




NEO-FASCISM IN BRAZIL, FROM THE LOCAL TO THE GLOBAL?

Neofascismo no Brasil: do local ao global?

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DEBATE

NEOFASCISMO NO BRASIL/NEO-FASCISM IN BRAZIL/NEOFASCISMO EN BRASIL

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the landscape of neo-fascism in Brazil, analyzing its phases of development and dialogs with similar movements and manifestations in the international arena. The central argument of the analysis is that neo-fascism in Brazil is a late and potentially unique phenomenon and therefore has its own particular characteristics in terms of its interaction with the global structures of these manifestations. The article also offers a discussion of the definition of neo-fascism as a category of analysis—as well as its distinction from historical fascism—based on the global nature of these manifestations.

KEYWORDS

Neo-fascism. Transnationalism. Far right.

RESUMO

O artigo discute o quadro do neofascismo no Brasil, analisando as suas fases de desenvolvimento e os diálogos com movimentos e expressões congêneres no campo internacional. O argumento central da análise é que o neofascismo, no Brasil, é um fenômeno tardio e potencialmente peculiar, e por essas razões, isso acarreta particularidades do ponto de vista da interlocução com as estruturas globais dessas expressões. Além disso, o artigo fornece uma discussão sobre a definição do neofascismo como categoria de análise – e a sua distinção com o fascismo histórico - a partir da condição global dessas expressões.

PALAVRAS-CHAVES

Neofascismo. Transnacionalismo. Extrema direita.

The far right is a global phenomenon. This perception seems to be one of the main convergences between public opinion and the academic study of different manifestations of right-wing extremism and radicalism¹ in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.² Along with having a certain immediatist perception, based on the emergence of new leaders, as well as the electoral advances of the so-called populist parties of the radical right, the analysis of the far right as a global object is grounded in references that are more remote in chronological terms, which is fully addressed by the specialized literature on the topic.

To a certain extent, much of the debate about the transnational facet of the extreme right is ancillary to the development of studies on historical/classical fascism, situated in the interwar period. In analytical terms, the transnational dimension of fascism has achieved a strong consensus in recent decades, in terms of both its approach and its factual dimension, that is to say, the strategies that fascists have used to coordinate themselves internationally.

Through organizations such as *Fasci Italiani all'Estero* or through dialog between fascist leaders and militants, a sense of transnational cooperation was present in classical fascism, such that fascisms were simultaneously national and transnational, albeit largely "Europeanist" (BAUERKÄMPER; ROSSOLINSKI-LEIBE, 2016).

Beyond the transnational consensus (ALCADE, 2020) reached some time ago in studies on fascisms, in recent years, there has been an intensified effort to understand fascism as a global phenomenon (FINCHELSTEIN, 2019), in other words, one beyond European exclusivisms. According to this perspective, rather than understanding the spaces and elements of fascisms through a global analysis (JACOBY, 2006), the specialized literature began to develop an analytical matrix that was critical of Eurocentric temptations (ZACHARIAH, 2014), thereby understanding non-European fascisms as creators of concrete policy proposals rather than merely as reproducers of imported theories.

Although the global dimension of fascism seems to be a burgeoning preoccupation, and perhaps a potential new consensus, this may not be as clearly applicable to the field of studies on neo-fascism, given the particular nature of the object.

Based on this, it is necessary to offer a few brief preliminaries. As classical fascism begins to decline after 1945, fascist intellectuals and political forces move towards what Pierro Ignazi (1992) calls the new extreme right, incorporating new agendas and promoting effective ways to move away from the fascist "condition" and status.

This debate was strongly influenced by the Italian political landscape, where Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) constructed the path from neo-fascism to post-fascism. While the MSI initially sought to incorporate the doctrinal apparatus of the National Fascist Party, the transformation into Alleanza Nazionale combined the support of political and economic liberalism with the attachment to individualism and Westernism, characteristic aspects of this post-fascist condition. As such, in Ignazi's view (IGNAZI, 1994), the party would be linked to the camp of the new post-industrial extreme right.³

¹ With regard to this debate, Carter's (2018) contribution is essential to refining these categories. Here, we primarily use the general framework proposed by MUDDE (2019), in particular the distinction between the radical right and the extreme right. In the Brazilian context, the distinction is particularly viable with respect to anti-democratic sentiment as a combination of anti-pluralism and the denial of citizens' fundamental rights. The issue of nativism, however, seems especially problematic for the Brazilian reality and the historical tradition of the extreme right.

² This, of course, does not preclude a sometimes too-heated debate about the extent of the impact and danger of these manifestations. On this subject, see the critique advanced in BALE and BAR-ON (2022).

³ This does not preclude the continued existence of a political culture celebrated and nurtured by a diverse range of neo-fascist tendencies (LENCI, 2012) in Italy, including by new manifestations, with *CasaPound Italia* (CPI), and the pursuit of a "third millennium fascism" (FROIO *et al.*, 2020) as its most well-known facet in recent years.

This is a phenomenon that sharply intensifies throughout the 1970s, with the increased electoral power of parties such as the French Front National and the Austrian Freedom Party, among others. Since the 1980s, the anti-immigration agenda and neoliberal policies have become the unifying elements of radical right-wing parties and their electoral constituency, reigniting questions about the relationship of these groups with historical fascism in public opinion and academic debates (KARAPIN, 1998).

Are these parties neo-fascist? This is not a question that this article intends to answer, in particular because the specialized literature has already made advances in this regard. The objective of this paper is to understand the development of neo-fascism in Brazil, using the interpretative key of transnationalism and a hypothetical global dimension of the phenomenon. To this end, it is necessary to consider two central issues: (a) neo-fascism undergoes its own unique development and is therefore not merely a continuation or remnant of classical fascism and its transnational and/or global networks; and (b) the transnational aspect of neo-fascism has its own rhythms and spheres, the result of conjunctural aspects and the ambitions of neo-fascist groups and leaders, as well as more or less specific thematic affinities.

