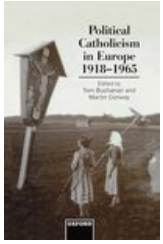

Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918–1965

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CHAPTER

4 Portugal

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Abstract

This chapter discusses political Catholicism in Portugal. The story of 20th-century Portuguese Catholicism has been one of increasing ghettoization where its failure to translate residual regional strength into national influence is increasingly marked. Church leaders emphasized devotionalism and piety, but offered no sustained encouragement to political movements and parties that claimed a Catholic inspiration for their activities or sought to implant Catholic values in public life. During the long embargo on political activity between 1926 and 1974, the Church was also lukewarm in support of movements, essentially social or spiritual in orientation, which had cause to take a public stand. Thus, unlike its counterparts in the other major Catholic states of Western Europe, the Portuguese Church set its face against a politically engaged Catholicism. No durable Catholic opposition existed and when political freedoms returned in 1974, the time for advancing a Christian democratic alternative to the left or to secularism had long passed.

Keywords: political Catholicism, Portugal, Portuguese Catholics, Portuguese Catholicism, Portuguese Church, political movements, politicy activity

Subject: European History, History of Religion, Political History, Modern History (1700 to 1945), Social and Cultural History

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Portugal is venerated by many European Catholics because it is a centre of the worldwide cult of Mary which developed after the apparition of Our Lady at Fátima in 1917. Moreover, for nearly forty years, its political destinies were in the hands of an austere dictator who convinced conservative Catholics everywhere that in Portugal a genuine attempt had been made to shape government policy around Catholic social principles. But even before his retirement in 1968, Dr Salazar had revealed himself to more percipient Catholics as a personal autocrat who had insisted on a compliant church and whose policies were proving immensely harmful to the standing and long-term prospects of the Church.

In return for accepting the protection of the authoritarian state, the Church lost the freedom of action to play the active role in politics and society that other national churches have pursued with varying degrees of success in the last seventy years. The story of twentieth-century Portuguese Catholicism has been one of increasing ghettoization where its failure to translate residual regional strength into national influence is increasingly marked. Church leaders emphasized devotionalism and piety but offered no sustained encouragement to political movements and parties which claimed a Catholic inspiration for their activities or sought to implant Catholic values in public life. During the long embargo on political activity between 1926 and 1974, the Church was also lukewarm in support of movements, essentially social or spiritual in orientation, that had cause to take a public stand. Thus, unlike its counterparts in the other major Catholic states of Western Europe, the Portuguese Church set its face against a politically engaged Catholicism. No durable Catholic opposition existed and when political freedoms returned in 1974, the time for advancing a Christian democratic alternative to the left or to secularism had long passed.

It was Portugal's authoritarian ruler, Dr Salazar, who imposed strict limits on the ability of the Portuguese Church to intervene in national affairs, ones that were adhered to by a hierarchy grateful not to be faced by a state openly hostile to religious interests. A long bruising engagement with the forces of political liberalism forged the Portuguese Church into a defensive and reactive institution ill-equipped to use modern political means to advance its cause and prepared to enlist behind the banner of a political dictator whose Catholic nationalist imagery evoked memories of medieval Portugal when the Church and monarchy had operated in
p. 130 tandem. To begin to explore the institutional malaise of twentieth-century Portuguese Catholicism, it is ↳ therefore necessary to take into account the difficulties under which it had laboured during the previous 150 years.

In 1918 Portuguese Catholicism was emerging from a long period of crisis and doubt in which it had ineffectually sought to combat secularizing trends in Portuguese society as well as encroachments by the State on its privileges and traditional sources of influence. Ever since the reforming rule of the Marquis of Pombal (1750–77), who suppressed the Jesuits, Church-State relations were marked by hostility to the wealth and influence of the Church[1] and, in particular, of the religious orders. The Church paid dearly for backing the reactionary Miguelistas in the civil war of 1832–4, when the victorious rebels seized its property and estates in the south. This was a backlash from which Portuguese Catholicism has never recovered in the province of the Alentejo where religious devotion fell steeply in the remainder of the nineteenth century.[2] In this underpopulated region, parish structures were weak and it had been the religious orders who had ministered to the population. Meanwhile, in the north which contained the bulk of the population, diocesan clergy were far more numerous and the *paroco* (parish priest) was an integral element of most local communities.

In the Catholic North the landholding system had a profound and lasting effect on social relations. The prevalence of *minifundia*, or dwarfholdings, meant that the gulf between want and plenty, noticeable in the south, was less marked north of the Tagus river which flows across the centre of Portugal and is the key geographic dividing line. Ownership of some land, however meagre, predisposed the peasantry against challenging the traditional order and, in an atmosphere of social cohesion, the Church flourished in many areas of the north.[3]

In the absence of its northern redoubt, the Portuguese Church would have been ill-equipped to resist the third and greatest challenge to its authority, mounted by urban middle-class republicans. Republican sentiment had steadily mounted in the face of economic problems and the failure of the State to compensate for these by pursuing a policy of colonial expansion in Africa. The Ultimatum of 1890 delivered by Britain to prevent Portugal encroaching into present-day Zimbabwe was a grievous blow to the standing of the constitutional monarchy and the oligarchical liberalism which had prevailed since 1851. Though their base was a narrow one, Republicans were able to depict themselves not just as the party of lower-middle-class

social radicalism but as the patriotic party keen to end Portugal's demeaning position as a colonial satellite of Britain.

By 1910 the constitutional monarchy was so isolated and enfeebled that it was able to put up scant resistance before a civilian Republican revolt which broke out in the capital. Most of the beneficiaries of the previous
p. 131 order transferred their allegiances to ↳ the new Republic or adopted a wait-and-see attitude. The existence of republican systems in Brazil and France, the countries with which Portugal enjoyed the closest ties, initially dispelled anxieties about Portugal's radical departure among those whose economic interests or social outlook predisposed them against bold political experimentation. By 1910 there was a widespread feeling, at least in urban Portugal, that the monarchical regime had run its course and could not be resuscitated in any convincing way.

Portugal's *petit bourgeois* rulers were greatly influenced by French norms and cultural values. Six years after the effective separation of Church and State in France, Portugal's anticlerical rulers followed suit. But the State's restrictions on the Church imposed in a lightning series of decrees during 1911 were far more sweeping and came to be regarded as persecution beyond the ranks of those who bore their brunt.[4] All Church property was nationalized, the faculty of theology at the University of Coimbra was closed and the chair of canon law abolished, holy days were made into normal working ones, and the number of seminaries was sharply cut back, the remaining ones being placed under government control.[5] There were severe restrictions on worshipping after sunset, bell-ringing, religious processions, and clerical freedom of movement. The Jesuits were once more sent packing along with many foreign religious orders, all foreign and foreign-trained priests were barred, and ecclesiastical pronouncements were subject to censorship. Divorce was introduced, the marriage ceremony was made civil, and religious teaching was disallowed in schools. Upon the enactment of these laws, the majority of bishops were expelled or went into exile and in 1913 diplomatic relations with the Holy See were broken off.

