to reformulate their discourse and deny that they defended Violence for the sake of it, refusing to explicitly praise it. For this reason, the mere reading of fascist sources could reveal itself insufficient for us to notice the importance of this concept. Nevertheless, if one pays attention to certain words like “struggle”, “fight”, “force” and “war”, it is still possible to see the way how, behind the apparent rejection of violent means, the fascist mentality conceived Violence as fundamental component of human society.

Summarizing the conceptual configuration that we presented, we can thus say that fascism is an ideology that, at its core, is constituted by the central cores of Nation, State, Synthesis, Revolution, Authority and Violence, and that, in all its variants, we shall find these fundamental features, as well as a current pattern of interlinkages between them. It

is precisely the rearranging of these six concepts that give to the content of fascist ideology a very specific meaning that is not found in any other ideological pattern. Besides, there is a set of particularly important interlinkages that are crucial to understand this ideological core: for instance, the concepts of Nation, State and Synthesis interlink, since one of the fascist goals was to create a Nation that was cohesive (a Nation-Synthesis) by using the State as an instrument to achieve it and guarantee the maintenance of order. The concepts of Revolution and Authority also interlink, thus meaning that one of the purposes of the fascist Revolution was to create a new “elite” capable of leading society (this new elite should be constituted by the “heroes” that represented the “new man”). Furthermore, there is an evident interlinkage between the concepts of Authority and Violence, which explains why, in fascism, the new “elite” of “heroes” was often seen as one that was capable of violent and warlike actions, while also being noted for their virility and strength.

### *The Ideology of the AIB*

At this point, we are finally able to proceed to our analysis of the ideology of the AIB, which will be done in this section. As it is told by Leandro Pereira Gonçalves and Odilon Caldeira Neto (2020), this movement was created in São Paulo on October 7, 1932, by the writer and journalist Plínio Salgado. In time, it would grow to become one of the most important fascist movements in the South American continent. Known for the green uniform used by its members, as well as for its main symbol (the Sigma) and its greeting “Anauê”, the AIB met with the opposition of his leftist adversaries (which led to clashes like the so called “Battle of the Praça da Sé” on October 7, 1934) and was eventually dissolved by the new dictator Getúlio Vargas on 1937, after having tried to achieve some kind of agreement with him. Apart from its leader, this movement also counted among its ranks with important figures like Miguel Reale and Gustavo Barroso, who made important ideological contributions. It is precisely through the close readings of texts written by Salgado, Reale and Barroso that we will try to untangle the core aspects of the integralist conceptual pattern.

João Fábio Bertonha reminds us that “it is common to state that, in Brazilian integralism, there were three main currents” (Bertonha, 2020, p. 133): the one related to Salgado (conservative and catholic); the one connected to Reale (concerned with social questions and corporatism and closer to the Italian variant); and, lastly, the one that was associated with Barroso (romantic and anti-Semitic, somehow closer to German Nazism).

These three figures thus represent the main components and ideological currents that composed the AIB and it is precisely for this reason that we chose to focus on them in this study. With them, it will be possible to grasp the full extent of integralist ideological rearrangements within the scope of fascism. Furthermore, it is also important to note that “independently of how much they fought for power and held ideas that were, to a certain extent, diverse, the several integralist currents remained united until the end by standing on a common ground” (Bertonha, 2020, p. 133). This assertion is particularly important for it shows us that analyzing the ideology of these three figures does not actually mean to study three particularly different conceptual patterns (which, if it were the case, would render this choice an ineffective one), but rather to study slightly different varieties of a same conceptual pattern (the integralist pattern), each of them displaying some unique features that do not set them apart from the main one. Studying Salgado, Reale e Barroso is, therefore, the most secure way to get to know the ideological pattern of Integralism as a whole, while at the same time shedding some light on the extent of minor rearrangements that the latter could encompass.

All this said, we can start by focusing on the core concept of **Nation**. The centrality of it is evident, for instance, when Gustavo Barroso mentions that his movement wants to “aggrandize it [the fatherland]”, while Plínio Salgado states in *O que é o Integralismo* that “Integralism wants a Nation that is united, strong, prosperous, happy” (Salgado, 1933, p.130). The leader of the movement reinforces this point when referring, in *A Doutrina do Sigma*, that “the integralist knows that he must give everything to his fatherland, that he should ask nothing from it” (Salgado, 1937, p. 28). Furthermore, in the text *Perspectivas Integralistas*, written by Miguel Reale, the author states that “the Nation is an ethical, political, cultural and economic organism” and that it is “a reunion of individuals who, in the same territory and under the same sovereign power, have common aspirations”. Furthermore, the Nation is a “communion of language, history, traditions, customs, habits, virtues and flaws, a common conscience of willing”. Likewise, it is mentioned that the Nation is a “heritage of culture and deeds” (Reale, 1983, p. 15). This seems to point to the idea that Integralism sees the Nation as an entity whose identity is defined mainly in cultural and spiritual terms (integralists themselves would add “in ethical terms”), and which encompasses the heritage of several generations: the present ones, the ones who already died and also the ones who have yet to be born (something that Reale also says). It should be added that, just like in the pattern of “generic fascism”, there is the idea that the Nation has a mission to fulfill, and that mission is, according