NEO-FASCISM AND THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSNATIONALISM

Whether in the press, in day-to-day politics, or even in academic repositories, it is easy to observe the diversity of meanings in the use of the term “neo-fascism.” This use often involves drawing a dividing line in the moral and political realm against political manifestations on the right. As a result, it is necessary to understand neo-fascism apart from the categories of political denunciation and dismissal, so common in the political uses of the term.

In academic terms, it is also necessary to move away from reductionist interpretations of neo-fascism, as proposed by authors such as A. James Gregor (2006), who limit neo-fascism to the continuities of the Italian model. We agree with Jeffrey M. Bale (2006), who criticizes readings of neo-fascism that focus excessively on the experience of classical fascism and that, in the relentless pursuit of similarities, often ignore the new facets that characterize neo-fascism. Indeed, beyond being an extension of classical fascism, neo-fascism must be analyzed as a plural phenomenon, one that is in constant tension and not infrequently chaotic.

Based on similar inquiries and looking historically at the phenomenon, Nigel Copsey’s (2020) contribution is crucial, as he characterizes neo-fascism based on three characteristics of the post-war reformulation of fascism: deterritorialization, metapoliticization, and historical revisionism. These three characteristics provide elements of continuity but also depart from the “classical” model of fascism.

Deterritorialization, an aspect also addressed by Andrea Mammone (2001), is clearly visible in the emergence of pan-European nationalism; metapoliticization—inspired by the ideas of *Nouvelle Droite*—is important for thinking about neo-fascism beyond formal political structures; and historical revisionism emerges as a way to deal with the traumatic past of fascisms and promote Holocaust denial literature. This taxonomy is useful, as it also circumvents more subjective definitions, such as those of Walter Laqueur (1996), who interprets neo-fascism, after the failure of continuist groups, primarily as an alternative lifestyle.

In “typological” terms, neo-fascism is understood as a phenomenon with characteristics that go beyond fundamental and organizational elements of historical fascism, such as the party, regime, or state model. This proposition is in line with the typology of Roger Griffin (1991), for whom neo-fascism comprises three key categories. The

first is continuist groups, such as the MSI (in its initial phase) and the German Sozialistische Reichspartei (1949), in addition to small neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups in the countries of origin of those ideologies.

The second group includes organizations that incorporate the practices of international groups inspired by fascism, such as neo-Nazi entities outside Germany, white supremacist groups, neo-Nazi skinheads (the self-styled White Power, in particular), as well as initiatives with an international ambition, such as *Círculo Español de Amigos da Europa* (CEDADE). In general, one of the primary differences between the first two categories is the degree of “faithfulness” to the organizational model of classical fascism, which is stronger in the first group.

The third group contains a great diversity of organizations, the primary focus of which is a more intellectual dimension of reviving—and diversifying—fascist origins. From Holocaust deniers to national-revolutionary (or national-anarchist) groups, the primary manifestation in this category, which intensifies beginning in the 1960s, is the conservative revolution proposed by the European New Right (ENR), the primary reference of which is the French framework of Alain de Benoist.

In addition to these aspects, there are other elements in the neo-fascist landscape, such as “right-wing Gramscism” undertaken by *Nouvelle Droite* and activities of national Bolshevik groups, led by figures such as Eduard Limonov and, in particular, Aleksandr Dugin. It is due to these aspects that in Jeffrey Bale’s view, the 1960s will be characterized by a “turn to the left” (based on an anti-imperialist and anti-Westernist agenda) for certain neo-fascist organizations, such as *Jeune Europe* and *Nouvelle Resistance*, both led by Jean-François Thiriart.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of hybridization (FORTI, 2021), through aspects such as anti-Americanism, would reveal new frontiers for neo-fascism. This is clear even in the post-Cold War context and the dismantling of the USSR, particularly in the post-Soviet territories and conflicts, which would mark a third phase of development for neo-fascist and related tendencies (VEIGA *et al.*, 2019).

There are thus striking changes from the viewpoint of the relationship between neo-fascism and “classical” fascisms. Neo-fascism cannot be analyzed and mapped solely from the perspective of the revival of classical frameworks by continuist groups but is instead a component in constant transformation, based on the affinities established through a fundamental ideological quorum that have also been developing since the end of the Second World War.

In addition to this phenomenon of “new facets,” there is an organizational dimension to the issue, as proposed by Griffin’s concept of the “groupuscular right” (GRIFFIN, 2003). This groupuscular right is defined not only by its fragmentation but also by an ideological similarity due to this common political nature, which rejects the primacy of the (liberal) democratic model and is strategically oriented towards a non-institutional and metapolitical path, when it is not infrequently anti-institutional, i.e., against political parties.

The fragmented condition is certainly not a consequence of the efforts of neo-fascist groups but rather a result of the political environment, which invalidates—not infrequently even via legal means—any form of politics aimed at the masses by neo-fascist organizations. Indeed, the far-right camp generally tends to favor radical right-wing populism to the detriment of the different sides of neo-fascism. In any event, the fragmented, polycentric, and rhizomatic nature of neo-fascism, without any large groups or leaders, provides the appearance of an ideological substratum, which is claimed and incorporated in different ways by a range of organizations.

For Anna Cento Bull (2012), it is possible to delineate different phases of neo-fascism. The first phase, in the immediate post-Second World War context of Cold War

upheaval, is based around continuist organizations and the transnational interaction of war criminals. The second phase is the post-1968 turmoil, with the strengthening of third-way groups, the influence of authors such as Julius Evola, and the appeal to Gramscian strategies. The third phase, now in progress, is the relationship of neo-fascists with radical right-wing parties.

Regardless of the categories and phases that are delineated by the cited literature, there is no question that this is a debate that largely incorporates only the European and North American specificities of neo-fascism. Is neo-fascism a phenomenon that does not exist in Latin America? If studies of classical fascism rightly consider the transnational and global condition of their field, should studies of neo-fascism do so as well?

It is evident that the Europeanist (and pan-Europeanist) dimension is central in neo-fascist arrangements after 1945. The case of Francis Parker Yockey, his relationship with Oswald Mosley, the idea of “Imperium” in his key work, or even the objective of forming the European National Front is instructive (COOGAN, 2022). Indeed, this neo-fascism was drawing its thinking from a European reality, in the context of the Cold War, but above all framed by a political (and ethnic-differentialist) status based on an imagined European continent. This initial condition was reified in different—but convergent—ways in the subsequent phases of European and North American neo-fascism.

