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Article

"Prices that cannot be paid": Itamaraty's conservatism and anti-communism in the early 20th century (1900 – 1945)

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Abstract

This article focuses on anti-communist practices conducted by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the first half of the 20th century. We believe that anti-communism was fostered by Itamaraty's conservative and aristocratic ethos, playing an important role in Brazilian foreign policy from Rio Branco's administration (1902-1912) to the Vargas Era (1930 – 1945). This helped shape the authoritarian foreign policy adopted during the Military Dictatorship twenty years later (1964 – 1985). Therefore, the foreign policy of the dictatorship, rather than a "step out of cadence," is rather a continuity of practices established long before the Cold War.

Keywords: Brazilian Foreign Policy; Diplomatic History; Anti-communism.

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Introduction

On his testimony to the Center for Research and Documentation on Contemporary Brazilian History (CPDOC), ambassador Vasco Leitão da Cunha was asked about the failure of multilateral diplomacy during the League of Nations period. While commenting on why the United Kingdom and France did not stop Hitler from invading the Rhineland, he states: "There are prices that cannot be paid. Unless you want to do it like Bertrand Russel, who says it is better to be red than dead" (Cunha 1994, 69).[1] This quote, attributed to the British philosopher, argues that if humanity were forced to choose between its demise and the adoption of the

[1] To allow textual flow, direct quotes of texts written in Portuguese were translated into English by the author.

communist regime, it should choose the latter. The statement is a comeback for the anti-communist slogan "better dead than red" (Safire 2008, 49).

Since documents from the Brazilian Military Dictatorship (1964 – 1985) were declassified, there is an emerging scholarship in the field of Brazilian Foreign Policy and Brazilian Diplomatic History that seeks to unveil the collaboration between the diplomatic corps and the dictatorship's authoritarian project with a more critical stance (Roriz 2021, Provazzi 2023). In the last fifteen years, we have witnessed the publication of much research on the topic, beginning with the seminal 2009 article written by Pio Penna Filho about the Foreign Information Center (CIEX) (Penna Filho 2009).

In 2014, the launch of Brazil's Truth Commission final report enabled the publication of research work that focuses on the involvement of diplomacy with the military's authoritarian project. We can highlight works about Brazil's participation in the Chilean coup of 1973 and its support to the Pinochet government (Harmer 2012, Burns 2016, Simon 2021); the work of diplomats seeking to avoid that Brazil became charged with human rights violations at the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC) and the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations (Bernardi 2017, Roriz 2021), as well as the relationship between Itamaraty and Amnesty International in the 1970s (Roriz 2017).

Beyond understanding how diplomats acted during the dictatorship, it is important to understand the origins of anti-communism inside Itamaraty, which can encompass an explanation on the adherence of career diplomats to the dictatorship's authoritarian project. Therefore, we will turn our eyes to the beginning of the 20th century, focusing on the role played by conservatism and anti-communism inside the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, commonly known as Itamaraty, during the early 20th century.

The article is composed of two sections: we will first comment on the conservative origins of the diplomatic career; then, discuss how anti-communism played a role in the foreign policy making process from the tenure of Barão do Rio Branco (1902 – 1912) to the end of the Vargas era. We believe that there was a deeply entrenched conservative and anti-communist mentality inside Itamaraty prior to the beginning of the Cold War; thus, we will take a closer look at the socialization patterns of diplomatic life in the early 20th century. The memoirs and testimonies written and/or given by key diplomatic actors of the dictatorship – Vasco Leitão da Cunha, Manoel Pio Corrêa and Azeredo da Silveira – will help recreate a collective biography of the diplomatic service. Through an extensive literature review, we will see how anti-communism affected the Brazilian foreign policy of the time.

The noble and conservative origins of diplomatic practice in Brazil

Before analyzing the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is important to contextualize the origins of the modern diplomatic career. We believe that diplomatic institutions tend to be

intrinsically conservative for two reasons: first, they exist to guarantee the existence and the safety of the State; second, the diplomatic service is historically a career that was pursued by the nobility, creating an aura of privilege.

The most common interpretation regarding the establishment of the modern diplomatic institution argues that it was created in the Italian city-states in the end of the 15th century. The sovereigns of the city-states started appointing official representatives to their interests – the ambassadors - in "a development of the need to keep liaisons and sources of information with other political units considered unreliable." By the end of the 17th century, diplomacy was already considered a "distinct and honorable" career (Lopes 2013, 100). In his essay "Politics as a Vocation", Max Weber also briefly points out how the diplomatic career distinguished itself from others careers in the public service. For Weber, "adepts of this diplomacy had mostly received a humanist education and regarded one another as a trained class of initiates" (Weber 2004, 45).