once again to Reale, “to contribute with its own values to universal progress and common peace” (Reale, 1983, p.15).

In the case of Salgado, there is also a strong proximity between the Nation and two other terms that recurrently appear attached to it: “God” and “Family”. This happens when Salgado writes that “we love our fatherland, we believe in God, we idolize our families” (Salgado, 1937, p. 28). In *A Quarta Humanidade* it is also said that “without the fatherland [...] one cannot understand the effective defense [...] of those two other fundamental principles of human happiness: family and propriety” (Salgado, 1934, p. 28). This feature, expressed in the motto “God, Fatherland, Family”, points to one of the main characteristics that is a part of Salgado’s version of Integralism: its social conservatism and the importance that he gave to religion (notice that the other leaders also made references to these conservative ideas, as it is evidently the case of Reale, who mentions the family as “the first and most important social institution”. It is simply that they are more prominent in Salgado’s texts than in the other figures here in analysis). To the leader, the defense of the Brazilian nation was always connected to faith in God and respect for the family as the main unity upon which society must be established. This clearly made his ideological pattern permeate with conservative ideologies of the time, with which he was in tune (that is the case, for example, of the Portuguese dictator Salazar). Another feature that is important to point out is the apparent absence of the concept of “imperialism”, since Miguel Reale explicitly writes that “Integralism rejects, therefore, imperialism, which wants the Nation to be a mere instrument of conquest in the hands of economic groups” (Reale, 1983, p.15). While seemingly different from our generic configuration, this characteristic is, after all, shared with other permutations of fascism that appeared in countries that did not have the possibility of conquering an actual empire by invading other territories.

One last important component of integralist nationalism is related to the question of “race”. In this point, it is commonly noticed that Barroso was the one who was closer to the Nazi variant and who explicitly made use of the concept of “anti-Semitism”. In one of his most important books, *Brasil: Colônia de Banqueiros*, he presented a curious version of the history of his country, which is seen as a victim of the machinations of an international financial elite, conspiring to weaken the Brazilian nation and constantly get it into debts (the anti-Semitic tropes, usually associated with conspiracy theories about global bankers, cannot be left unnoticed, something which is reinforced with derogatory mentions to figures like the Rothschilds). The references to the Jews as creatures who “acted in the shadows”, to “Jewish capitalism”, to “Bolshevik capitalism” and even to the



*Protocols of the Elders of Zion* clearly approximate Barroso's ideology to German Nazism, which also becomes more evident when he praises authors that denounced the "Jew" as "the disguised organizer of antichristian sects, of secret societies, of the overthrowing of thrones, of enrichment through usury, with the goal of dominating the world" (Barroso, 1934, p. 15). In any case, it is important to retain that, contrary to what sometimes is thought, Barroso was not the only integralist who made use of anti-Semitic references (for instance, Salgado also did it, even if he gave this theme much less relevance than his rival), and that Barroso himself frequently made an effort to separate his ideology from that of the Nazis. Thus, in a passage from *O que o Integralista Deve Saber*, Barroso rejects biological racism and explicitly states that "the Jewish question is not, contrary to what many think and to what the Jews tried to propagate, a religious or racial question". He then adds that "no one fights the Jew because he is of a Semitic race nor because he follows the religion of Moses. But rather because he acts politically inside the Nations, according to a preconceived plan" (Barroso, 1935, p.119). There is, therefore, an attempt to present anti-Semitism as a political question rather than a racial or religious one.