The Church had been more closely identified with the constitutional monarchy than any other institution, which had already made it the target of hostile Republican propaganda before 1910. Its privileged role in the monarchical order, allied to its weakness and unpopularity in Lisbon, where the bulk of political power lay irrespective of what political tendency or system prevailed, left it open to attack in the event of a radical political upheaval. Of the various vested interests bound up with the toppled regime such as the southern landowners and the upper echelons of the army, the Church was the easiest one to penalize. It was also the only obvious target the Republicans had to hand since they were not so radical that they wished to reconstruct the economic order.

In its brief flowering Portuguese Jacobinism was socially radical but economically conservative and the anticlerical offensive was pitched to suit the tastes of the urban lower middle class which would act as the regime's only reliable power-base. Freemasonry was the secular creed of this numerically weak but influentially located group in Portuguese society. Dismantling the clerical privilege which prevented
p. 132 Portugal from taking its place as a modern, progressive nation able to stand alongside ↳ its French mentor was to prove one of the few objectives behind which most Republicans were able to close ranks.

Radicals behaved and spoke as if organized religion was a pitiful relic of a failed past to which no serious consideration need be shown even as their fragile regime was beset by problems inherited from its predecessor as well as new ones induced by the factionalism which quickly undermined the Republican experiment. In 1911 their champion Afonso Costa, the most purposeful of the Republic's many prime ministers, had no qualms about forecasting an end to Roman Catholicism in a few generations, when speaking in the northern town of Braga, the religious seat of Portugal.[6] But if this was a prize Costa really desired, Republicanism was too ephemeral and opportunistic a movement to secure it. Within a short time the parliamentary republic would be preoccupied with internal power struggles and with staving off mounting challenges from conservative forces that would eventually overwhelm it in the 1920s.

The anticlericalism which ran its course from 1910 to 1914 was largely an intellectual or middle-class affair in which enthusiastic mass involvement was not a factor. Popular anticlericalism, manifesting itself in the church-burning that occurred during periods of social unrest in neighbouring Spain, was absent even though Portugal already possessed an urban and rural southern proletariat that was deaf to religious appeals. Neither was there any grass-roots backlash in the Church's northern strongholds to impede the modernizing tendencies of urban liberals, that could compare with the rural resistance movements spearheaded by the Carlists in Spain or by the Cristeros in Mexico after its 1910 revolution.

Faced with what seemed like a state-sponsored drive against organized religion itself rather than just clerical authority, a purposeful response did, however, arise from young Catholic intellectuals who managed to find both their voices and a receptive audience during the turbulent early years of the republic. In 1912, a Catholic student group known as the *Centro Academica da Democraçia Cristão* (CADC) was revived by Catholic students at the University of Coimbra. These activists, drawn from fairly modest but devout homes in the north, were well placed to mount a defence of Catholic interests. Being located in the smallholding northern half of the country, Portugal's major educational institution was influenced by the traditionalist outlook of the surrounding region. Moreover, the student body at Coimbra had always been an influential group destined for posts in the public administration, the legal profession, and politics so this was important terrain in which to promote the Catholic viewpoint and assert the right of Catholics to operate in public life.

Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira (1888–1977) and Antonio de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970) emerged as the leading figures in this Catholic student nucleus. Both were emblematic figures in the CADC: from frugal but respectable provincial rural backgrounds seeking to make careers in conservative institutions which had in
p. 133 the past afforded openings for conventional and hardworking young men from the provinces. ↳ In later years, their careers at the helm of Church and State would parallel one another to a striking extent, but in the initial years of the Republic, the prospects for a new generation of politically engaged and ambitious Catholics must have seemed bleak. Cerejeira, a future primate of the Portuguese Church, carried a Mauser pistol during tense periods when Republican and conservative students were engaged in street battles.[7] At issue was the right of *Imparcial*, the CADC journal, to be sold openly. Cerejeira, its editor, worked hard to ensure that Catholics, monarchists, and members of the newly founded Integralist movement, closed ranks to defend a conservative platform.[8] By 1914 student conservatives (with Catholics at the forefront) were on the way to gaining the upper hand in Coimbra, the first Catholic victory against Republican secularism.

'Piety, Study, Action', the motto of the CADC, suggests that it was regarded more as a pressure group designed to restore lost Church influence than as a politically engaged movement ready to participate in the muscular politics of the First Republic. The priorities of the CADC were conservative unity, moral regeneration, and the rechristianization of Portugal. It maintained friendly relations with almost all the forces on the political right, *Imparçial* being a focal point for debates and interventions.[9]

Salazar, the CADC's most gifted intellectual, was a lecturer in economics at Coimbra University after 1915. Both he and Cerejeira steered the CADC away from overt commitment to the standard right-wing campaigns, particularly monarchical restoration. In 1914, with the Republic still looking fairly secure, Salazar declared 'democracy to be a historic phenomenon and by now irresistible'.[10] He and his cohorts subscribed to the Christian democratic perspective that had been licensed by the Vatican in order to enable Catholics to compete in the political arena in what was seen as the start of a turbulent age of mass democracy. But almost a decade later (and possibly much earlier), his outlook had changed, Portugal having gone through a series of upheavals that devalued the democratic option to an even greater extent than was occurring elsewhere in Catholic Europe. In 1922 Salazar declared that 'we are drawing near to that moment in political and social evolution in which a political party based on the individual, the citizen or the elector will no longer have sufficient reason for existence'.[11] By now, liberalism and secularism were rapidly losing support. It took no great effort of will for the forces of the right to win the battle of ideas. Anti-parliamentary ideas were bound to prove attractive in the midst of widespread electoral chicanery and

administrative misrule. When Guerra Junqueiro, the famous anticlerical Republican poet, returned to the ractice of Catholicism before his death in 1923, it was a telling sign that the validity of the radical secular
p. 134 cause, ↳ unchallenged for a century or more, was being questioned even by some of its stalwarts.[12] Another sign that the tide had turned in the Church's favour came in 1921 with the enthronement of a new archbishop of Lisbon: António José de Almeida, Portugal's head of state, and an old Jacobin who had poured withering invective upon the Church two decades earlier, presided at the ceremony and professed his respect for the Church.[13]

Despite the strength of devotionalism in the north, a mass Catholic Party failed to emerge in Portugal as it would in several other countries (starting with Germany in the 1880s) marked by a clash of religious and state interests on a similar scale. Leaving aside the fact that electoral malpractice by the strongest Republican grouping, the Democrats, made the electoral option an unrewarding one for Catholics hoping to secure change via the ballot box, other factors made this course an impractical one. Women and illiterate citizens were deprived of the vote by the Republican electoral law. This prevented Catholics from turning the devotionalism of the northern peasant to political advantage or of staging a revival in urban centres by relying on the women's vote. Besides, absent from the scene was a strong Catholic social movement sponsoring co-operatives, Friendly Societies, and labour associations. Some efforts in this direction had occurred in the north at the turn of the century, but they were not sustained and they did not spread to areas of growing social tension in the south.