Recent studies, however, are challenging this assumption regarding the origins of the diplomatic career. Neumann (2012) and Leira (2021) tend to argue that this interpretation helps imagine International Relations as a primary Eurocentric discipline. They believe that the diplomatic activity is a "lot less distinctive and novel" throughout world's history (Leira 2021, 305). Notwithstanding those new interpretations, the diplomatic activity is still held as a career that can only be carried out by connoisseurs, individuals well versed and trained in the arts and humanities, the type of knowledge that comes easily to those with a noble background.

Therefore, there are some key concepts that help explain the aura that surrounds diplomatic practice: the concept of kinship and the Bourdieusian concepts of field and habitus. Kinship can be described as a "mutuality of being." For Sahlins (2013, 3):

> any relationship constituted in terms of procreation, filiation, or descent can also be made postnatally or performatively by culturally appropriate action. Whatever is construed genealogically may also be constructed socially: an affirmation that can be demonstrated across the known range of societies and not infrequently within a given society.

Relationships built on kinship create a very special bond, in a sense that those relations become a cornerstone of one's own identity and existence (Sahlins 2013). Kinship is also "confirmed and strengthened by being exercised" (Neumann et al. 2019, 5), whether we talk about biological/consanguineal kinship or metaphorical, socially constructed kinship, as is the case of diplomatic institutions.

In fact, according to Neumann (2012, 15), "all known diplomatic systems seem to have rested on shared myths of kinship", and kinship and diplomatic practices are intrinsically related throughout history, thus making the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs no exception.[2] Kinship

[2] To see how kinship structures other diplomatic institutions, see the works of Neumann (2012) on the Norwegian foreign ministry and Anderson (2021) regarding Syrian diplomats of the Assad regime.

is essential to understand the idea of *esprit de corps* that permeate many diplomatic institutions, the sense of collective identity and trustworthiness that preserves the institution before the preferences of the individuals. The esprit de corps also creates, as some authors put it, a *diplomatic habitus* (Batista 2010, Moura 2012, Gobo 2016, Targa 2017).

Bourdieu defines *habitus* as "(…) social acts performed under structural necessities, under the constraint of the products of the previous history, under structural necessities that are embodied in the form of permanent dispositions" (Bourdieu 2014, 93), and "(…) a generative principle of systematic behaviors", which tries to

> account for the fact that, in order to understand a certain number of fundamental human behaviors that are oriented towards the preservation or elevation of the position in social space occupied by a family or an individual, you have to take into account a certain number of strategies that are seemingly unrelated, strategies without a palpable connection (Bourdieu 2014, 237).

Through habitus, an individual transforms their personal and collective history into principles and dispositions that affect future practices (Mérand and Pouliout 2013, 29). It is only possible for the habitus to exist within a field, a "kind of relatively autonomous microcosm within the great social world and which obeys its own laws" (Castro 2014). To Mérand and Pouliout (2013, 30), fields are "a social space structured along three principal dimensions: power relations, objects of struggle, and the rules taken for granted within the field". The authors argue that those dimensions create a hierarchy of domination that is historically constructed by different forms of capital.

The concept of habitus allows us to see how agents and structures work dialectically: social acts incorporated into the structure of a field not only shape the agents, but are also shaped by the subjects who are subsequently inserted therein. The Brazilian "diplomatic habitus", thus, embraces the classic interpretation that diplomacy is one of the most prestigious state careers: the diplomat is a civil servant who represents the interests of the State abroad. Moreover, it is expected that a member of the diplomatic service has broad knowledge, not only regarding their profession, but also culture and arts. Therefore, diplomats do not perceive themselves as mere bureaucrats, common civil servants, and are not perceived that way. The perception that Itamaraty is unique in comparison with other state agencies reinforce their kinship ties – most of the time, diplomats refer to each other as members of the same family. It is not uncommon to hear that Brazilian diplomats serve the "House of Rio Branco" (Moura 2012, Gobo 2016).

The imperial influence on Brazilian diplomacy is an important element to understand the diplomatic habitus, not only because of the ministry's monarchic roots, but also because of the social origins of diplomats in the early 20th century. When Brazil became independent in 1822, it faced the need for international recognition at the same time the country was consolidating its territory. Thus, the first two ministries created by Dom Pedro I were the Ministry of War

(Ministério da Guerra) and the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (*Secretaria de Negócios Estrangeiros*), Itamaraty's predecessor. According to Estre (2022), the newly independent country inherited the diplomatic structure of its former metropole, Portugal, to which "Brazilian diplomatic agents inherited their Portuguese counterpart's *modus operandi, modus vivendi"* (Estre 2022, 39). The first representatives of Brazil abroad had to provide for their subsistence overseas by their own means, meaning that only members of the imperial elite could pursue the diplomatic career. Thus, during the 19th century, the foreign service in Brazil was marked by patrimonialism, and progressing in the diplomatic path took a great deal of social capital (Cheibub 1984, Gobo 2016).