Such an attempt should not be discarded as a simple and isolated stratagem from Barroso. In fact, it can tell much about the way how integralists saw the nation and the question of race. Acting in a country with a multiethnic society, Salgado and his colleagues hardly could present themselves as racist leaders, defending some form of "Aryan supremacy". On the contrary, they had to take into account the other main ethnic groups that were part of the history of Brazil: black people and the Native-Americans (it thus seems less surprising that even Barros, close to Nazism in some aspects, rejected the explicit use of the concept of "race"). It is in this context, that Reale writes that "Integralism remains aloof from any racial prejudice [...] The racist thesis is not, and has never been, in our considerations" (Reale, 1983, p.34). This happened because, in the integralist view, Brazil as a nation was formed through a "fraternization of races" (to use an expression by Salgado), each of them contributing in some aspect to the constitution of the culture of the country and the psychological features of its inhabitants. It is in this context that Reale mentions that "in Brazil, where all the ethnic groups unite and combine to give the world the cosmic man of the tropical American civilization, the theory of superior races reveals itself in all its weakness" (Reale, 1983, p. 35). Thus, even Barroso, in his book *O Integralismo em Marcha*, praises the "absence of prejudices of color" in his country. Nonetheless, a careful reading of integralist sources rapidly shows that, in spite of this rejection of the concept of "race", this movement still held a view towards other

ethnic groups that could be considered racist, as its members tended to have a paternalistic view, characterized by the idea that white people of European ascendancy somehow had the mission of civilizing them and educate them. This is shown when Reale, in his *ABC do Integralismo*, writes that “Integralism cannot forget the great indigenous family, our Indians, who, then, shall be integrated in civilization through the action of Christian missionaries” (Reale, 1935,p.132). Salgado, in his turn, talked about the “sweet naivety of the Indian” (Salgado, 1934, p.139).

We can now go further to the concept of **State**, which closely interlinks with the concept of Nation. This is expressed in a passage by Miguel Reale: “the State is the organized nation” (Reale, 1983, p.16), as well as when Salgado writes that he wants a “living State, identified with the Nation itself” (Salgado, 1933, p.126). According to this author, it must correspond to the “hierarchical and solidary organization of the individuals and groups that congregate their efforts with the goal of reaching a maximum of personal and general happiness”. Plínio Salgado, in his *Psicologia da Revolução*, is even clearer when he says that the State is a center of “aspirations of harmony and equilibrium” and its goal is that of attaining “social justice”. Its mission is that of being “a center of collaboration, of stimulation, of subordination of scattered forces to a national conditioning” (Salgado, 1932, p. 56). We see, thus, how the concept of State interlinks with the adjacent concepts of “order” and “harmony”, since its mission must be that of ending chaos in the national community. In the integralist worldview, this concept is conceived as an instrument responsible to coordinate (or supervise) the different components of the national community and carefully conduct them towards the construction of a new nation, while using all the potentials that exist within the community and submitting them to a higher goal. Reale also explains that “the State does not confound itself with a social class, neither with a group, and can only express the totality of the nation” (Reale, 1983, p.16). It must, then, be a strong State, for only with such a characteristic can it fulfill the mission that the nation needs it to do.

Most importantly, the integralist State (interlinking with the core concept of Revolution) must represent a new type of State, a transformation that comes about in the context of the changes that Salgado’s movement wants to perform in the national community. “The concept of State must be a revolutionary concept”, Salgado tells us, and it must be capable of constant renovation and dynamism in order to replace the old State and tackle the issues of the new era. Besides, integralist leaders were also prone to theorize about the differences between the type of State that they favored, and the types that they reject: mainly, the liberal State and the Marxist-socialist State (in this aspect,

they were close to many other fascists in European countries). Thus, the liberal version of the State was rejected due to its supposed weakness and incapacity to maintain order, as well as to its tendency to maintain the divisions between individuals (which made it impossible for the Nation to regain its greatness). Besides, the liberal State was too infective to deal in a dynamic way with the problems of the modern era, and, as said by Barroso, “the laic State resulting from liberal democracy in any of its avatars is an excrescence in our current times, in which problems demand quick, decisive and radical solutions” (Barroso, 1936, p. 41). As to the socialist (or Marxist) version of the State, it was rejected because its legitimation was based on the concept of “class struggle” and was supposed to represent just one social class (the workers) and not the nation as a whole. Such a State denied “all the moral and superior fundamentals of Man” (Barroso, 1936, p. 41) and would still be incapable of solving the problems caused by the liberal State, because it did not represent a dynamic conception of the State, but rather a very static one. As said by Salgado, “Marxism conceives a definitive form of State, originating in a definitive economics and envisioning a definitive society” (Salgado, 1932, p.64).