Without succumbing to the temptation to underestimate the existence of strong networks and connections in European neo-fascism (HIERRO, 2021), it is necessary to ask the following: Does neo-fascism exist in Latin America? Does it have a more or less direct relationship with these new facets of international neo-fascism structured over decades? What is the actual relationship of this neo-fascism in the most recent political environment? We will use the case of Brazil for our analysis.

NEO-FASCISM IN BRAZIL: A LATE PHENOMENON?

In effect, it is not possible to consider Brazil to be the sole producer, appropriator, or propagator of neo-fascist organizations and tendencies in Latin America. Some studies even demonstrate that countries such as Argentina (FINCHELSTEIN, 2014; GRINCHPUN, 2021) and Chile (DEUTSCH, 2009) were important centers of production for ideas in the context of post-fascism and neo-fascism, even during military dictatorships, including from metapolitical perspectives.

We take the case of Brazil as a reference, considering the country’s importance in regional geopolitics and, primarily, due to the fact that Brazil was the home of the largest non-European fascist political organization: the Brazilian Integralist Action (Ação Integralista Brasileira - AIB), an entity that established a mass political organization and effectively became part of the camp of fascist transnationalism (TRINDADE, 1974; BERTONHA, 2014; GONÇALVES, 2018).

Nevertheless, institutional fascism disappears prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, due to the troubled relationship with Getúlio Vargas following the Estado Novo coup and the political disputes that ultimately turned Brazilian Integralism into a marginal political activity.

Although it is possible to look at the history of fascism in Brazil beyond these institutions and organizations, it is important to consider their trajectories to understand the dynamics that will impact neo-fascism in the country. In the post-war context, the main integralist organization will be the Popular Representation Party (Partido de Representação Popular - PRP), an entity that acted on issues typical of the post-fascist context, although it did not propose a typically neo-fascist path.

In general terms, the integralism that began in 1945 proposed to revive the values of classical fascism while also incorporating a democratic discourse, through conservative values based on the relationship and influence of Salazarism and Portuguese Christian democracy (GONÇALVES, 2018). As such, although it was undoubtedly an integralist party and referenced the context and tenets of classical fascism (CALIL, 2001), these arrangements advocated for an apparent “de-fascistization,” typical of the post-fascist context but not of neo-fascist continuism.

In the context of the civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985), there was little integralist participation; it was part of some institutions and bodies of the authoritarian regime but without imposing an agenda of its own in those spheres. Thus, although there were extreme right-wing groups with violent activities that sought to radicalize the military authoritarianism, there were no typically neo-fascist groups (in their great diversity) that had any impact during the period.

Consequently, in Brazil, the neo-fascist context begins to develop as a result of two key moments: the death of the integralist leader Plínio Salgado (1975) and the democratic transition (1985). Following Plínio Salgado’s death (CALDEIRA NETO, 2021), the neo-integralist phenomenon emerges, based primarily on the sense of neo-fascist continuism. However much the neo-integralist groups disagreed in strategic terms and modes of organization, the sense of returning to the framework of classical fascism was predominant in this camp.

Another factor that explains the “late” nature of Brazilian neo-fascism is not directly related to the (neo)integralist context, although it will impact those groups. Following the democratic transition, the phenomenon of the “ashamed right” (RODRIGUES, 1987) will impact the coordination of political forces on the right. In an apparently paradoxical manner, this phenomenon coexists with a conservative transition that does not immediately provide any legal or judicial avenues for discussions about the dictatorship nor the relationship between civil society (and the political class) and the dictatorship. Thus—hence the paradox mentioned above—the conservative camp refrains from any significant references to its right-wing political nature but remains active in the democratic political arena despite its links to the recent authoritarian past.

In the realm of political radicalism and extremism, the impact of the combination of the conservative transition and the ashamed right opens a precedent (or a political space) for the coordination of extreme right-wing groups, including neo-fascists. Consequently, in Brazil, it is not during the civil-military dictatorship but rather during the democratic transition that neo-fascism effectively begins to organize itself through diversified strategies—in other words, not only continuist—and seeks ways to coordinate with others in the international arena of neo-fascism.

As such, while this “late neo-fascism” certainly does not strictly correspond to the phases proposed by Anna Cento Bull (2012)—and of course every model has its exceptions—it is after the democratic transition that neo-fascism in Brazil produces new facets and rifts similar to the tripartite model described by Nigel Copsey (2020) as well as possibilities for international interaction. In short, it is in the 1980s that neo-fascism begins to become an effectively quantifiable and somewhat significant phenomenon.

NEO-FASCISM IN BRAZIL: BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL

The international coordination and interaction of neo-fascism in Brazil is defined by ideological phases and issues. This is contingent both on technical aspects (such as the use

of the Internet) as well as on the emergence of new tendencies affiliated with the diversity of a neo-fascism that is not exclusively continuist.

It is therefore possible to follow several lines of analysis emerging from this topic. Throughout the 1980s and 2000s, the Brazilian neo-fascist landscape is composed of neo-Nazi, neo-integralist, and Holocaust denial groups. As will be seen below, each group's capacity for internationalization is dictated by its ideological nature, with some being more inclined towards internationalization and others being confined to the local sphere.

Beginning in the 2000s, the neo-fascist landscape is largely dominated by neo-integralist groups, with a decrease in activities by Holocaust denial groups, due mostly to legal issues as well as a retreat of neo-Nazism, which becomes a phenomenon without clearly organized groups. It is a moment in which neo-integralism becomes established as a referent for Brazilian neo-fascism but with a low level of interaction in the global arena.

Throughout the 2010s (and until the present day), neo-fascism in Brazil has undergone an intense process of diversification and radicalization, not least as a consequence of the emergence of a new radical right, partly epitomized by the groups involved in the electoral campaign of Jair Bolsonaro. As a result, the neo-fascist landscape includes the presence of continuist and non-continuist groups, metapolitics, and Holocaust deniers, among others, signifying a more plural and internationalized landscape for Brazilian neo-fascism.