Given that diplomacy was not exercised by professionally trained diplomats, but rather members of the ruling elite, it was within those homogenous circles that a common conception of national interest took shape. Therefore, the consensus on foreign policy was an intra-elite consensus (Cheibub 1984, 1985, Lima 2005). When the Baron of Rio Branco became Brazil's Foreign Minister in 1902, he was responsible for breaking away from the Brazilian Empire's foreign policy and setting the tone for modern-day Brazilian foreign policy (Ricupero 2017). At the same time, he consolidated the aristocratic ethos that still pervades the ministry: his administration was marked by a personalist and centralizing management style, and his political and personal preferences utterly shaped the institution (Barros 1983; Cheibub 1984; Moura 2012; Gobo 2016).

A monarchist, Rio Branco kept his title even after Brazil became a republic in 1889. With a clear preference when hiring diplomats, he favored the employment of young, white, "well-born" men descending from the old aristocratic families of Brazil (Moura 2012). The Baron's vision of the "ideal diplomat" was based on a race, class, and gender bias. Many diplomats of the First Republic were monarchists (Barros 1986); consequently, the so-called diplomatic habitus was, at first, linked to the origins of the diplomatic career *per se* and to its members' backgrounds. Rio Branco was the son of the Viscount of Rio Branco, former Foreign Minister, Finance Minister, Senator, and head of the council of ministers during the reign of Dom Pedro II. The Baron spent most of his childhood in Rio de Janeiro, with a brief period in Montevideo, where his father served as secretary to the Brazilian mission. In Rio, he studied in the prestigious Pedro II School, and then studied law at the notorious Largo de S. Francisco, in São Paulo (Santos 2018).

The creation of the Rio Branco Institute and the standardization of the admission through civil service examination in 1945 did not abolish the institution's aristocratic habitus; rather, they replaced "biological" kinship ties for "metaphorical" ones (Barros 1983, 1986; Cheibub 1984; 1985; Moura 2006; 2012; Lopes 2013; Gobo 2016). According to Estre (2022, 44), there is evidence of elitist bias in the examination, favoring those in the Brazilian upper classes: "notwithstanding some degree of democratization (…), the process was still remarkably elitist, mainly because of the required level of foreign languages mastery". If we look at the background of career diplomats who had prominent positions during the military dictatorship, despite having joined the career long after Rio Branco, we can conclude that the aristocratic background was common.

Vasco Leitão da Cunha, the first foreign minister of the military regime, was born in 1903. His maternal grandfather was a British engineer who had come to Brazil to work with submarine telegraphic cables. His father came from a prominent family from the empire. His great-grandfather was the Baron of Mamoré, head of the prestigious mission to study the viability of the Madeira-Mamoré railroad – an unsuccessful link between the Brazilian State of Amazonas and Bolivia. Leitão da Cunha spent his childhood in Petropolis, where his father befriended the Baron of Rio Branco and other diplomats and politicians, such as Joaquim Nabuco. As a child, he made occasional trips to England to visit his maternal relatives. Before becoming a diplomat, he studied in England and went to the National Law School in Rio de Janeiro. When talking about his childhood in Petropolis, Leitão da Cunha stated it was "aristocratic in the distinction, but of great modesty" (Cunha 1994, 5).

Manoel Pio Corrêa, who became Itamaraty's Secretary-General in 1966 during the presidency of Castello Branco, was responsible for structuring CIEX, the repressive arm of Itamaraty during the military regime. Born in 1918, he spent most of his childhood in Paris and studied Law at the National Law School in Rio de Janeiro (Corrêa 1995). Not only was he fiercely anti-communist, but he was also a monarchist and a supporter of the British Empire, which was, in his opinion, the peak of Western civilization. He was not afraid of showing his racist views – in his memoirs, he criticized the decolonization movement of the 20th century, claiming that it "would distribute around the world a picturesque cloud of exotic 'diplomats' who came down directly from the highest canopy of equatorial forests", saying that diplomats from the newly independent states of Africa and Asia disrespected traditions such as the dress code in UN meetings: "they rejected western formal attire in favor of folkloric capes or Pai-de-Santo gowns, worn with slippers without socks even on the greatest of solemnities" (Correa 1995, 377).