The next core concept is that of **Synthesis** and, just like in the pattern of the generic ideology, it interlinks with the concepts of Nation and State. Thus, the integralist project has, at its core, the goal of constructing a National-Synthetic-State, that is, a State that is capable of uniting under it all the scattered elements of the Nation and create a cohesive and holistic community (a Nation-Synthesis, guided by a new State). Thus, the new type of State, identifying with the nation, would be “a synthesis of its highest spiritual and material values” (Reale, 1983, p. 15). The Synthetic State (or simply, Integralist State) would reject both the disorder brought about by the liberal State and the false solution of the Socialist State, that was nothing but an illusion that had been promised to the working class but which would worsen the situation in which workers lived and the nation as a whole. Furthermore, the concept of Synthesis becomes relevant in integralist ideology because it relates to the notion that, in principle, it is necessary to conciliate the opposites in all spheres of live and thought in order to create something new, cohesive and efficient. Barroso reveals this feature, when writing that “Integralism concretizes it [the synthesis] in the realm of ideas and will concretize it in the realm of reality” (Barroso, 1934a, p. 50). In another passage, the same author also writes that “Integralism understands the world in a total way” (Barroso, 1935, p. 75). To unite what was formerly set apart seemed to be a philosophical principal and a material goal of most fascist movements, and Integralism is no exception. It is in this context that Salgado also states

that “our preoccupation is to sum up everything, to considerate everything” (Salgado, 1933, p. 28).

What was curious about integralism was the frequency with which its members used the actual world “synthesis” and the explicit prominence that they gave to the concept. It is as if, to Brazilian integralists, the core of their ideology was to build a society in which the construction of this synthesis would be put at the center of a new political project. Thus, interlinking with the core concept of Revolution, this concept seems to point to a “Synthetical Revolution”, one in which it would be possible to create a new era led by this principal. The interlinkage between Synthesis and Revolution becomes evident when, for instance, Salgado says that “the new civilization will put into practice the great synthesis”. And it would be a “philosophical synthesis. Political synthesis. But, most importantly, the synthesis of the Human ages” (Salgado, 1934, p. 82). In the end, Salgado aimed at building a new “era of synthesis”. In the theoretical real, this tendency to create a union of opposites would become evident, for example, when dealing with two concepts of human life: the material one and the spiritual one. The former “sees human life as a phenomenon that starts and ends on the earth” (Salgado, 1933, p. 20), and is responsible for chaos and decadence in the national community. The latter “considers human life as a transitory phenomenon, conditioning an eternal and superior aspiration” (Salgado, 1933, p. 20), and, while being morally higher, cannot sustain itself if it does not take into account the human aspirations in earthly life. Thus, the synthesis of both, even if acknowledging the moral elevation of spiritual principles, would translate in a society in which would be restored “the right of the spirit to intervene in the development of the material forces of society” (Salgado, 1934, p. 83).

In its material concretizations, the concept of Synthesis also has in its vicinity the adjacent concept of “unity”, since it aims at putting an end to the conflicts taking place within the national community and create a holistic society. In this sense, we find the same adjacent concepts that are present in the generic configuration: “conciliation between individual and collectivity” and “conciliation between classes”. The former relates to the rejection of liberalism and of its supposed anarchism and “false” conceptions of liberty and individualism. In this situation, “man, released into society, detached from the ties of his family or his group, is a biological and social nonsense” (Reale, 1935, p. 40). Integralism thus aspires to have a “total conception of Man”, seeing him as an element that is part of a higher unity in which he must be reinserted (more of this will be said later). Besides, it is also in this context of rejection of liberalism that integralists reject party democracy and the divisive political struggles that are a part of it. In the

integralist worldview, this only serves to divide and further weaken the nation. In this sense, Salgado is very explicit: “Integralism will wage war against all political parties, whatever they might be. The Nation is one and indivisible and parties divide the nation”. And he adds: “Integralism will put an end to the political parties that explore the people” (Salgado, 1933, p. 20). Perhaps, the most interesting integralist reasoning to oppose political parties (which, due to lack of space, we cannot analyze thoroughly) is found in Miguel Reale, who, in his *ABC do Integralismo*, sees party elections as a stratagem destined to keep the current decadent elites in power and fool the common people into keep them distanced from the national groups in which they should be integrated. It is an “electoral aura” that destroy the “real” liberty that only the integralist State can bring about.