NEO-NAZISM: FROM “CONTINUISM” TO SKINHEADS

The first neo-Nazi organizations that appeared were characterized by continuism and the attempt to create a neo-Nazi party. These initiatives were led by Armando Zanine Jr., a retired military veteran who had been active in fascist-inspired groups and parties on the conservative right during the dictatorship. In 1985, Zanine Jr. attempted to organize the creation of the Brazilian National Socialist Party (Partido Nacional-Socialista Brasileiro - PNSB) and achieved some measure of media prominence with the initiative. In 1990, he conceived the equally neo-Nazi Brazilian Nationalist Revolutionary Party (Partido Nacionalista Revolucionário Brasileiro - PNRB). Both organizations had a strong anti-Semitic component and defended the eugenics of the Brazilian population but presented themselves as “non-racist” groups.

The attempt to create a neo-Nazi party was not an exclusively Brazilian innovation on the continent, as exemplified by the short-lived National Socialist Party of Paraguay (ARDITI, 1989) and Alejandro Biondini's Partido Nuevo Triunfo in Argentina. In any event, analyzing the documents pertaining to the groups led by Armando Zanine, it was not possible to observe any sign of international dialog among them.⁴ Although the leader of the group told the press that it received non-financial support from neo-Nazis in Europe, there is no evidence to support this statement.

Indeed, the low number of documents produced by the neo-Nazi “parties” of Zanine Jr.⁵—which were limited solely to a manifesto, documents from state security agencies, and the (unbridled) media appeals of the neo-Nazi leader—can be seen as hindrances to the analysis. But there are two points that seem to be important when considering the group's low level of internationalization.

The first is the “late” aspect of continuist neo-Nazism, which becomes slightly more prominent in Europe in the immediate post-1945 period but not in the 1980s; as such, the

⁴ Nazista brasileiro faz lista para formar partido. *Jornal do Brasil*, 27 de março de 1988, p. 5.

⁵ "Falange Patriótica". Arquivo Nacional: BR.DFANBSB V8.MIC, GNC.AAA.80010429.

Brazilian groups were out of sync. Admittedly, neo-Nazi groups of this type continue to exist even today, but they were not the focus of most of the production of the neo-fascist camp.

The second explanatory hypothesis seems to be more significant, related to the multiethnic dimension of Brazil and of a national identity archetype. The notion of the mestizo dimension of the Brazilian national identity is a global referent. As such, why would more organized neo-Nazi continuist groups (political parties, in particular) support a neo-Nazi group from the tropics that did not have a robust organizational capacity and, more importantly, had a clearly confused discourse regarding racial issues?

In this case, the relationship of neo-Nazi skinheads is diametrically opposed. The first White Power groups that emerged during the 1980s reproduced *ipsis litteris* the basic corpus of the symbology and values of other international neo-Nazi skinhead groups and movements. Obviously, some adaptations were made in the pursuit of a specific white nationalism in certain regions of the country, particularly in the south and southeast, as indicated by the studies of Alexandre de Almeida (2004).

In any event, the neo-Nazi skinhead landscape facilitated at least two new additions to the international field of skinhead neo-Nazism. One of the most emphatic events was the creation of a Brazilian chapter of the group Blood and Honour, which used digital media for dissemination. It appears that the Brazilian cell emerged as a byproduct of the group's transnationalism in Latin America, whose cells in Argentina and Chile were better established (ALCANTARA, 2015) and even recognized by the British leadership.⁶

On the group's website, they introduced the group as the São Paulo/Argentina division and emphasized ethnicity as a component for this association: "All of them are descendants of Europeans and have been involved in the movement for many years." Additionally, they sought to establish an idea of racial purity in contrast to other regions of the country: "Brazil is too large a country (with an extension bigger than the whole European continent [...]) the population in the northern part of Brazil is mainly non-white. Therefore, it would be illogical to open a B&H; division denominated by their country of origin (Brazil)."⁷

Indeed, the relationship between neo-Nazi skinhead groups in Brazil and Argentina was a means devised for these Brazilian groups to break with the multiethnic imperatives of the Brazilian population. The group Division 18, for example, was a neo-Nazi skinhead organization that was simultaneously both Brazilian and Argentine (ALMEIDA, 2013).⁸

It is also evident that neo-Nazi skinhead (and similar) groups use digital media to engage with international groups and transnational dynamics. More recently, the closer relationship of some Brazilian neo-Nazis with Ukrainian groups such as the Azov Battalion⁹ or, more specifically, the Misanthropic Division, has led to attempts to create a Brazilian division of the Misanthropic Division. According to a report by the Public Prosecutor's Office¹⁰ (Ministério Público Federal - MPF), one of the initiatives was initially developed through the social network "VK" by a neo-Nazi skinhead linked to Impacto Hooligan, a Brazilian group.

As such, from the viewpoint of a loosely coordinated neo-Nazism, it is the skinheads who provide some degree of international interaction and a reproduction of global

⁶ "Blood & Honour Southland is an official division of B&H/C18, where the best skinhead elements from Argentina and Chile meet". Blood and Honour Worldwide. Disponível em:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160325181958/http://www.skrewdriver.net/worldindex.html>. Acesso: 10 jul. 2021.

⁷ Blood & Honour: Divisão São Paulo/Argentina. Disponível em:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20070219044818/http://www.bloodandhonoursp.com>. Acesso: 12 fev. 2021.

⁸ The existence of a virtual network for dialog between Argentines and Brazilians is also noted by Dilton Maynard (2014).

⁹ This is a point that is particularly well explored by the international media. See: LEAHY, Joe. Brazil neo-nazi claim challenges Myth of Nation's Racial Harmony. The Financial Times, Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/f9ee01ca-ce49-11e6-864f-20dcb35cede2>. Accessed: May 12, 2020.

¹⁰ Ministério Público Federal: Ação Penal – Procedimento Ordinário (283) No 5000562-48.2021.4.03.6181 / 1ª Vara Criminal Federal de São Paulo.

mechanisms, albeit always in terms of poorly coordinated political groups. In comparison to the proposed attempts to create neo-Nazi political parties, it is possible to conclude that skinheads are less impacted by the late aspect of Brazilian neo-fascism.