Having neglected the social sphere before 1910, the Church thereafter was too embattled to give much time to cultivating the variety of lay vocational groups emerging under clerical direction in other countries. Nevertheless, an explicitly Catholic movement, known as the *Centro Católico Portuguesa* (CCP) had emerged by 1917 and would participate in the remaining elections that were held under the Republic.[14]

From the outset the CCP insisted that it was not a party which aspired to exercise political power but an association without a party character that sought to represent the viewpoint of Catholic civil society. It was taking part in the electoral struggle not as an end in itself but in order to bring about the rechristianization of laws and customs in Portugal.[15] But a close study of the CCP reveals that its parish organizations only came to life during pre-election periods and that, except for conferences on Catholic social teaching, little in its behaviour could distinguish it from conservative bodies which did accept the party label.[16]

The CCP won seats at every parliamentary election held after 1918, mainly in northern districts such as Minho and the Beiras which had withstood the anticlerical storm. It had the explicit backing of the hierarchy and even the Papacy.[17] It was seen as an instrument designed to change the situation which permits 'the
p. 135 existence of a ↳ parliament basically opposed to Roman Catholicism that is elected by a people which remains essentially Catholic'.[18] Many bishops and possibly most clergy and lay leaders, while continuing to favour the monarchical regime, saw as their priority the need to restore the Church as an active force in national life. When diplomatic relations were restored with the Holy See under the authoritarian conservative regime of General Sidónio Pais who ruled Portugal for a year until his assassination at the end of 1918, it was clear that progress in this direction was possible even in the republican context. Portugal's entry into the First World War in 1916 had already eased much of the State pressure on the Church as the goal of national unity took precedence over ideological vendettas. In order to establish a consensus behind intervention, the moral sanction of the Church was vital, so permission was granted to send chaplains with the troops and to remove obstacles in the way of the Church's missionary role in the colonies.[19]

António Lino Neto, the main promoter of the CCP, exemplified the cautious *modus vivendi* that arose between Church and State during the latter half of the First Republic's tempestuous existence. He was an energetic and moderate politician who opposed the rising tide of right-wing authoritarianism of which Salazar would be the eventual beneficiary. In 1923 he expressed his fears in Parliament that the strained atmosphere in Portugal might give rise to a home-grown Mussolini or Primo de Rivera.[20] Soon afterwards

he was contradicted by *A União* (the *Union*), the CCP's own press organ which, in an editorial, exalted dictatorship 'as a vital reaction from society against insupportable anarchy ready to asphyxiate it'.[21] This is a clear sign of the prestige that anti-democratic views enjoyed in influential Catholic ranks, but in 1924, with the rudderless Republic suffering further discredit, Neto reiterated his previous view: he argued that all dictatorships are disastrous; that parliamentary institutions, though undoubtedly defective, have a necessary role in political life; and that the army is not, by nature, equipped to understand Portugal's complex political and administrative problems.[22]

Perhaps the punishment it had received from liberal republicanism made the CCP overestimate the strength of the regime even as it was staggering towards collapse. The CCP's moderation earned it the criticism of full-blooded reactionaries who expected Portugal's traditional interests to make common cause to drive out the Republicans. But serious divisions not just over tactics but forms of government weakened the right and may have given the discredited Republic a stay of execution of a few years. Chief among these was whether to restore the monarchy or continue with the republican form of government. From 1919 the CCP and the CADC were making it clear that they were partisans neither of the Republic nor of the monarchy and that preoccupation with the outward form of government was not the answer to Portugal's manifold problems.
p. 136 The CADC preoccupied itself with moral and ↳ family questions in line with the official Church viewpoint that the root of Portugal's problems lay in the existence of a moral vacuum. To mark the recovery the Church had made in recent times, an impressive Eucharistic Congress was held in Braga in 1924 at which a range of addresses were given by prominent lay and religious figures; Salazar's contribution, entitled 'The Peace of Christ and the Working Class', was based on the need for the working class to cast aside its militancy and cultivate patience and passivity since its reign was not meant to be on this earth.[23]

The scale of Portugal's economic problems which were hitting the pockets of influential groups like the military dependent on the public purse, led to growing acceptance of the Catholic viewpoint that preoccupation with external forms of government was a wasteful distraction. The most obvious sign of the national Catholic revival in the twilight years of the Republic was the Lisbon diocese's launching of a Catholic daily paper, *Novidades*, in 1923 which soon enjoyed a respectable circulation. It was duplicated by the appearance of weekly and fortnightly local papers in the north with a clear Catholic orientation. In such outlets Salazar was writing about the need for a programme of action to cure Portugal's dire economic and financial problems; and since concrete suggestions about how to extricate Portugal from its plight were not plentiful on the right, it ensured that he was increasingly noticed.

A military coup launched on 28 May 1926 overthrew the parliamentary republic. It was to the Catholic world that military leaders, united in their detestation of the previous regime but unsure of what to do next, looked for political collaborators. Salazar briefly served as minister of finance in the provisional government hastily formed in June 1926. He resigned after sixteen days convinced that it was impossible to do worthwhile work in the face of continuing instability. A military dictatorship finally took shape over the summer which struggled to remain in charge against a background of continued plotting and near-financial insolvency. In April 1928 Salazar was taken back into government as minister of finance after insisting upon sweeping conditions which included the right to veto expenditure in all government departments. Beforehand he had used the Catholic press to promote his own economic ideas and repudiate those of the officer in charge of the ministry of finance.[24] This was a sign that he was operating in the political arena as an independent figure rather than as a representative of the Church. The failure of military efforts to correct the economy damaged their standing and increased the likelihood that the military-controlled regime would be a temporary arrangement until a new balance of power emerged.

Despite imposing stiff conditions, there were aspects of Salazar's political background which made the elevation of a civilian, soon behaving as a financial dictator, acceptable to important elements in the army. His Catholic background was likely to be reassuring since the Catholic lobby had behaved in a prudent and
p. 137 indeed ↳ self-effacing manner in the 1910–26 period; fears of a return to full-blooded clericalism (though

felt and expressed in some quarters), consequently had little impact. The credibility of those on the right who identified with Catholic interests was reinforced by the papal condemnation of Action Française on 29 December 1926.[25] The Pope's insistence that 'politique d'abord' be replaced by 'religion d'abord' as a guiding example for French Catholics, justified what had been the trend in the Portuguese Catholic world for some time. The hierarchy had been stressing the need for the unity of Catholics in order to accomplish the institutional restoration of the Church and had played down the importance of outward political forms as long as basic Catholic rights were respected. However demanding Salazar could be as a ministerial colleague, military figures had relatively little trouble reaching an understanding with the Catholic Church, an institution which like the army emphasized unity and discipline as necessary for its own well-being and that of the nation.