As to “class conciliation”, it expresses the utmost rejection of communist ideology and its principle of “class struggle”. In order to create a solution to this supposed problem, “the integral State will defend the harmony and cooperation between capital and labor within a spiritual order” (Barroso, 1936, p.82). This collaboration between classes legitimates the establishment of “corporatism” as a political and economic system destined to restore harmony and equilibrium in the nation. No other integralist dealt so thoroughly with this concept of “corporatism” than Miguel Reale. This does not mean that other important members of the movement did not defend the same type of system, but rather that the concept did not have as much prominence in their permutation of Integralism as in Reale’s one. Thus, displaying a conceptual pattern that was closer to the Italian version of fascism, this integralist sees corporatism as a system in which “production must be considered according to national interests and not according to the particular interests of individuals and groups” (Reale, 1983, p. 23). In this system, the corporations, formed by syndicates, were institutions and an “organ of the State, where there are representatives of businessmen and workers”. Seeing the process of economic production as constituted by the three elements of capital, work and intelligence, Reale and other integralists viewed corporatism as a way to conciliate all these elements and put an end to the struggles that took place between them in liberal society. Thus, the Integral State would create some sort of “social justice”, addressing both the demands of workers and of entrepreneurs, without necessarily satisfying all their exigencies and always subordinating them to the national will, which stood above class interests. In any case, integralist syndicates should represent specific branches of production and they would have political, economic, cultural and moral functions.

Lastly, there is one element that somehow sets Integralism apart from other varieties of fascism (even though it is possible to find some similarities with Spanish Falangism in this matter) because, according to integralists, apart from the division between individuals and between classes, there was another main division that imperiled the unity of the nation and needed to be solved through a new synthesis: the division between regions, provinces and federated states. In this ideology, one of the reasons that explained Brazil's weakness was the sharp separation between "states that fight to conquer federal power" (Salgado, 1933, p.10), and the fact that "each province closes itself selfishly examining its own problems" (Salgado, 1937, p.46), something which did not allow for the creation of a sense of "national unity". Thus, Brazil was not a "real nation" yet, and it is for this reason that Salgado calls on the Brazilian people to "forget your province" and fight for the nation as a whole, one in which there would be "the same rhythm of attitudes from the Amazonas to Rio Grande" (Salgado, 1937, p.37). This state of affairs would be solved thanks to the holistic integralist doctrine, since "while state governments divide Brazilians, we unite them in a prodigious communion, which concretizes the stupendous miracle of one single national aspiration" (Salgado, 1937, p.37). Interestingly enough, the political corporatist system that the integralists purposed in order to solve this problem and create a cohesive organic community, would not be based on centralized power either, but rather in the municipality. Thus, municipalities, conceived as unites composed by families, should maintain a certain degree of administrative autonomy and function harmoniously within the organic system of the nation, being this as a way to fulfil local aspirations while, at the same time, contributing to the achievement of national goals (to which the municipalities should be subordinated). All these ideas are expressed in the words of Barroso: "the municipality is a reunion of families. The origin of the municipality in the family renders it sacred, unassailable, in everything that is related to its peculiar interests". Nevertheless, he adds that "those interests, like the individual ones, cannot exorbitate" and, for this reason, "Integralism, while maintaining the moral authority of the municipality, subordinates it to the interests of the region or the nation" (Barroso, 1935, p.53).

The next core concept is that of **Revolution**, which is conceived in integralist thought as the creation of a whole new era of human history and in the life of the nation. The integralist revolution means, therefore, the construction of a new nation, and there is no doubt that the members of the movement themselves saw their political task as a revolutionary one. For example, Barroso writes that "we are, after all, that revolutionary spirit of which much has been said since 1930" (Barroso, 1936, p.15), and that

“Integralism does not preach the destruction of the social order [...] but rather the transformative revolution of the meaning of life” (Barroso, 1935, p.73). Reale, in this turn, interlinks the concepts of revolution with that of the State in order to conclude that “the sovereign state assures itself the right to revolution” (Reale, 1935, p.122). The adjacent concept of “palingenesis”, meaning “rebirth”, is also expressed, for instance, when Salgado says that “a new light is announcing itself to the world” (Salgado, 1934, p. 82) and “the first signs of dawn can already be seen, in the thick groaning darkness” (Salgado, 1934, p. 66). In other passage, he also states that “we are living, nowadays, the beginning of a new great human era” (Salgado, 1934, p.9). It is also worthy to mention that, as in most varieties of fascism, the concept of Revolution interlinks with the “valorization of youth”, for young age is seen as a stage in life in which there is a tendency to change things for the better and perform valuable deeds that contribute to regenerate the nation. The rejection of the “old” and the cult of the “new”, therefore, also manifests itself in this praise of the young. It is for this reason that Barroso writes that “only the youth can save the world” (Barroso, 1936, p.9), due to its condition of not being “contaminated by the lowness of the environment”, and for this reason young people are the “constructors of the future society”. In other book, the same author writes appraisingly that “youth is spring, dawn and hope. Youth is the greatest source of energy of a people. Youth is the future of Brazil. Youth is the guarantee of the new homeland” (Barroso, 1934a, p.124).