Azeredo da Silveira, Geisel's Foreign Minister from 1974 to 1979, also came from a family with ties to the Brazilian Empire. His great-grandfather, Senator Manuel Francisco Correia, was a minster in the cabinet of then Foreign Minister, the Viscount of Rio Branco, and was responsible for the peace treaty with Paraguay after the Paraguayan War (1864-1870) (Spektor 2010).

Those diplomats were linked to the Brazilian Empire by blood. The exception was Mario Gibson Barboza, Minister of Foreign Affairs during the Medici government (1969-1974). Born in Olinda, Pernambuco, in 1918, he descended from Henry Gibson on his mother's side, an English man who came to Brazil in the 19th century and became wealthy with sugar plantations and exporting goods. His father was a Portuguese merchant who migrated to Brazil. While his family was wealthy, it did not seem to have any ties with the imperial elite. However, it is curious to notice that he was referred to as *Marquês de Olinda*, or the Marquis of Olinda, by his peers (Barboza 2020).[3]

It is our understanding that their aristocratic background helped shape their actions and worldviews. Gibson Barboza, Pio Corrêa and Azeredo da Silveira joined the Foreign Ministry during

[3] *Biografia de Mário Gibson Barboza*. Access February 01, 2024. https://ggibson.criadorlw.com.br/mariogibsonbarboza

the Vargas Era (1930 -1945): Pio Corrêa was admitted in the career in 1936; Gibson Barboza in 1939, and Silveira in 1941. Other famous diplomats of the regime joined the career during that time, such as Antônio Cândido da Câmara Canto, who was the Brazilian ambassador in Chile during the Coup that overthrew Salvador Allende in 1973, and who supervised Itamaraty's inquire commission after the establishment of the Institutional Act no. 5 (AI-5) in December 1968.

In the beginning of the 20th century, anti-communism became a major political and repressive force in Brazil. Knowing that those diplomats came mostly from a similar background and joined the career in the same timeframe, that the creation of a habitus is not static, and dispute for influence inside the field allows individuals to force a change within it, it is interesting to see how they perceived "communist and subversive threats". To understand that we must look at how anticommunism was disseminated inside the Brazilian society and the ministry of foreign affairs before the Cold War.

Anti-communism in Itamaraty in the first half of the 20th century

Anti-communism can be defined as "individuals and groups dedicated towards the fight against communism", with communism being understood as "the Marxist-Leninist synthesis that originated bolshevism and the soviet model" (Sá Motta 2000, 4). Since the first decade of the 20th century, anti-communism was a part of Brazilian foreign policy, especially in regards to immigration policies. As of 1903, for example, there are letters from the Baron of Rio Branco to the Chief of Police of the State of São Paulo claiming that the government should repress foreign agitators, and that the police should not be tolerant towards foreigners (Torres 2013, 59).

It was after the Russian Revolution in 1917, however, that anti-communism would gain traction in Brazil. At first, Brazilian diplomacy did not pay much attention to the October Revolution of 1917. The Brazilian press and members of the Brazilian elite publicly referred to the October Revolution as a distant event that would not resonate in Brazilian society, arguing that the foreign ideology of communism would never flourish in Brazil (Sá Motta 2000; Torres 2013). However, 1917 was also marked by general strikes in the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Pernambuco that were called due to the poor labor condition of urban workers, which concerned Brazilian officials regarding the possibility of this "foreign ideology" to set foot in the country (Bandeira 2017). In 1918, the Brazilian government broke off diplomatic relations with Russia.

In 1922, the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) was founded; along with it, anti-communist pamphlets translated into Portuguese began circulating in Brazil, and the government started suppressing the organized left. In 1927, President Washington Luís (1926 -1930) criminalized PCB through the Celerada Law[4]; almost concomitantly, anti-communist engines were set in motion inside Itamaraty by Raul do Rio Branco, the son of the Baron.

[4] The law, proposed by Congressman Aníbal de Toledo, criminalized any act that could incite workers towards demonstration, which led to the suppression of the press and the freedom of assembly, among others.