The emphasis on 'religion d'abord' was shown by the way in which the Church channelled its energies into encouraging a spiritual and devotional revival outside the secularized south and the cities. The driving force behind this revival was the growing devotion to Mary which stemmed from the series of apparitions Our Lady of Fátima made to three children, Lucia, Jaçinta, and Francisco, between May and October 1917 in the central Portuguese hamlet of Fátima. Fátima is situated in an intermediate zone just to the west of the River Tagus which divides north from south but could be said to separate religious Portugal from irreligious or indifferent Portugal. The hierarchy was initially circumspect about the impact that Fátima had on the faithful but in 1930 the local bishop was able to announce that the cult of Fátima had the authorization of the Vatican. From then on this flourishing Marian cult occupied a central place in the minds of the Catholic peasantry and Leiria, the capital of the district in which it was located, acquired a bishopric which it had previously lacked, the fulcrum of the Church shifting from the north to the centre of the country where its implantation had always been much weaker. The pilgrimages and celebrations associated with the cult of Fatima restored public visibility to a Church which had been required to retreat into the shadows in the time of the First Republic.[26]

Liberals were unable to make effective propaganda against Salazar due to an increasingly rigorous censorship. Salazar's careful accounting methods stopped the drain of the national finances and were equated with an economic miracle by a censored press which he was not adverse to manipulating to his own advantage. At an early stage, he made it clear that he was in government as a politically disinterested financial expert not as a representative of Catholic interests. He had outlined this position on the day he took office in April 1928 in an interview with *Novidades*: 'Tell ↳ the Catholics that the sacrifice I have made gives me the right to expect that they of all Portuguese, will be the first to make the sacrifices I may ask of them, and the last to ask for favours which I cannot grant.'[27]

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The need to be responsive to Portugal's anticlerical traditions, as well as his own desire to be free of political obligations, explains why Salazar emphasized at the outset that he was not the representative of clerical interests. He knew that the Church lacked the means to intervene actively in shaping a new political settlement after the bruising experiences it had received at the hands of a hostile state in the previous decades. He was probably also aware that most Catholics would place few demands on him if he succeeded in vanquishing republicanism and liberalism and substituting them with a new Christian political settlement based on property, order, and the family. In 1929 the appointment of Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira, Salazar's friend and ally from Coimbra, as archbishop of Lisbon resulted in the elevation as primate of the Church of someone with whom Salazar could work in tandem in subsequent decades.[28]

From the outset Cerejeira was careful to assert the autonomy of the Church from the State while striving to ensure that it enjoyed the influence befitting a national institution able to rely on unparalleled historical continuity and strong, if localized, popular devotion. But the churchman was under no illusion that Church-State relations would have to be handled with the utmost prudence to prevent the personal connection between himself and the *de facto* head of government being exploited by the enemies of all they stood for. Thus, in a letter to Salazar written in the autumn of 1930, Cerejeira warned against confounding the Church

with the dictatorship in the way that it had been confounded with the monarchy before 1910.[29] At that time, he may have viewed the current regime as a short-term arrangement which would not necessarily evolve into full-blown and permanent authoritarianism. Shortly beforehand in September 1930, Cerejeira had written to President Carmona, suggesting that a wide-ranging political amnesty on the twentieth anniversary of the formation of the Republic, might be a gesture that could secure national reconciliation.[30]

Salazar reacted angrily, having not been consulted in advance about this initiative. It was one that Cerejeira did not repeat but when the terms of their relationship were discussed after Salazar became head of government in 1932, both men were anxious to define their respective spheres of influence. On being told by Salazar that he represented 'Caesar, just Caesar, and that he was independent and sovereign', Cerejeira responded that he represented 'God...who was independent and sovereign and, what's more, above Caesar'. A. Franco Nogueira, Salazar's biographer and the only person with untrammelled access to Salazar's voluminous correspondence, reckons that both men respected the other's sovereignty which made for a smooth, if increasingly formal and distant, relationship over the next four decades.[31]

p. 139 Ever since editing *Imparçial* at Coimbra Cerejeira had worked for conservative unity and he is unlikely to have had any qualms about the creation in 1930 of the União Nacional (National Union). The birth of what became the regime's official political movement was proclaimed by Saiazar himself and highlighted his growing pre-eminence. It was meant to draw together the main groups participating in the dictatorship—monarchists, conservative republicans, army officers, Catholics, and Integralists—so that the factionalism which at times had threatened the regime's survival could be formalized and defused. Its launch anticipated the dissolution of all other political bodies, including the CCR Lino Neto, its president, and some others were reluctant: to wind up their movement. The CCP had always claimed to be an association, without a party character, in existence to defend Catholic interests, not to engage in party warfare or electoralism for its own sake which were the features of the previous regime Salazar was determined would have no part in his new order. However, Salazar was adamant: in 1933, the year in which the provisional character of the regime was ended upon the proclamation of Portugal as a corporative and unitary republic, Salazar pointed out that 'an independent Catholic body working in the political realm would prove inconvenient for the march of the dictatorship'.[32] The CCP was duly wound up and most Catholic activists gravitated to, and were given places in, the newly created public bodies in which political activity was tolerated. By 1935 a national assembly was sitting for three months of each year and in 1939 a corporative chamber became the upper house of a new bicameral parliament. These were deliberative rather than legislative bodies whose membership and activities Saiazar carefully monitored as he did with the National Union, the political framework being a façade behind which an informal personal dictatorship was constructed.

Most politically engaged Catholics were content to participate in a regime which had superseded liberalism and put an end to the vacuum at the heart of the state which had marked the agitated times of the First Republic. Lino Neto and the few others who, in their speeches and respect for constitutionalism, had viewed Christian democracy as the basis for a representative democracy and not just as a tactic for Catholic survival and recovery in a hostile political environment, remained aloof from Salazar's Estado Novo (New State).[33]

No fresh political innovations would emerge from Saiazar during what was to stretch into a marathon personal dictatorship. Neither did the Portuguese Church reveal any capacity to innovate in ways which would bring its dream of staging a Catholic revival in Portugal nearer to accomplishment. Later than in most other European countries, Portugal witnessed the formation of Catholic Action even though its goals of defending Catholic interests and a rechristianization of society could be said to be in greater need of fulfilment in Portugal than in many other Catholic countries where the movement had sprung up earlier.

In the year 1933 the hierarchy authorized the formation of Acção Católico Português (Portuguese Catholic
p. 140 Action: ACP). Coming on the creation of Salazar's ↳ New State has prompted one writer to describe it as an attempt by the Church to define a space for itself in the authoritarian state Portugal had become.[34] But the

low profile which the ACP acquired during most phases of its active life over the next thirty years weakens such a view. The motivation behind it may have been nothing more than the need to bring the Portuguese Church in line with others by following the recommendations of the papacy to create a movement of the lay apostolate under clerical direction.

In the ACP there was a narrow definition of 'religious and pastoral activity' and an emphasis on tight hierarchical control even by the standards of inter-war Catholic Europe. Homilies and conference proceedings emphasized piety, good works, prayer, and personal example but there was no strategy of action which could harness this energy and bolster Church influence in areas of weakness. The ACP did see the formation of elites who would bring a Christian perspective to their public duties as part of its remit but it was prevented from playing this role by its own restricted agenda: few members had the opportunity to acquire skills in administration, public speaking, and conciliation of differences valuable for public affairs. The ACP's emphasis on piety and devotional and sacramental practice taken along with the regime's insistence on political uniformity and obedience meant that the Catholic Church was unable to produce an intellectual elite of any real distinction. Intellectuals in Portugal continued to be attracted by humanistic and rationalist doctrines and, in the university world, Marxism would acquire a powerful appeal among several generations of university students which it had not possessed during the Republican regime.