To a certain extent, this is aided by the relatively minor temporal disparity, as neo-Nazi skinheads are an international phenomenon that began expanding in the second half of the 1970s (VIÑAS, 2022), while Brazilian “White Power” first appears in the early 1980s. Furthermore, the dynamics of the youth culture of skinheads—neo-Nazis or not—give a greater degree of malleability to the phenomenon, which incorporates local issues in concert with the global demands of the phenomenon, as suggested by Ryan Shaffer’s study of the British case (SHAFFER, 2017).

In any event, they are minoritarian groups with little political impact, characterized by intense ephemerality and a rejection of more effective political dialog, although some of them have made occasional nods to political leaders of the radical right, such as Enéas Carneiro and Jair Bolsonaro (beginning in 2011).

HOLOCAUST DENIALISM

To a certain extent, the beginning of the neo-fascist phenomenon in Brazil confers a capacity for international dialog upon the groups that do not seek a Brazilian specificity (such as the neo-integralist groups). The phenomena that are not grounded in national identity (or, simply, those that are deterritorialized) are naturally more inclined towards the possibility of transnational interaction and circulation. This can also be seen in Holocaust denialism.

The primary denialist vehicle in Brazil was the publisher Editora Revisão, founded in 1985 by Siegfried Ellwanger Castan, a Brazilian engineer of German descent. Taking advantage of the discussions on censorship and political freedom that characterized the democratic transition, Editora Revisão functioned as a denialist and anti-Semitic hub, publishing international and Brazilian literature by authors linked to classical fascism but also to more recent manifestations (CALDEIRA NETO, 2012).

From that moment on, Jewish and anti-racist organizations engaged in a legal battle against the denialist publisher. The “Ellwanger case” lasted until 2003, when the Federal Supreme Court (Supremo Tribunal Federal - STF) denied the habeas corpus request (HC 82424), convicting the denier of the crime of racism. Over the years, as a result of those issues, Editora Revisão has received extensive publicity and become a model for different groups on the Brazilian extreme right and for seeking to establish international connections.

The sale of denialist books was carried out via unconventional methods, such as postal reimbursement and fax, using a printed form. Beginning in the 2000s, the Editora Revisão website became an instrument for the dissemination of texts and the books published—or printed—by the publisher. These materials included a list of works by Brazilian denialist authors as well as non-denialist anti-Semitic titles (such as “The International Jew” by Henry Ford and “The Secret Powers Behind Revolution” by León de Poncins) and denialist works by foreigners, such as Robert Faurisson (“Is the Diary of Anne Frank Genuine?”), C. W. Porter (“Not Guilty at Nuremberg”), Richard Harwood (“Did Six Million Really Die?”), and Louis Marschalko (“The World Conquerors”).

Coupled with this foray into the transnationality of denialist authors, Editora Revisão arranged for the translation of books by Siegfried Castan. “Holocausto: Judeu ou Alemão?” [“Holocaust, Jewish or German?”], for example, was translated into English, Spanish, and German. The translation effort and the court battles provided valuable political tools for Editora Revisão and interactions in the international field of Holocaust denialism, such as L'Association des Anciens Amateurs de Récits de Guerres et d'Holocaustes (AAARGH), founded in 1996.

AAARGH was a website that was originally exclusively in French,¹¹ with an anti-Semitic and Holocaust denial orientation. In addition to disseminating denialist texts by different authors, it had archival sections devoted to Robert Faurisson and Paul Rassinier, the most prominent French denialist authors, as well as texts in support of other deniers, such as Roger Garaudy.

On the main site, there was a list of links to other denialist websites, but there was no mention of the Editora Revisão website. The only reference in Portuguese was to the website “Página de Freiheit” [“Freiheit Page”], a Brazilian outlet for neo-Nazi, denialist, and white supremacist material that stated that it had no relationship with Siegfried Castan and Editora Revisão.

Beginning in 2005, AAARGH began publishing a quarterly newsletter of “historical criticism” in Portuguese. Titled “O Revisionismo em Língua Português (sic)” [Revisionism in the Portuguese Language] and with the motto “Não acredite. Pense.” [“Don’t believe. Think.”], the newsletter included both denialist authors and critics of denialism, aiming for a tone of democratic plurality.¹²

Siegfried Castan appeared in some issues (no. 1, no. 3, no. 5) of the newsletter, but the legal case involving Editora Revisão was featured on other occasions, until the final issue of the newsletter (no. 8, 2008). On the main AAARGH website in Portuguese, some denialist content produced by Brazilians was included, notably by Siegfried Castan and retired military veteran Sérgio Oliveira, the second most important figure at the publisher.

In addition to the references to Editora Revisão, the AAARGH website included links to the website “Inacreditável” [“Unbelievable”], one of the main disseminators of denialist material on the Brazilian Internet and a site that is still active today. Among the books from Editora Revisão available for download in PDF, some had identifying marks that indicated the digitization and dissemination process for the books: the website Valhalla88, presented as “the largest national socialist portal in South America on the Internet” was “responsible” for the dissemination of “Acabou o Gás!” [“The Gas is Over!”]. In turn, “Holocausto Judeu ou Alemão?” [“Holocaust, Jewish or German?”] and “O massacre de Katyn” [“The Katyn Massacre”] (by Sérgio Oliveira) carried the mark of Nuevo Ordem, a Spanish neo-fascist (and denialist) portal.

This circulation (or recognition) in Ibero-American environments is clearly visible in other spaces, such as the Libreria Europa website,¹³ with its slogan “Conferindo e divulgando a História” [“Examining and Disseminating History”], from the Spanish denier Pedro Varela; the site had a list of links to denialist websites in other languages on its homepage: The Journal of Historical Review (Institute for Historical Review), the website of Ernst Zündel, and the website of Editora Revisão. Like Castan, Pedro Varela has been involved in legal disputes due to his Holocaust denialism.