Raul do Rio Branco began his career as an assistant to his father in Paris; in 1899, he was appointed attaché in Bern, Switzerland. From 1905 to 1911 he worked at his father's cabinet in Rio de Janeiro and, in 1912, the year of his father's death, he was assigned as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the Brazilian government in Switzerland.[5]

In 1925, he cemented a partnership between the Brazilian government and the *Entente Internationale Anticommuniste (EIA),* or International Anticommunist Entente (Comissão Nacional da Verdade 2014). Founded in 1924 in Geneva by Theodore Aubert, a Swiss Lawyer, and Georges Lodygensky, a Russian Red Cross delegate. The EIA was created in opposition to the Third Socialist International to defend the "principles of order, family, property and nationality" in "all countries", prioritizing "religious and spiritual dimensions and the defense of the free market system" (Ruotsila 2010, 26). The EIA became an important arm of the anti-communist movement in Europe before World War II and the Cold War:

> Most of the EIA's work took place behind the scenes, and it was coordinated by a permanent central office in Geneva with a staff of fourteen and sustained by an international network of informants and correspondents. The central office organized international conferences, published books and information bulletins for a range of periodicals and key political and business leaders, produced anti-communist films, and conducted research into communist activities (Ruotsila 2010, 27)

One of EIA's founders, Theodore Aubert, was supposedly a close friend of Raul do Rio Branco and other Brazilian diplomats, and the International Anti-communist Entente had an important presence in several Latin American countries. The anti-communism fostered by Aubert and Lodygensky was grounded on religious and moral aspects, with the EIA seeing communism as a form of degeneration resulting from modernity, the profanation of the sacred hierarchy and the natural order of things. One of its most famous supporters, for example, was General Francisco Franco (Ruotsila 2010; Comissão Nacional da Verdade 2014).

The EIA's take on communism was like Brazil's. Its anti-communism was rooted in a mix of catholic nationalism and liberalism. Whereas in the United States a sort of "market-oriented" anti-communism became preponderant, through the defense of the principles of liberal democracy and free-market capitalism, in Brazil anti-communism was rooted in religious and chauvinistic grounds. Communism was considered a foreign menace created to destroy society, a "moral perversion" that would annihilate the natural order of things (Sá Motta 2000). Anti-communist groups, consequently, took advantage of the moral panic in Brazilian society to depict any progressive view as a communist menace, even if it was not true.

Taking advantage of Raul do Rio Branco's position within the EIA, Itamaraty began exchanging correspondence with the anti-communist organization regularly. In 1927, President Washington

[5] Ministério das Relações exteriores. *Anuário (1928)*. Accessed February 1, 2024 https://www.funag.gov.br/chdd/images/Anuario_Funcionarios_MRE/Anuario1928A.pdf >.

Luis started to collaborate with the organization, paying ten thousand Swiss francs annually – and the exchange between the EIA and Itamaraty soon had practical effects on the fight against communism in Brazil (Torres 2013, 62). For instance, the approval of the Celerada Law relied strongly on the argument that in 1924 the British Government had found evidence of an international communist conspiracy and that the Brazilian police had discovered documents in Bern that confirmed British claims (Pinheiro 1991). The Celerada Law was justified in terms of internal security, the same justification for the elaboration of the National Security Doctrine years later. That same year the National Security Council (*Conselho de Segurança Nacional* – CSN) was founded through Decree n. 17.999 (Setemy 2013).

One of the reasons for the collaboration between the Brazilian government and the EIA was the internationalist aspect of Marxism-Leninism and its idea that class solidarity should suppress nationalism. The internationalism of the III International justified the need for coordinated anti-communist activities in the realm of international politics. Brazilian diplomats believed that the III International received money from the Soviet government to forge communist propaganda in South America (Torres 2013, Setemy 2013). In 1927, diplomat Lucillio Bueno wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Otavio Mangabeira, commenting on the Celerada Law:

> [...] I see that the predictions made by me have been taking place since 1922 when I started to see the danger of communism in Brazil with my eyes enlightened by patriotism. Since there is no middle class in our country, as in Western Europe, we are exposed, like Russia, deprived also of this barrier to the ferocious appetites of the uncultured masses, to the rapid contamination of the social virus in the populace guided by foreign agents. Propaganda, thanks to the wise law recently voted, is restricted, but not jugulated, and the authorities must not give barracks to those who, under the pretext of freedom of ideas, try to upset the constitutional order (Bueno *apud* Torres 2013, 61).

As we can see, anti-communism was part of the political discourse of the *República Velha*: the internationalist nature of the communist movement asked for an international anti-communist response. Therefore, Itamaraty played a major role in the containment of communism in Brazil since its early days. It was after the beginning of the Vargas Era (1930 – 1945), however, that we will witness the consolidation and institutionalization of anti-communist practices inside the institution.

During the provisional government of Getúlio Vargas (1930 – 1934), Afrânio de Melo Franco, Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1930 to 1933, took up measures to suppress communist activities in Brazil. Throughout his administration, Itamaraty started to collaborate with the Federal District police in Rio de Janeiro and signed agreements with the police forces of Argentina and Uruguay to restrain Soviet immigration and communist activities at their borders. Melo Franco firmly believed that the Komintern was fomenting revolutionary and subversive movements in South America (Hilton, 2013).