Under corporative legislation which promised an end to class conflict, the already precarious conditions of life of landless labourers and workers declined steeply which enabled the underground Partido Comunista Português (Portuguese Communist Party: PCP) to gain a powerful foothold in southern Portugal from the 1930s onwards. Few priests in the south were prepared to live close to the poor or to draw attention to the lack of social justice in their lives. One who did was Abel Varzim who by the late 1930s was prepared to question the efficacy of the corporativist doctrine in the National Assembly to which he then belonged. He mounted increasingly searching questions about the failure of the New State to protect the conditions of life and employment of the workers. This in turn brought him into conflict with his clerical superiors (who viewed his outspokenness as a danger to healthy Church-State relations) and with the state which suppressed his newspaper, *o Trabalhador* (The Worker).[35]

Communism was fiercely denounced by the Church once it became clear that it was no longer a distant threat but had become the alternative faith for large numbers of sullen and resentful Portuguese alienated from the New State. Bolshevism at home and the eruption of civil war in Spain which yielded up thousands of martyrs to the faith would have weakened any inhibitions possessed by Catholics about the lengths to
p. 141 which Salazar had gone in order to consolidate his rule. It is unlikely that ↳ Cerejeira had envisaged in 1929 how radical and sweeping Salazar's plans were. The creation of a political police, the dissolution of working-class movements and secret societies, the introduction of pre-publication censorship, and the removal from public employment of those whose loyalty to the new order was suspect, were proof of Salazar's determination to break with the past in line with the drift to the authoritarian right elsewhere in Europe.

However, Salazar's Catholic and juridical formation made him wary of going down the totalitarian path which would involve the mobilization of the masses and the creation of a one-party state which viewed itself as the embodiment of all virtue. In 1934 he speculated about whether 'it might not bring about an absolutism worse than that which preceded the liberal regimes…Such a state would be essentially pagan, incompatible by its nature with the character of our Christian civilization and leading sooner or later to revolution'.[36]

Salazar counterposed the one-party states of Germany and Italy with the Portuguese New State 'which does not evade certain constraints of moral order which it deems vital to maintain as balances on its reforming programme…Our laws are less severe, our daily life less interfered with while the State is less absolute and does not proclaim itself as omnipotent'.[37]

It is significant that Salazar set the New State apart from full-blown fascism while he was grappling with the Blueshirts, an extreme-rightist body influenced by the rise of Nazism in Germany. This challenge from the radical right had been successfully overcome by 1934 which thereafter left Salazar with no qualms in saying that the ideological roots of the New State were to be found in the writings of traditional Catholic theorists and in the papal encyclicals (particularly those of Leo XIII) which proposed a Catholic solution to the problems of the modern age. Of course, Salazar was a gifted adapter who borrowed the repressive techniques of his own time as well as some of the symbolism of Italian Fascism to endow a regime based on order, tradition, and a respect for hierarchy with a modern veneer. Perhaps it was the dozen years he spent as a theorist of Catholic social thought and as an activist in the CADC and the CCP which did most to shape the political system he created after 1930: hostility to the party concept; lack of concern with the outward form of regime, whether monarchy or republic; and commitment to inter-class co-operation were central tenets of political Catholicism before 1926 which Salazar was able to draw on and refine as he constructed his own political order.

Education was probably the area of government where Catholic influence was to be felt the most. Salazar was mindful of the need to overturn the liberal, secular inheritance of the Republican era if future generations were to embrace positively the very different outlook of the New State. Accordingly, the education ministry was placed in charge of two longstanding Catholic activists, António Carneiro Pacheco
p. 142 (1936–40) and Mário de Figueiredo (1940–4) who shared Salazar's belief that education was ↳ a key aspect of social control able to revive and popularize traditional values. After 1936, the school curriculum was heavily politicized so that it became a prime source of New State propaganda. All schoolchildren were required to be enrolled in an official youth movement, the *Moçidade Portuguesa*. In the countryside, the regime was less in evidence but great care was taken to inculcate the values of nationhood, family, and attachment to one's locality. The school was deliberately used to keep the rural population where it was and to discourage emigration to the city. In speeches and interviews Salazar frequently referred to the social dangers posed by a growing population which between 1920 and 1940 increased by one-quarter to 7 million.[38] Unsurprisingly, the revival of a mystical brand of folk Catholicism centred on the Miracle of Fátima proved a boon for a regime intent on keeping the countryside frozen in a pastoral pre-industrial age and it was exploited openly by the regime's propagandists.

The continued parlous state of the Church in Lisbon showed that the Catholic revival in Portugal was a movement of cautious recovery and defence rather than expansion or renewal. In the early 1930s a diocesan population of one-and-a-half million was being served by only 320 priests, many of them 'old and worn-out clergy'.[39] On 8 December 1935 a pastoral letter issued by Cardinal Cerejeira painted an alarming picture:

> Black Africa of the Pagans is at the very gates of Lisbon—the mother church of so many Christian churches in Africa, Asia, Oceania. Should things continue thus, the time will not be long coming when our Christian land will be turned completely into a cemetery of glorious Catholic and apostolic tradition like those brilliant dead churches in north Africa that were once illuminated by the genius of St Augustine.[40]

This was an admission by Portugal's leading churchman at the zenith of Salazar's national revolution that the Church was a slender minority presence in Portugal's capital. Against this background, it is difficult to talk about a 'Christian reconquest' in Portugal after 1926.[41] Indeed, under Salazar Portugal continued to have the lowest ratio of priests to Roman Catholics in Europe with 1 per 2,311 inhabitants in 1954 compared to 1 per 1,336 in neighbouring Spain.[42] Although primate of the Portuguese Church, Cerejeira's authority did not extend beyond his own diocese and it would not have been a straightforward exercise to transfer priests from better-supplied parts of the north. In 1931 the diocese of Braga had three times as many priests as Lisbon, while a small rural diocese like Vila Real had almost as many again, an imbalance that has continued down to the present day.[43]

The Church did not receive endowments or special concessions from the regime which might have enabled it to recoup partly its position in the capital. Even after gaining undisputed control of the country, Salazar
p. 143 remained wary of unduly close ↳ identification with church interests. Thus in 1935 he declared that 'the Catholic Church had nothing to do with my entering government, and they did not influence my political decisions'.[44] Another five years were to elapse before a concordat was signed which regulated relations between the Holy See, the Portuguese Church, and the State. It was only agreed after protracted negotiations between the various parties. Salazar drove such a hard bargain that the papal nuncio was moved to describe him as 'the living incarnation of the devil' in an outburst to Portugal's negotiator.[45] Negotiations almost fell through and it was only a last-minute ultimatum to Rome requesting that government terms be accepted or the concordat would be shelved, which caused it to be promulgated on 7 May 1940.[46]

Under the 1940 Concordat the Church was recognized as a privileged institution with a very large role in society but Church and State remained separate and some basic laws from Republican days were not overturned: religious teaching in schools remained voluntary, civil marriage and civil divorce were retained, and Church property seized after 1910 by the State remained sequestrated. Article 10 stipulated that the Holy See must, before nominating a bishop, communicate the name to the Portuguese government in order to determine whether there was any objection of a political nature.[47] By way of a contrast, churches and seminaries were to be exempt from taxation and the State was prepared to finance partly the building of churches. But given Salazar's Catholic formation many were surprised that the 1940 settlement was not more favourable to the Church.