Going further, we should note that, in Salgado’s ideology, we find a theoretical justification for revolution that is more intricate than the one that we find in other permutations of fascism. In his book *A Psicologia da Revolução*, the integralist leader sees revolution as necessary movement of transformation in the history of mankind, but decontests this concept in a way that is much different from the one that we find, for instance, in left-wing ideologies. Thus, the Revolution is something “important to the improvement of man in what he has of superior in his essence” (Salgado, 1932, p.28). It serves to bring order to society and creates the condition for mankind to ameliorate and reach its full potential and to achieve a higher condition. The revolution has thus its origin in the spiritual realm, and it is the product of the human spirit, who perpetually transforms and changes things. Conceiving history as divided in two levels, the material and the spiritual, Salgado believes that revolutions happen when a revolutionary idea, which originates in the spiritual level, acts on the material level in order to alter it and correct errors that may exist in it. He therefore rejects the Marxist notions of revolution for its materialistic nature and defends instead a vision of a revolution that is subordinated to the

spiritual but does not leave aside the actual transformations that have to take place in the material world. Besides, it is already known, integralist ideology is particularly interesting in the way in which it interlinks the concepts of Revolution and Synthesis, leading to the conclusion that what is envisioned is a real “revolution of synthesis” and the creation of a new “era of synthesis”. This is evident in Salgado’s book *A Quarta Humanidade*, in which is said that this new era would be guided by the principle of synthesis and it would synthesize elements of past eras. This era would succeed to the three past ages of the history of humanity which were characterized, respectively, by addition, fusion and dissociation.

Furthermore, like in the case of “generic fascism”, there is a goal of creating a new society and a “new man”. This new type of man, who would abandon the individualism of the liberal era, would represent a real “personality” (a word that is used, for instance, by Reale and which also appears in other varieties of fascism). This “personality” is not the individual of liberal ideology, but is rather someone who is inserted in the social groups to which he belongs. In this context, Reale writes that Integralism proclaims “the unassailable rights of human personality” and asserts that it is necessary for the new State to “provide the necessary conditions to the integral satisfaction of those legitimate aspirations of human personality” (Reale, 1935, p.131). The integralist revolution represents, thus, the creation of a type of society in which such a “new man” could thrive. The human personality would there be understood through a new total conception that would encompass the spiritual, moral and material dimensions of mankind. Besides, in the case of Salgado, there is a very close interlinkage between the conception of Revolution and the creation of a “new humanity”, which is highlighted as the central feature of the new era that is about to come. This would be “a new totalist humanity, in opposition to the other one, partialist”. This humanity that is about to emerge in the historical era that is now close, would regain his sense of spiritual matters and be in touch with the order of the universe and the cosmos. In the end, it is a “new sense of life” and of “cosmic conception” that is coming to being, and “a new humanity which is in front of another humanity” (Salgado, 1934, p.10).

Therefore, one of the most interesting and original features of integralist ideology is the use by its leader of the concept of “fourth humanity”, which interlinks with the concept of Revolution and represents a more original way to conceive the “new man” and the transformations brought about by the fascist palingenetic revolution. In Salgado’s view, the history of mankind has been characterized by the succession of three humanities: the first one, characterized by polytheism; the second one, characterized by



monotheism; and the third one, characterized by atheism. The latter, which is the one that is still in existence (even if in a very decadent phase), is a materialistic humanity, detached from spirituality and prone to base itself on scientific knowledge. And, due to its materialism, the current “third humanity is now in state of agony”, facing the decadence brought about by liberal democracy and Marxist socialism. “It has lost its ideal center of movement” and “despair enters every home. Misery oppresses workers [...] The anguish of the popular masses flares up in revolutions without purpose” (Salgado, 1934, p. 60-62). In sum, there is disorder and “humanity is terrified of itself” (Salgado, 1934, p. 64). Such a state of decadence necessarily leads to the palingenetic solution, represented in the “fourth humanity” that will create a new State, capable of bringing happiness, and “new patterns of culture, moral, law, administration and politics”, at the same time that it subordinates “science to the superior finality of man” (Salgado, 1934, p. 66-67). What is more, Salgado believes that this “fourth humanity” will soon come into being in Brazil and that South America is a place that offers some of the best conditions in the world for its creation. This is so because of its amalgam of races and ethnic groups, which will facilitate the process of synthesis of all the best features that were present in past humanities. For instance, the legacy of native populations, with its polytheism, gave the Brazilian race “a cosmic sense originating in the ethnical sources” (Salgado, 1934, p.69). Besides, there is a “remarkable religious power” influenced by the mythology of the Tupi and the rites of African tribes, while Christian beliefs brought by missionaries also gained a new vitality in this zone of the globe. In the final analysis, the era of “polytheism” still cohabits in Brazil with the “era of the machine” (“last stage of the third humanity”) and the combination of all this will translate in the new “synthetic humanity”.