In 1932, *Ação Integralista Brasileira* (AIB) was founded, led by Plinio Salgado de Oliveira. The AIB was a fascist movement that successfully echoed the fears of the Brazilian middle-class, afraid of Communism and social upheaving with the slogan "God, Country and Family" (Hilton 1972; Sá Motta 2000). Since the focus of the integralist movement was the heart and minds of the Brazilian upper and middle classes, it is no surprise that some young diplomats during the 1930s flirted with fascism, something that Azeredo da Silveira recalls:

> I can say that the Germans had a lot of sympathizers in the class who were trying to get into the ministry. Jayme [de Azevedo Rodrigues] himself had been head of the Integralist Youth (then he turned to the left). (...) Some colleagues attended school wearing green shirts, like Sérgio Corrêa da Costa, who was an integralist. Lauro Escorel, a São Paulo native and Jayme's favorite student, was also a sympathizer (...) there were a lot of nice people in integralism, but I was never able to find the doctrine sympathetic nor had I ever had this kind of inclination (Spektor 2010, 26)[6]

Integralism gained force as a political movement especially after the episode known as *Intentona Comunista* in 1935.[7] The upheaval was maybe the most significant attempt of communist sympathizers to seize power in Brazil, although unsuccessful. Anti-communist groups took advantage of the fear provoked by the uprising to spread anti-communist propaganda and increase xenophobic sentiment against immigrants; there was a rumor that the upheaval was fostered by the Komintern (Sá Motta 2000). The failure of the 1935 uprising opened paths for the crystallization of repressive measures that would eventually culminate in the *Estado Novo* dictatorship in 1937 (Pereira 2005, 42).

During the episode, Pio Corrêa was serving the Army and was one of the soldiers that defended the fort at Praia Vermelha in Rio de Janeiro against the upheaval (he would only become a diplomat in 1938). For Corrêa, the failed communist uprising solidified his anti-communist beliefs (Corrêa 1995).

After 1935, Itamaraty started to refine its actions against foreign subversive threats. The ministry created an agency called *Serviços de Estudos e Informações* (SEI, Studies and Information Service) in 1936 which, one year later, changed its name to *Serviços Especiais de Informações* (Special Information Service). SEI was conceived by Foreign Minister José Carlos Macedo Soares (1934-1936) and by career diplomat Odette de Carvalho e Souza. Its purpose was "to deal with the repression of communism through the specialized study of Marxist doctrine, the methods of Bolshevik propaganda, its infiltration into the country and the means to fight it practically and

[6] Some *integralistas* diplomats took later in life a "leftist" turn, as Azeredo da Silveira points out. Jayme de Azevedo Rodrigues, who became a career diplomat in 1937, was expelled after the 1964 Coup D'etat for sending a telegram to minister Vasco Leitão da Cunha stating that he would not work for *gorillas* (Abreu and Lamarão 2007). In the opposite direction, Sergio Corrêa da Costa and Lauro Escorel ended up in prominent diplomatic posts during the dictatorship. Escorel, for example, served as Ambassador in Bolívia (1965-1967) and Paraguai (1970-1972). Sergio Corrêa da Costa served as Ambassador in London (1968-1974) and the United Nations (1975-1983).

[7] Although the most known name of the 1935 communist upheaval, this is a pejorative term.

efficiently" (Setemy 2013, 111). Carvalho e Souza was responsible for structuring the information apparatus that would become the CIEX thirty years later.

Therefore, Itamaraty's anti-communist ethos during the first half of the 20th century was embodied in the first female career diplomat to have ever reached the status of Ambassador in Brazil, Odette de Carvalho e Souza, called *Dona Odette* or *Dona Ó* by her (male) counterparts. She was the first woman to receive the title of consul and the first woman to become a career Ambassador (Friaça 2018). She joined Itamaraty in 1936, two years before the Oswaldo Aranha reform, which prohibited women from taking the admission test to the diplomatic career – a prohibition that lasted until 1954 (Tomas 2020).

According to Vasco Leitão da Cunha (1994, 175), "Dona Ó [as he calls her] was our first female Ambassador. [She] Had a real fear of communism, so she did a lot of work on it." Pio Corrêa (1995, 581), describes her as a woman of "ungrateful aspect" physically, but of "clear intelligence, a great professional culture, a great kindness and an enviable sense of humor". Despite talking about her in a very sexist way, both diplomats remember her with affection and respect, expressing the kinship ties that bonded them.