The Concordat was promulgated in May 1940 amidst celebrations marking the 800th anniversary of the formation of Portugal and the tercentenary of its deliverance from sixty years of Spanish captivity. Since much of the rest of continental Europe was embroiled in war as Portugal celebrated the normalization of relations with Rome and two of the formative events in her history, the May 1940 celebrations acquired a special symbolism which marked the high-water mark of the Salazar regime. As Portugal avoided becoming involved in the European conflict, thanks undoubtedly to Salazar's skilful conduct of foreign policy, much of the Catholic faithful came to view this as a miracle stemming not just from God's protection but from the intercession of Our Lady of Fátima.[48]

Cardinal Cerejeira took a pro-Allied position, influenced in part by the Nazi seizure of Catholic Poland and subsequent religious persecution there.[49] Portugal's ability to remain neutral in the world conflict, its distance from the main theatres of land warfare, and the fact that it was bordered on three sides by Spain, which possessed an analagous regime of authoritarian conservatism under General Franco, meant that it was one of the few parts of Europe to emerge relatively unchanged from the war years. But Salazar's place in
p. 144 the pantheon of conservative heroes was not as ↳ secure as it had been in the late 1930s when Portugal was a place of intellectual pilgrimage for European conservatives impressed by the way in which Salazar had produced order from chaos apparently within a Christian political and social framework. As he obstinately refused to adapt his regime to changing times, he began to appear as an anachronistic and compromised figure for Catholics involved in public life elsewhere who were keen to find applicable models for the reconstruction of Europe but along Christian democratic lines. By the 1950s the verdict of many of Salazar's European Catholic peers on his New State was that it had been a formula which might have suited a disturbed period in European politics but which new conditions had rendered obsolete.

However, for those Catholics who possessed a Cold War mentality, especially in North America, Salazar's Christian order remained a beacon of inspiration. The Marian cult centred on Fátima was the main point of contact between the Portuguese Church and Catholics from the rest of Europe and from overseas, conservative-minded exponents of their faith who may have reinforced the traditionalism of the Portuguese Church. The content of the Fátima message was interpreted in strongly anti-communist terms, Pope Pius XII in 1946 having crowned Our Lady of Fátima queen of the world.[50] Suitably enough, it was also in 1946 that Opus Dei spread to Portugal: given the Portuguese terrain, its traditionalism, stress on individualistic

piety, and theology of political conservatism were bound to acquire a growing niche, despite its Spanish origins.

Nearly all Portuguese Catholics who had growing qualms about the ethical basis of the Salazar regime shrank from going into public opposition. Their Church leaders sanctioned obedience to what they regarded as legitimate authority and the Portuguese opposition, still dominated by Republican anticlericals as well as a growing Communist presence, remained unattractive to most Catholics. But one exception was Francisco Veloso, one of Salazar's most steadfast colleagues in the CADC at Coimbra (described by Cerejeira as the true editor of its paper *Imparçial* 'in its first and most brilliant year of existence'),[51] who in 1945 embraced a Christian democratic position. He joined the opposition Movimiento Democrático Unido (United Democratic Movement: MUD) which was the first body allowed to stand against the National Union when elections for the National Assembly were held in November 1945. The opposition won no seats (nor would it in any of the decorative elections regularly held over the next thirty years). But censorship was briefly lifted during the weeks of campaigning which enabled Veloso to mount the first public critique of the regime by a representative Catholic figure. Veloso argued that dictatorship should only be a temporary expedient required in times of emergency and must not be turned into a permanent system of government; his charge that the younger generation was being given no opportunity to play a role in a government which had grown remote from the people through operating behind firmly closed doors was one that would be repeated even by regime insiders in the years to come.[52]

p. 145 No other dissenting voices emerged from Catholic circles at this time. Christian democracy was still to prove itself as a governing philosophy in Italy and Germany. Disenchantment among those Catholics who were well placed to see that the benefits of the regime were distributed very selectively, was outweighed by a fear of communism. Despite the oblique language he used in his public addresses, Salazar left few in any doubt about his abhorrence of democracy as a governing system or of his belief that the Portuguese were temperamentally unsuited to applying it in their own affairs. Even cautious liberalization would, he felt, only place the fruits of his regime of peace and order at risk but as he grew older he offered no clues about his thinking on who or what would succeed him.

Younger generations of Catholics, and those who felt that the problems of postwar Portugal required solutions different from those imposed in 1926, had no channels through which they could bring their views to bear within the system. The dissolution of the CCP and the relegation of the CADC to a memorialist body which commemorated the spirited days of combating atheistic liberalism, had left a vacuum. Salazar may have disposed of the bodies which had provided him with his political formation to allay fears of a Catholic dictatorship; however, he was also aware that his autocratic political system was particularly vulnerable to criticism from Catholics who felt that he had renounced the truths contained in the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII merely in order to install a dictatorship of the privileged. Signs that the lay apostolate were moving beyond conceiving their role as one of piety and good works emerged in the post-war years. A series of congresses were held between 1948 and 1953 at which the various branches of Catholic Action discussed social and religious questions, moving beyond the abstract and relating them to contemporary Portugal. Thousands attended what were inaugural conferences for Catholic primary teachers and Catholic men while delegates had the chance to share experiences and views at Catholic conferences abroad where they found that in order to maintain links with the poor and the marginalized, injustices were being exposed and challenged by their Catholic colleagues.[53] Any possibility that religious life would become the basis for social criticism and social action was effectively dashed in the early 1950s. Against the background of growing disquiet within the regime about incipient trends within the Church, full control was reasserted over Catholic Action in 1953 and its relevance as a force in the lives of even the most traditional Catholics declined steadily thereafter.

Those groups ready to involve the Church in contemporary national debates needed backing from people high up in the ecclesiastical hierarchy in order to create the space in which to realize their aims. But such

well-placed allies ready to act as mediators between the Church's advanced groups and the State were not to be found. In its public statements the Catholic hierarchy betrayed no apprehension about whether it was in the Church's long-term interests to be so closely identified with a regime increasingly revealed to be a
p. 146 personal dictatorship whose future only ↳ seemed certain as long as Salazar possessed the will and the stamina to plot its course. In a pastoral letter issued in November 1945, Cardinal Cerejeira repeated the existing formula that 'the Church is above and outside the concrete policies of specific regimes...as long as these respect the liberty of the Church and the fundamental principles of the moral order'.[54] But there was no official ceremony in Portugal—the opening of a new public building, the completion of a dam, or the opening of a new session of the National Assembly—without the presence of a bishop or, very often, the Cardinal himself. However, in the post-war years the previous close co-operation between church and state would fade somewhat. By the 1940s Salazar was no longer able to draw upon former CADC colleagues to fill cabinet posts. No less than ten of his eighty-seven ministers came from this small association, but by the 1940s it was technicians from a Catholic background who were emerging to replace them as Salazar's CADC colleagues along with other founders of the regime opted for more lucrative positions in industry and the professions.[55]

A limited degree of opposition was permitted in carefully policed elections for the presidency and the National Assembly. But the aura of calm and continuity which had become synonymous with the New State was shattered in the campaign for the 1958 presidential election when General Humberto Delgado, an air-force officer who had held a series of important state appointments, announced his decision to challenge the official nominee. His nationwide election campaign was greeted by highly enthusiastic crowds even in parts of the northern countryside where the regime had been thought to enjoy a real degree of popular acceptance. Seeing that this populist officer had tapped a genuine vein of discontent, the liberal Republican and Communist wings of the opposition rallied around him as the sole opposition challenger. Delgado received just under a quarter of the vote amidst widespread claims that the poll had been rigged by state officials to stave off certain defeat.[56] One source has claimed that in Braga the authorities obliged priests in every electoral ward to identify parishioners liable to support the opposition challenger so that they could be removed from the voting lists.[57] Since it was not unknown for parish priests in country towns and villages to act as dispensers of official propaganda and agents of social conformity and political vigilance, it is not surprising if local officials felt that they could rely on politically minded clergy in this way.