This recognition from international deniers was indeed something sought by Siegfried Castan. Inspired by international initiatives, Editora Revisão sought to create institutional denialist bodies, such as the National Center for Historical Research (Centro Nacional de Pesquisas Históricas - CNPH), founded in 1992 and clearly inspired by the North American model of the Institute for Historical Review. Effectively, CNPH was simply a body for the internal gratification of Editora Revisão and its authors, reinforcing the denialist praxis of self-citation and hermetic references among peers. In any event, CNPH sought to confer a

¹¹ L'Association des Anciens Amateurs de Récits de Guerres et d'Holocaustes Disponível em: <http://aaargh.vho.org/fran/fran.html>. Acesso: 01 fev. 2022.

¹² O Revisionismo em Língua Português. Disponível em: <http://aaargh.vho.org/port/revport/revport.html>. Acesso: 15 out. 2021.

¹³ Libreria Europa. Disponível em: <https://web.archive.org/web/20070331051016/http://personal.redestb.es/lib.europa>. Acesso: 17 nov. 2021.

degree of legitimacy, giving awards to books such as “O livro branco sobre a conspiração mundial” [“The White Book on World Conspiracy”], an anti-Semitic pamphlet by Sérgio Oliveira.

Until the end of the lawsuit, Editora Revisão had become the epicenter and disseminator of international denialist literature in Brazil. Following the closure of the publisher and the death of Siegfried Castan in 2010, this phenomenon effectively receded, although there are a few vehicles that have sought to recapture this legacy, such as websites like “Inacreditável” and “O Sentinela” [“The Sentinel”], but both have a low level of internationalization.

NEO-INTEGRALISM: LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL UNREST

As stated above, neo-integralism develops earlier (beginning in 1975) and in parallel with other phenomena in Brazilian neo-fascism. At certain moments, the neo-Nazi and denialist movements are specifically associated with neo-integralist groups. These groups were led by the lawyer Anésio de Lara Campos Jr., who was simultaneously an integralist, a Holocaust denier, and close to neo-Nazi continuist groups under Armando Zanine Jr. and sought to rally neo-Nazi skinheads or (bald) non-racist nationalists. These contentious relationships in the diverse neo-fascist camp placed a number of political constraints on neo-integralist groups throughout the 1990s, which can be broken down into three elements.

First is the dispute over the leadership of neo-integralism. In general, the neo-integralist groups have leaders who seek to guide integralism into the twenty-first century in its entirety, rather than just one or another group. This creates a clear conflict among those who claim, in their own way, to be the “next Plínio Salgado.”

The second characteristic—internal tension—is related to the reinterpretations promoted by these groups. All of them are continuists, but they establish a clear process of selecting the integralist legacy and erasing certain nuances. The primary legacy is anti-Semitism (CALDEIRA NETO, 2014), as it raises a complex issue, ranging from legal questions (in relation to Holocaust denialism) to a possible preference for the more radical wing of classic integralism, led by Gustavo Barroso, and more in line with German National Socialism.

The third aspect, originating in the debate over the space of anti-Semitism in neo-integralism, concerns the relationship with other neo-fascist groups, the extreme right, and right-wing nationalism. The more radical and anti-Semitic groups gravitate towards tendencies such as neo-Nazi skinheads and Holocaust deniers. Other neo-integralist groups, more Catholic, are more in line with Brazilian groups that participate in the traditionalist Catholic universe, such as Tradition, Family, Property (Tradição, Família e Propriedade - TFP) or small monarchical entities.

Consequently, the neo-integralist environment during the 1980s and 1990s was characterized by internal disputes and tension. This will be somewhat resolved beginning in the 2000s with the formation of certain groups, some of which still exist today. This process will lead to a slight centrality of neo-integralism in the local neo-fascist field but with a low level of international dialog, also due to the revival of the multiethnic integralist discourse.

International dialog was very sporadic. In 1995, integralism was the subject of an article in the magazine *Vorderste Front: Zeitschrift für politische Theoria & Strategie*, a periodical linked to Junge Nationaldemokraten (National Democratic Youth), the youth section of the German Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD).¹⁴ According to

¹⁴ Die integralistische Bewegung Brasilien, *Vorderste Front: Zeitschrift für politische Theoria & Strategie*, n. 7, abril, 1995, p.14-28.

Lukas Novotny (2009), the periodical was part of an effort by the German extreme right, associated particularly with neo-Nazism, to encourage the creation of no-go areas, i.e., areas with a low or no presence of immigrants. This strategy was inspired by practices linked to the International Third Position (ITP) and particularly to the Italian Terza Posizione. At the end of the article, which did not mention any neo-integralist group, there was a short note mentioning the ITP.

Three years after this initial contact, the ITP emerges in exclusively neo-integralist environments (CARNEIRO, 2012). The first appearance in print occurs in the periodical *Idade Nova*, in January 1999. The manifesto/declaration of the ITP is featured on the cover of the periodical and occupies two pages of the small magazine, the result of “a responsibility we have to our British colleagues.”¹⁵ The text was provided courtesy of Final Conflict, a magazine of the ITP, through Legionary Press, the entity responsible for translating doctrinal texts by the extreme right into English; these texts are graced with the message “Thank you comrades, God bless the national revolution around the world!!!” Eighteen months later, in June 2000, the same report appears in the newsletter of the Center for Integralist Studies and Debates (Centro de Estudos e Debates Integralistas - CEDI).¹⁶

The Internet was potentially the central element that facilitated this dialog. The CEDI, a group led by the student Marcelo Mendez, was the first neo-integralist group to invest in digital media, with websites as well as print materials. This effort is quite evident, as beginning in 1999, the official website of the ITP included a reference to the website of the CEDI, in the “Central and South American”¹⁷ section of an extensive list of links to related (unaffiliated) ITP groups. During the same period, the ITP’s statement of principles in Portuguese (from Portugal) began to be included on the website.¹⁸

This relationship did not last, as Marcelo Mendez passed away in 2000, in an act of suicide traced back to disputes with other neo-integralist groups and leaders (CALDEIRA NETO, 2014), bringing about the end of the CEDI. Furthermore, the ITP also collapsed in the early 2000s, when it was incorporated into the English First Party (BLAMIRE; JACKSON, 2006).