For Setemy (2013, 203), Carvalho e Souza genuinely believed that Itamaraty was the "Civilian General Staff", paraphrasing Oswaldo Aranha, Vargas' Foreign Minister from 1938 to 1944. Pio Corrêa was her subordinate and inherited her files on communist and subversive activities. Those files would later become crucial for the elaboration of CIEX policies during the military dictatorship. For Carvalho e Souza, it was only natural that Itamaraty took the lead in the fight against communism. Thus,

> Brazilian diplomatic missions constituted "great observation posts". Its "precious" information would help to better know the enemy, its tactics, and slogans. Brazilian consulates, on the other hand, should exercise permanent vigilance, to avoid the infiltration of weapons or extremist elements of foreign nationality. In parallel, diplomatic missions and consulates from other countries in Brazil would be called upon to collaborate in the process of expelling unwanted foreigners. By maintaining 'a constant and close connection with the international institutions charged with combating communism' – that is to say, with the EIA –, the MRE had information from all over the world, which, through the then projected SEI, could be transmitted "to authorities most directly concerned, notably the police and military ministries". (Comissão Nacional da Verdade 2014, 181)

Carvalho e Souza and Macedo Soares were deeply influenced by the consequences of the *intentona* when SEI was established. Due to the supposed involvement of the Komintern in the failed communist insurgency, Itamaraty restored its relationship with the EIA. In the 1930s, Dona Odette was serving in Geneva and likely became a link between Itamaraty and the International Anti-communist Entente. She was transferred back to Rio de Janeiro by Macedo Soares when he became Minister in 1934. The official reason for such a move was for her to work at the ministry

general secretariat as his secretary. However, it might be that she was transferred back to Brazil to establish the SEI, since in the same year of its creation, 1936, Macedo Soares authorized the transfer of 3.082 Swiss francs to the EIA (Torres 2013; Comissão Nacional da Verdade 2014; Friaça 2018).

Itamaraty closely collaborated with the police at the states' level as well, helping them find communist agents infiltrated in Brazil. One of the best-known cases was that of Arthur Ernst Ewert, also known by the pseudonym Harry Berger. Member of the German Communist Party and elected member of the Reichstag in 1928, he flew away from Germany in 1933, after Hitler's victory, to the Soviet Union. In 1934 he was sent to Brazil to help the Brazilian Communist Party, arriving in the country in 1935 via Buenos Aires, under the alias Harry Berger. Ewert and his wife were arrested in December 1935, after he and other foreigners involved with the failed revolt had been closely monitored by the police in collaboration with Itamaraty. Because of that collaboration, Itamaraty suggested in 1936 that the IV Interamerican Police Conference should take place in Brazil, and the fight against communism should be discussed (Setemy 2013).

Vargas paid close attention to what was happening in the Southern Cone. As many "subversives" were arriving in Brazil via Argentina and Uruguay, he tried to condition bilateral relations to the fight against communism, and the Brazilian government believed that the Soviet Embassy in Montevideo was the official Komintern headquarter in the Southern Cone. Brazil then pushed Uruguay to sever diplomatic ties with the USSR, which happened in December 1935. Lucílio Bueno was the Brazilian Ambassador to Uruguay at that time. He was the one to defend the Celerada Law under the argument that Brazil, due to the lack of a strong middle class, was doomed to follow the steps of Russia, where an "uncultured mass" ferociously took power (Torres 2013). As ambassador, he tried to push the Uruguayan government to censor Uruguayan journalists who took a critical stance against Brazil. According to Setemy (2013, 120)

> (...) in parallel with the execution of Brazilian foreign policy, Brazilian diplomatic representatives acted in those countries [Uruguay and Argentina] as "licensed spies" or recruited their own secret agents to carry out covert data collection actions related to the development of communist activities in foreign territory.

Another member of the Brazilian delegation in Montevideo was Antônio Cândido da Câmara Canto, who was the embassy's commercial attaché. Câmara Canto was born in Montevideo in 1910 and officially entered the diplomatic career in 1938. He had been working at the Brazilian embassy in Uruguay since 1935 (Setemy, 2013). Thirty-five years later, while serving as Brazilian Ambassador to Chile, he would become known as one of the supporters of the military coup that overthrew President Salvador Allende and installed Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship on September 11, 1973. Furthermore, he was one of the chairs of the Inquire Commission that happened in Itamaraty in January 1969, in the wake of the promulgation of the Institutional Act no. 5 of

December 1968. Pio Corrêa (1995, 641) considered him one of the few diplomats that "bravely" opposed the "leftist foreign policy" of João Goulart.