Dr Franco Nogueira, Salazar's former foreign minister, has admitted that 'many Catholics supported Delgado with their votes if not by public word or action'.[58] In his influential life of Salazar, he went on to concede that a split had opened up in the Church between traditionalists and a minority progressive wing.[59]
p. 147 Salazar had been ↳ informed earlier in 1958 that a meeting in Fátima of leaders of the Catholic Student's Movement (JUG) had given rise to a welter of criticism of the choice made by the institutional Church and the precepts which had shaped Portuguese Catholicism for the previous generation. The new progressive thinking had found its way into other branches of the lay apostolate, such as the Catholic Workers Movement, the League of Catholic Men, and the Catholic Information Centre. Catholic newspapers like *Novidades* and *O Trabalhador* were affected and the new questioning mood had even taken hold among members of the diocesan clergy.[60]

The bishops were thought to be unaffected until Antonio Ferreira Gomes, bishop of Oporto since 1952, caused a major political upheaval by writing a long letter of twenty-four pages to Salazar in July 1958, critical of his stewardship of the country, which soon became public knowledge. He wrote of a deepening gulf between the country and the New State and warned that while it was necessary to defend Portugal, closing ranks behind the New State was not the only means of salvation.[61] He criticized restrictions on human rights in Portugal and the neglect and suffering experienced by much of the population in the overseas territories, depicted corporativism as a way of depriving workers of their natural right to association, and drew attention to the harshness of Portugal's poverty, especially in the countryside.

Turning to the Church, he insisted that it 'is not free to teach its social doctrine' and related that even in rural areas of northern Portugal, supposed to be strong in their support of Salazar, the men walked out of church in indignation when the priests referred in their sermons to the elections.[62]

Outwardly Ferreira Gomes had appeared to be just another of the conformist bishops from a devout northern small farming background who had shaped the Portuguese Church into a pious and conventional force. However, his first episcopal appointment had been in the Alentejan diocese of Portalegre from 1949 to 1952 where he had been much affected by the neglect of education and the misery experienced by landless labourers. A study of his homilies and pastoral letters, as well as contributions he made to the local press, reveals that Church-State relations, the dangers of totalitarianism, and the importance of liberty were recurring themes.[63]

The events of 1958 revealed simmering discontent within two national institutions, the Church and the military, which had hitherto acted as the chief pillars of the regime. Their loyalty and co-operation had enabled Salazar to grant them a certain degree of autonomy in an otherwise highly regulated political system. However, in the uncertain years immediately after 1958, such political immunity was lifted. Delgado was dismissed from the air force and forced to flee abroad where he plotted against the regime until his assassination by the secret police in 1965. On returning from a holiday abroad in July 1959, the Bishop of
p. 148 Oporto was prevented from ↳ re-entering Portugal. When the Vatican declined to act upon the government's wish that a new bishop be appointed, an apostolic administrator was chosen to run the diocese in the absence of Ferreira Gomes; the bishop found himself in exile for the next ten years, during which time he remained under close watch from the secret police as his voluminous file in their archives makes clear.[64]

The Ferreira Gomes affair was a grievous blow to the standing of an authoritarian regime which was far more vulnerable to the withdrawal of official Church backing than was Franco's in Spain. Much of its legitimacy derived from being seen as a governing system which had tried to implement Catholic doctrines through its public policy. The Bishop of Oporto had repudiated that claim as Salazar's regime faced unprecedented opposition. If his critique had been endorsed by others among Portugal's forty-nine bishops, it might have given the Church vital detachment which would have enabled it to keep its options open as the regime began a slow but inexorable decline which culminated in it being removed by force in 1974.

But the Ferreira Gomes affair proved not to be the turning-point that would recast Church-State relations. None of the other bishops in mainland Portugal echoed his views, nor is there evidence that any tried to intercede with Salazar to get his expulsion lifted. *A Voz*, the conservative Catholic daily, provided a platform for Catholic traditionalists to denounce the bishop for using 'subversive communist terminology' and for 'defending the class struggle as the motor of history'.[65] But in a 1959 dispatch to London, the British ambassador reported that in talking to a journalist on the Lisbon archdiocese's own daily paper, *Novidades*, one of his staff had been left with the impression that many in the Church 'felt that the Bishop of Oporto's strictures on the Government and the Church in Portugal were justified'. The view was also conveyed from this *Novidades* source that the Cardinal, through his longstanding friendship with Dr Salazar, was allowing the Church to be used as an instrument of what was termed the 'situation' (i.e. the regime). He maintained that 'there was an abyss between the ordinary people and the Church whose present state could be likened to that of the Church of England in Victorian days.'[66]

When the furore over the Bishop of Oporto's letter had been at its height, Salazar had delivered a stern speech in which he hinted strongly that the consequences for the Church could be painful if a threatened breach with the government was not avoided in time. Given its importance, the speech, delivered to the executive committee of the National Union on 6 December 1958 is worth quoting at some length:

> Certain Catholics actually boast of having broken the front of national unity and have gone to such lengths that they have won the applause not only of the Liberals with whom they have allied themselves, but of the Communists…I consider this fact of the utmost gravity, not because of the individual elements which are lost to the National Front, but because of the disturbance which it
p. 149 causes in the consciences of many…I shall not address myself to the ↳ question today; it contains such serious implications with respect to the Concordat and even to the future relations between the State and the Church, that I have thought it right to maintain complete silence about it in public…
>
> I who have contributed something to religious pacification and to the liberty of the Church in Portugal, as well as to the position of affection and prestige in which it has been placed in the last thirty years, should find it extremely painful if I were forced to register complaints.[67]

Salazar's speech was a warning that Church-State relations and even the 1940 Concordat might be imperilled if the dissidents were not called to order. In response, a pastoral letter issued by the bishops on 18 January 1959 noted that the Church had been accused by some of having become a vassal of the political system while being attacked by others for having failed in moments of crisis to use its authority on behalf of the system. Both these accusations stemmed from the same misconception of ascribing to the Church a political mission, the statement went on to say. The Church's task was to preach the gospel and the State had an obligation to build its institutions on the basis of a Christian social programme. But the statement did not mention whether the bishops felt that the government had been fulfilling that obligation and what the role of those Catholics should be who in their own spheres of existence had clear evidence that it was not. However, members of Catholic Action were reminded that the constitution of the Portuguese branch provided that it should operate outside and above all political movements and that members were required to exercise discipline and show all due obedience to ecclesiastical authority. Perhaps the most comforting part of the bishop's message for the government was the declaration that obedience to legitimate authority was always necessary as it was only in a climate of order and peace that true progress could be achieved.[68]

The bishops, in their statement, had placed on record their special concern for the humblest classes in society but in a meeting with the British minister to the Vatican a day after it had been issued, Cardinal Cerejeira talked frankly about 'the innate political ineptitude of the Portuguese people'. Their flaws 'made stable government in Portugal so difficult and were shared by all Latin peoples', remarks which suggested that there was little to choose between his highly restricted political outlook and that of Salazar.[69]

As long as Cerejeira remained the leading churchman in Portugal, the chances of the Church distancing itself from the regime were extremely remote. Yet, less than two months after the bishop's statement, there was unmistakable evidence that important Catholic figures, mainly drawn from the laity, had concluded that the main arena for securing meaningful change in Portugal was no longer within the ranks of the Church.