Following this event, the neo-integralist landscape underwent an attempt at readjustment—both in terms of internal disputes and of its relationship with the digital media. In 2004, when the “I Congresso Integralista para o século XXI” [“I Integralist Conference for the Twenty-First Century”] took place, one of the speakers (Marcelo Silveira) made some nods to the ideas of transnational neo-fascism, relativizing (but not explicitly denying) the Holocaust and making a specific and slightly critical reference to Julius Evola, an author who until then had not been acknowledged by Brazilian neo-fascist circles (CALDEIRA NETO, 2021).

Of the neo-integralist groups operating in the twenty-first century, the Brazilian Integralist Front (Frente Integralista Brasileira - FIB) is the most organized but has little international reach. Only in 2012 did the group attempt to create relationships with certain international groups along the neo-fascist-traditionalist axis, through an International Relations entity.¹⁹ They made contact with Nation (Belgium), the Social Republican Movement (Spain) and Action Française (France) as well as Latin American groups: Organización de Estudiantes Nacionalistas in Venezuela and Movimiento pela Identidad

¹⁵ International Third Position. *Idade Nova*, n. 2, janeiro/1999, p. 5-6.

¹⁶ International Third Position. *Informativo CEDI*, n. 9, junho/2000, p. 1-2.

¹⁷ Links. International Third Position. Disponível em:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20010409224959/http://itp.org/links.html>. Acesso: 12 mai. 2021.

¹⁸ Declaração de Princípios. <https://web.archive.org/web/20010815163357/http://itp.org/full10-port.html>. Acesso: 17 dez. 2021.

¹⁹ VILLACIAN, Alexandre. Belgas e espanhóis felicitam a FIB pelos oitenta anos de luta do movimento integralista. *Ação!*, n. 8, 2012, p. 6.

Nacional and Partido Popular de la Reconstrucción in Argentina. However, none of these initiatives resulted in concrete dialogs.

Nevertheless, over the past decade, the Brazilian neo-fascist landscape has demonstrated a strong inclination towards the global arena, a phenomenon that extends to the far-right camp. This has even included the neo-integralist camp, traditionally indifferent or disinclined to those ambitions.

The Arcy Lopes Estrella Civic-Cultural Association (Associação Cívico-Cultural Arcy Lopes Estrella - ACCALE), officially founded in 2017, is representative of these changes. Combining the integralist ideology with other manifestations of the Brazilian radical right (such as Enéas Carneiro's Party of the Reconstruction of the National Order [Partido de Reedificação da Ordem Nacional - PRONA]), the group adopts a more youthful aesthetic, inspired primarily by CasaPound Italia (CPI). Indeed, the group makes a specific nod to an "Evolian" dimension of neo-fascism, wearing t-shirts with the phrase "Revolta contra o Mundo Moderno" ["Revolt Against the Modern World"] and praising the CPI on its official website.²⁰ In reality, this is a broader phenomenon, characterized by the emergence of groups inspired by the metapolitical matrix of international neo-fascism.

METAPOLITICS: FOURTH POLITICAL THEORY AND IDENTITARIANISM

The growing transnational ambition of Brazilian neo-fascism can be explained by two factors. The first is a result of the far-right political camp, which in one sense converges around a globalization process centered on the political project of Jair Bolsonaro and groups of more radical supporters. As Brazil effectively becomes part of this global agenda, neo-fascist groups will seek connections, not least as a method for survival in a landscape occupied predominantly by Bolsonarist groups.

The second factor, which has a greater impact internally within these groups, concerns the pluralization of the Brazilian neo-fascist camp, a late phenomenon, to a certain extent also influenced by the late aspect of this neo-fascist camp. The tripartite division (neo-Nazis, neo-integralists, and Holocaust deniers) that characterized the field between 1980 and the late 2000s is now being transformed. Consequently, these new manifestations have their own dynamics in terms of international dialogs and ambitions.

In the transition to the 2010s, there begins to be a proliferation of groups that think according to the dynamics of metapoliticization, making specific references to authors such as Alain de Benoist, Guillaume Faye and, in a Eurasian framework, Aleksandr Dugin. These groups emerge as the result of an effort that began during the "Encontros Nacionais Evolianos" ["Evolian National Meetings"], held between 2009 and 2014, bringing together those interested in areas such as traditionalism, perennialism, and dissident (and neo-fascist) philosophers and those with Nouvelle Droite tendencies. However, undoubtedly, the main point of connection was Aleksandr Dugin's fourth political theory.

Although there is a productive debate about the fascist nature (or lack thereof) of the fourth political theory (UMLAND, 2010), the Evolian events—which were attended by Dugin, Alain Soral, and Alberto Buela—gave rise to groups that developed a fascist reading of this political "doctrine." Combining a rejection of Atlanticism and an embrace of Third-Worldism in a palingenetic dimension of ultra-nationalism, this new generation of militants began to translate works by Julius Evola and Aleksandr Dugin through a small publisher (Editora Austral, 2012).

²⁰ Casa Pound distribui 6 toneladas de ajuda alimentar para mais de 500 famílias italianas. ACCALE. 2021. Disponível em: <https://accale.org/blog/2021/04/06/draghi-mata-de-fome-a-italia-casa-pound-distribui-6-toneladas-de-ajuda-alimentar-para-mais-de-500-familias-italianas/>. Acess: 15 sep. 2021.

In 2015, the group New Resistance (Nova Resistencia - NR) is founded, with a national-revolutionary emphasis, inspired not only by the name of the homonymous group founded by Christian Bouchet in 1991 but also by strategies that seek to incorporate the ideas of both the left and the right, in pursuit of a synthesis around the fourth political theory. It is not, however, merely an importation of the French or Russian framework but instead an attempt to adapt it to the Brazilian ethnic and political reality, using topics such as miscegenation, religiosity, and diversified folkloric nuances.