Following the beginning of World War II in 1939, Itamaraty's National Security Section was created. The National Security Council sent general guidelines to each ministry regarding the "state of war in Europe". For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the CSN recommended, among other things, to

> e) supervise the arrival of foreigners to the country, in order to prevent the use of political propaganda agents and recruitment of volunteers for the formation of expeditionary bodies.
>
> f) unravel the activities of espionage agents and saboteurs capable of entering the country and provoking attacks, to impute them to one of the parties to the European hostilities, to create an environment favorable to the end of our neutrality.
>
> g) organize a 'special investigative service,' with the collaboration of 'intelligence sections' from military ministries[8]

While this statement can be read as a simple guideline to maintain neutrality towards the war in Europe, it advises the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior to take "preventive, educational and repressive measures" to protect the political order. The National Security Council also tells the Ministry of Health and Education to "propagate the virtues and the goals of the social, economic, and political regime installed with the constitution of November 10, 1937". The War Ministry, in turn, was supposed to centralize the secret service and help organize the censorship service.[9]

Regarding the "arrival of foreigners into the country", the CSN recommended that Itamaraty focused on immigrants who had past involvement with "subversive activities". Since Brazil was still neutral in the conflict between the Allies and the Axis at that time, Brazilian diplomacy believed that if the government accepted Jewish refugees, it could harm Brazil's neutrality. It is important to notice that, at the time, anti-communist and anti-Semitic bias were intertwined (Sá Motta 2000; Setemy 2013).

After the World War II ended in 1945, Brazil and Latin America witnessed a brief period of democratic blossom, with the rise of social movements and leftist parties and the end of many authoritarian regimes, such as the *Estado Novo* (Bethell e Roxborough 1988). Luís Carlos Prestes was granted amnesty along with other *Estado Novo* political prisoners, and PCB was once again legalized, soon becoming an important political force – between 130 and 220 thousand Brazilians were affiliated to PCB between 1946 and 1947 (Schwarcz e Starling 2015, Caterina 2019).

[8] Diretrizes gerais aos Ministérios tendo em vista a situação criada pelo estado de guerra na Europa. Pasta 502.35 – Conselho de Segurança Nacional. Caixa 188. Seção da Correspondência Especial (SCE). Maços temáticos secretos. Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty – Brasília (AHI-BSB).

[9] Diretrizes gerais aos Ministérios tendo em vista a situação criada pelo estado de guerra na Europa. Pasta 502.35 – Conselho de Segurança Nacional. Caixa 188. Seção da Correspondência Especial (SCE). Maços temáticos secretos. Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty – Brasília (AHI-BSB).

However, this period ended soon. With the rise of the Cold War, Communism would become the biggest threat to national security. By 1946 the Brazilian government restructured the National Security Council and reshaped the National Security Sections of the civilian ministries. Itamaraty's National Security Section was restructured through Decree 23.944, from October 28, 1947, the same year that President Eurico Gaspar Dutra outlawed PCB for the second time in its history, and broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

This article intended to give an overview of the origins of anti-communism in Itamaraty. When analyzing the sources, anti-communism appears as an institutionalized force inside the Brazilian diplomatic corps. By considering the kinship ties that bounded diplomats and their social origins in the early 20th, we tried to reconstruct the diplomatic habitus and the diplomatic field of that period.

The diplomatic habitus and kinship ties reinforced the conservative *esprit de corps* of Itamaraty, marked by bias of gender and race. There was a notable exception – Odette de Carvalho e Souza, a career diplomat and a woman. However, she was also responsible for creating the structure that would enable Itamaraty to act as part of the dictatorship's security apparatus thirty years later. In her case, ideology came first, and maybe this was fundamental for her growth inside the ministry.

At the same time, we realize that not every diplomat at the time was conservative or anti-communist, nor that they have remained so for the rest of their careers – the example of Jayme de Azevedo Rodrigues contradicts this assumption. However, it is also true that the young diplomats who joined Itamaraty's ranks during the 1930s leaned towards a more conservative ideology, and some of them openly supported the *integralista* doctrine. Those diplomats are going to play an important role years later in the formulation of the military dictatorship's "ideological foreign policy", with the loudest examples being Câmara Canto and Pio Corrêa.

If anti-communism prior to the Cold War was a matter of internal security, after 1945 it will become a matter of national security. However, as the article demonstrates, anti-communism was a significant force in Brazilian foreign policy even before the Cold War. Contrary to what is usually said about the diplomacy of the 1964-1985, this article shows that the actions of those diplomats engaged in the foreign policy of the repression is not a "step out of cadence". It is rather the continuity of institutionalized practices that can be traced to the early 20th century and that were not properly addressed by the institution.

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