In order to finish this essay, we need only to address two more core concepts of fascism: **Authority** and **Violence**. The former, as we already know, represents a principle that must be restored in all spheres of society, interlinking with concepts such as “order”. In this context, Reale refers, quoting the integralist guidelines, that “Integralism considers authority to be a unifying force that secures the convergence and the equilibrium of individual wills and concretizes the total integration of the energies of the nation” (Reale, 1935, p.131). Authority is, thus, a principle upon which the transformation of society (envisioned by integralists) must assent, since only with it will be possible to put an end to the current state of disorder and chaos. In this context, authority also interlinks with the concept of State. Besides, authority also interlinks with the concepts of “discipline” and “hierarchy” and it is fundamental to understand how integralists conceived their own movement, in which the principle of “obedience” was always highlighted. This is

noticeable when Salgado asserts the necessity of obeying orders from above when saying: “he [the militant] will never fail to fulfill an order from his superiors, even if he thinks that it is a wrong one, for a correct order that is discussed is more pernicious than a wrong order that is obeyed” (Salgado, 1937, p. 29). In a similar fashion, Barroso interlinks this core concept with that of “leader”, writing that “integralism requires an oath of loyalty and obedience to its doctrine, incarnated in the national chief”. And he adds, “for him, we commit ourselves to sacrifice personal interests, ambitions and inclinations for the success of a great cause” (Barroso, 1935, p.111). In the end, the “new man” of integralist ideology, reinserted in the social groups to which he belongs, would gladly and “with dignity [...] accept [...] discipline and hierarchy” (Salgado, 1933, p.30), and these principles therefore become particularly important to supplement liberal society and its individualism.

Furthermore, we need to pay attention to the adjacent concept of “elites”, which, as previously said, represents the new heroes who are capable of rejuvenating society. These heroic elites, referring to a new aristocracy, shall create a “new authority” (the concept of authority thus interlinking with that of revolution), as reminded by Salgado, and are one of the most important features to distinguish fascism from other conservative antidemocratic ideologies. The elitist nature of Integralism is expressed by Barroso in the following way: “it does not suffice to want to be an integralist to become one, one has to be able to become one, to have competence, value, capacity” (Barroso, 1934a, p.71). It is also in this context that Barroso refers that “government must be exercised by an elite that is recruited from all social classes and that is formed by study, by fight, by work and by sacrifice” (Barroso, 1935, p.137). Such an elite would, therefore, be different from the traditional governing classes of society, which explains why the author criticized the bourgeois classes and their corrupt practices, adding that the elite would never be formed according to the money that one possessed. In some passages of *Psicologia da Revolução*, Salgado develops this notion of revolutionary elites, who are destined to change society due to their prescience and capacity to action. He writes that these “lucky few” are people who have already understood the spiritual designs and know that is necessary to carry out a transformation. “In the begin”, he says, “that idea belong to few, very few: they are the pioneers, the apostles, the evangelizers, the revolutionaries”. However, thanks to the “magnetism of word and action, the new men make the idea penetrate among the popular masses” (Salgado, 1932, p.91) who until then had remained aloof of such matters. The new elites are thus seen as a group of people who conquer the right to guide the nation and the masses and lead them to revolutionary change. Besides, this cult of the new elites

also included a cult of “sacrifice” and “martyrdom”, that is, some sort of suffering that justified their position of leadership and was understood as a kind of quasi-religious redemption towards the decadent nation. It is no wonder then that Salgado writes that “there is a new sense of heroism: of sacrifice” (Salgado, 1937, p.145) and Reale that “integralism is preparing the youth of the fatherland with the school of sacrifice” (Reale, 1935, p.122). Salgado goes even further when praising the suffering that the integralist goes through, and which he should accept with abnegation: “he knows that he will suffer injustices, will be the target of lies, of insults and slanders, we will be ridiculed by many and labeled as crazy. [...] he will remain indifferent to everything” (Salgado, 1937, p. 30).