The NR represents a well-articulated manifestation of Brazilian neo-fascism, both in terms of structure (organization of events, presence in street protests, and visibility in a country with a continental scale) and of international dialog. On the occasion of the group's II National Congress in 2021, NR was hailed by a number of leaders of identitarian, third position, and neo-fascist groups: Aleksandr Dugin, Christian Bouchet, Luca Boniardi (Radio Fenice Europa), Enrique D'Aceto (Editora Fides), Maxence Smaniotto (Rébellion), Alejandro Vasquez and Israel Lira (Center for Crisolist Studies and Nationalist Youth of Peru), Carlos Salazar (Patriotic Circle of Chilean and Indo-American Studies), José Alsina Calvés (Nihil Obstat), Mickael (Egalité et Réconciliation), and Manuel Rezende (Identitarian Shield [Escudo Identitário - EI]).

Although there are occasional interactions with other groups in the neo-fascist camp, such as the leaders of neo-integralist groups, NR has established itself thus far as the representative of a "Eurasian" and multipolar matrix of Brazilian neo-fascism. The apparent ambivalences and contradictions of the group's political discourse—on both the left and the right—are not a hindrance; on the contrary, they aid in this consolidation.

In turn, the metapolitical dimension introduces another component that certainly does not develop a Third-Worldist perspective but rather dialogs with groups and tendencies of Brazilian neo-fascism that envision a connection (or direct link) with a European identity archetype. These are very small groups, strongly influenced by the Brazilian multiethnic condition (and the myth of racial democracy in the national extreme right) and that act exclusively online but merit a brief analysis.

The Identitarian Legion (Legião Identitária - LI), a group that existed between 2016 and 2021 (SHIGUNOV, 2021), has defined itself as "an identitarian movement intended to preserve and strengthen the Euro-descendant identity and culture of the southern region of Brazil." It raised a few points that were not typical in the Brazilian extreme right (neo-fascist or not), such as the issue of immigration and warnings against the dangers of "Islamization."

More than international connections, what has had the greatest impact in this case is a transnational circulation and appropriation of neo-fascist and/or French New Right authors, such as Alain de Benoist, Dominique Venner, and Guillaume Faye. The group created an online publishing imprint (Editorial Aquiles) and translated works by Mark Willinger ("Generation Identity: A Declaration of War Against the '68ers") and Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier ("Manifesto for a European Renaissance") into Brazilian Portuguese. The group's aesthetic even appropriates the French Génération Identitaire.

The other group that is part of the pole of European identitarianism is Aurora de Ferro [Iron Dawn]. Active online, the group is inspired by its North American counterpart Archeofuturist Front and has an ostensibly active relationship with its US headquarters. Inspired by the ideas of Nouvelle Droite and particularly by the archeofuturism devised by Guillaume Faye, the group promotes an attempt to adapt the metapolitical and identitarian frame of reference to the Brazilian situation. Although it is a group exclusively inspired by the European framework of identitarianism and the ENR, Aurora de Ferro seeks to adapt these fundamental values (such as the rejection of pluralism and modernity) to the Brazilian autochthonous dimension and its ethnic particularities, privileging the Portuguese framework of Brazilian colonization and incorporating other references (such as the

Bandeirantes—literally, “flag-carriers,” who were explorers, fortune hunters, slavers, and adventurers in early Colonial Brazil) in the archetype of a new national figure.

The group maintains a partnership with the ACCALE, and it is thus possible to envisage a process of dialog and internal circulation, building bridges between groups usually situated at the continuist/neo-integralist pole and groups that work towards transnationalism using a metapolitical strategy.

Although these groups are still very new, the fact that some of them are inspired by the fourth political theory and by ENR authors indicates that from the viewpoint of transnationalism, there is now a new phase of Brazilian neo-fascism, resulting from a type of maturation of the field that emerged relatively late in comparison to the international phenomenon, particularly in Europe. This new phase is primarily characterized by the use of digital media for interaction and dialog, which has proven to be effective, albeit still groupuscular.

CONSIDERATIONS

Based on this analysis, it is possible to assert that in Brazil, the spaces of neo-fascism are typically both local and global. Indeed, there has been a tendency to pursue international dialogs ever since the neo-fascist camp first appeared in the country. However, these efforts have been largely frustrated by a number of factors. The first of these, as stated above, was the late establishment of the Brazilian neo-fascist camp. This led to a slight discrepancy, if we comparatively observe the phases and dynamics of the development of global neo-fascism.

There are clearly autochthonous factors that impact the composition of this landscape, such as the democratic transition as well as the apparent centrality of a continuist (neo-integralist) model that does not explicitly advocate the need for international interaction *par excellence*. Conversely, there are external dynamics that hinder many of the dialogs that were so productive during the “era of fascisms.”

Beyond the phases of international neo-fascism, the issue of European identity and pan-Europeanism as crucial aspects of European and North American neo-fascism poses significant barriers to the appropriation of these variables in the Brazilian neo-fascist landscape. In any event, the past decade has seen the rise of different neo-fascist groups that appropriate dynamics and strategies from the international arena, combining global aspects with local specificities and ambitions. The emergence of groups that operate not only according to “deterritorialist” and “revisionist” perspectives but effectively “metapolitics” is a strong indication of this new phase.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that these diverse dynamics in the relationship (and tension) between the local and the global do not necessarily signify any degree of fragility in Brazilian neo-fascism in political terms, even when compared to international tendencies. In recent years, the emergence of Bolsonarist groups (such as “Ukrainization” groups and the “300” group) that have appropriated a fascist political imaginary—and certain credentials previously restricted to neo-fascist groups—signals the possibility of a more effective dialog between Brazilian neo-fascist groups and other tendencies of the Brazilian extreme and radical right. In this respect, the local enables a capacity for immediate political gain, making the global perspective secondary.

For this reason, in addition to the international inclusion of Brazilian neo-fascism in the global neo-fascist landscape, it is important to observe how these groups are called upon to participate in moments of political radicalization and in the pursuit of disruptions to the democratic order, a persistent feature in the landscape of Jair Bolsonaro’s presidency but that can potentially be extended to other cases with certain similarities, such as Donald

Trump's mobilization in the US. Accordingly, while some groups manifest a stronger tendency towards global dynamics, others act in pursuit of local political capital. It is thus a phenomenon that is simultaneously local and global, and the two conditions often coexist in tension and in cooperation.

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