Finally, the concept of **Violence** may be more difficult to grasp since, as many other fascists did, integralists many times rejected the appraisal of this principle. In fact, integralists sometimes came to the point of explicitly rejecting violence, both as a method and as a principle of society, which is evident when Reale states that he envisions a peaceful world order in which there is cooperation between nations, and Salgado, when referring to the founding manifesto of the movement in his book *A Doutrina do Sigma*, says that “there is in it a vehement and tremendous condemnation of violent methods” (Salgado, 1937, p. 30). Other passages could be quoted in order to illustrate this view, like the one in which the leader claims that he wants to save the nation from communism by using non-violent methods. However, we should keep in mind that there may be an opportunistic reason behind some of this rejections of violence: for example, the quote about condemning violence that we here inserted comes from a book written in a time when the AIB had restructured his militia, trying to make it look as an organization with no para-military characteristics. Besides, like in the study of “generic fascism” it is important to pay attention to some subtleties, and, if we do this, we find in integralist texts words and expressions such as “soldiers of the fatherland”, “force”, “battle”, “fight”, “life-giving struggles” and many others. For instance, mentioning the “heroes”, Salgado writes that “against everything and everyone, they fight”, and that “thousands of soldiers will march in our march”. In other passages, Salgado reaches the point of talking about a “deadly war” against the parties and of detailing which types of people he considers to be the “enemies of the fatherland” (which also reminds us of a warlike language). This mentions seem to be enough to demonstrate that, also in Salgado’s ideology, politics and society as a whole are seen as a place in which struggle takes place and in which one needs to prove by force that he is worthy of being a leader. In the end, he is not much different from other European fascists and their conceptions of violence. When reading

other integralist figures, some components related to violence becomes even more noticeable. For instance, the idea of “virility” is express by Barroso in the following passage: “there is courage, contempt for danger [...] pride to feel like a man and being a Brazilian within discipline, order, hierarchy” (Barroso, 1934a, p.71). As to Reale, he, like many other fascists, seems to make a positive evaluation of World War I, a time in which “humanity reacquired a heroic sense of life” and “proletarians marched to the trenches and knew how to die for their country” (Reale, 1983, p. 40).

### *Conclusion*

What we presented in this essay was a conceptual pattern that serves to define the ideology of the AIB as whole, even if also paying attention to some variants, espoused by its important individual members. In the end, we saw that, at the core of integralist ideology, we find the six central concepts of nation, state, synthesis, revolution, authority and violence, all of them interlinking between each other a contributing to create a meaning that is unique. It is precisely because it shares its core concepts and main interlinkages that Integralism can be considered a permutation of “generic fascism” and, just like this ideology as a whole, it manifests itself as a **nationalist** ideology that intends to reinforce the power of the **State**, create a community in which the opposites are united in a new **synthesis**, carry out a **revolution** to create a new man, led by new elites that reinforce a new heroic type of **authority**; and that sees violence as an important component of society and life. Among the features that make integralism come closer to the “generic configuration”, we find: the close interlinkage between Nation, State, and Synthesis, thus referring to the creation of a national State that conducts the life of the nation; the interlinkage between Revolution and Nation; the Interlinkage between Revolution and Authority, which points to the creation of new revolutionary elites. However, we should notice that the interlinkage between Revolution and Synthesis is particularly pronounced in the integralist variety (perhaps in a way that is similar to some specific varieties of Italian Fascism).

In this essay, we also found out some specific varieties within the movement as a whole, one closer to the Italian variant (Reale’s conceptual pattern) and another a bit closer to German Nazism, even if not totally identifying with it (Barroso’s conceptual pattern). Nevertheless, we conclude that it is important not to have a rigid conception of the ideological divisions among the AIB because, as we saw, many of the ideas and concepts espoused by either Reale or Barroso could, for whatever reason, also be used by

their colleagues (in the end, defining these ideological factions is more a question of intensity rather than uniqueness). Lastly, we noticed that, in spite of being a permutation of fascism, there is in Brazilian Integralism some unique features that render it a unique version of the phenomenon. From our point of view, this uniqueness comes more precisely from Salgado's ideas and is related to the concept of "fourth humanity". Thus, while remaining close to fascism in calling for a revolution to create a new man, Integralist ideology acquires its originality thanks to the conception of the revolution and of the "new society" as the creation of a new type of humanity that came fourth in the history of civilization and which would find in Brazil and South America as a whole the place where it could thrive, mostly thanks to its supposed racial features. All these components make the AIB an interesting case study, both to be approached as a manifestation of fascism and as a phenomenon with unique features.

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