At the last minute, the secret police discovered a revolutionary attempt due to have taken place on 11–12
p. 150 March 1959, known as 'the Cathedral plot'. In the words ↳ of the Socialist leader and subsequent president of Portugal, Mário Soares, it was a conspiracy which 'had nothing to do with the old "putschist" movements of former times…Neither by its basic inspiration nor by the people who participated in it, in responsible positions'.[70] One of the key organizers was Manuel Serra, a senior Catholic Youth leader. He was in charge of some 300 armed civilians, many of whom were young activists whose formation had been in the Juventude Operaria Catolica (JOC: Catholic Workers Youth) and Juventude Universitaria Catolica (JUC: Catholic Student Youth).[71] Several of the junior officers involved had a background of Catholic activism and the crypt of Lisbon Cathedral was a storehouse for weapons. Fr João Perestrello de Vasconcelos, chaplain to the merchant navy, was arrested carrying weapons in what turned out to be the most elaborate conspiracy mounted against the Salazar regime for many years.

JUC members were to the fore in the university conflicts of the early 1960s which bore eloquent testimony to the regime's complete estrangement from educated young people, something that even Salazar acknowledged as a reality.[72] While some Catholic activists remained committed to revolutionary activity, others chose to follow more moderate and legalistic paths and worked in close alliance with liberals and socialists. Opposition tendencies within the Church were reinforced by the Second Vatican Council (1962–5) which set in motion a process of open discussion and radical change that was to profoundly alter the character of the Church. The emphasis on collegiality rather than hierarchy and the willingness to allow the laity to play a role as full participants in the work of the Church encouraged progressives while Salazar viewed the process as deeply subversive of the kind of church he had sought to foster. The encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) issued by John XXIII in 1963, which dealt with human rights and the relation of the individual to the State, was censored in Portugal and the overseas territories.[73] Portuguese bishops attended the Council but their role was secondary since they had clearly been on the periphery of the theological and pastoral movement which in other parts of Europe had paved the way for this crucial convocation of the Church. Official encouragement was lacking for the spread and penetration of conciliar ideas among both laity and clergy through discussion, publications, and study weeks, etc. Instead, according to a Portuguese Jesuit writing in the late 1970s, 'the hierarchy adopted…the role of surveillance and acted as a break on whatever was attempted'.[74]

When Pope Paul VI visited India in 1964 the government of Salazar regarded it as an insult because a few years earlier, India had annexed the Portuguese territory of Goa. The media was forbidden from mentioning the visit, Salazar having become ultra-sensitive to threats posed against Portugal's African territories
p. 151 where since 1961 an armed struggle against colonial rule had begun to be mounted by Black and ↳ mixed-race liberation movements.[75] Tensions between Church and State had manifested themselves in the colonies over a lengthy period. As early as 1941 M. Alves Correia, vicar-general of the Luanda diocese, had been accused by the governor-general of Angola of engaging in political action which threatened to separate the territory of Angola from mainland Portugal. Tensions had grown from the willingness of this churchman, who had the backing of his bishop, to defend African interests by applying Catholic social teaching and to take initial steps to foster a native clergy.[76] Sebastião Resende, Bishop of Beira in Mozambique from 1943 to 1967, had been a stern. critic of forced labour in the Portuguese territories but had been marginalized by nationalist sectors of the Church. His successor, Manuel Vieira Pinto, would declare towards the end of the long authoritarian era that 'we prefer a Church that is persecuted but alive to a Church that is generously subsidised but at the price of damaging connivance at the behaviour of the temporal powers'.[77]

The Vatican's growing criticism of colonialism was the issue which increasingly overshadowed relations with the Portuguese government as its determination to remain in Africa showed no let-up during the 1960s in the face of disengagement by other European powers. A brief thaw was evident in 1967 when Pope Paul VI visited Portugal on a pilgrimage to Fátima. But in 1970 he deeply angered the Portuguese authorities by granting a private audience to the leaders of liberation movements in the Portuguese African territories.

By the middle of the 1960s it was becoming clear that the existing strands of opposition to dictatorship, represented by the Republicans and the different wings of the left, had been joined by a third current emanating from within Portuguese Catholicism. The progressive lead given by the Second Vatican Council and the intransigence of the New State in the face of cries for liberalization at home and self-determination in the colonies, produced a new generation of liberal Catholic activists ready to test the limits of the regime's tolerance.

Dissatisfaction among lower clergy was revealed in 1963 when two priests in Oporto were arrested upon refusing to serve a tour of duty as military chaplains in Africa. In the same year a new monthly magazine, *O Tempo e o Modo*, was launched which for the remainder of the 1960s was to be an important vehicle of expression for the progressive intelligentsia.[78] The majority of its editorial board and contributors were Catholic intellectuals. Non-Catholic liberals and Marxists contributed to its pages and collaborated with

Catholics in various opposition initiatives. Old-style Republicans were forced to reassess their attitude towards Catholics when in 1963 an important conference of Catholic economists could discuss such sensitive issues as nationalization of industries and agrarian reform. Later in 1965, Catholic intellectuals were instrumental in forming a cultural co-operative called *Pragma* which held public meetings, published
p. 152 policy analyses, and offered educational courses.[79] ↳ Such initiatives proved effective in taking the heat out of what remained of the anticlerical cause and ensured that religion would not return to be a contentious issue when democracy was eventually restored in the 1970s. In the face of hostility from an inward-looking institutional Church, they also turned Catholic intellectuals and student activists towards Marxism. Attempts to synthesize Marxist and Catholic teaching in order to develop blueprints for a just moral order were made by small groups who saw their goals being realized by political revolution. When Portugal experienced an authentic if short-lived revolution in 1974–5 as a result of the military overthrow of the dictatorship, such knots of activists would briefly come into their own.

Politicized Catholics grew increasingly bold in their pronouncements as the wars in Africa intensified against a background of political paralysis at home. In 1965 the manifesto of the newly launched Christian Movement of Democratic Action stated that 'the Portuguese social situation is anti-Christian…Personal power which surpasses the occasional necessary need for it is by definition anti-Christian…A totalitarian state of a conservative type is the most anti-Christian social situation…Christ can never be on the side of shock police, suffocation of thought, violation of law.'[80]

Over one hundred Catholic laymen identified with this manifesto and in a public statement condemned Salazar's authoritarian state and expressed support for the right of self-determination in Africa's colonies. Three days later over one hundred conservative Catholics issued a counter-statement reaffirming their faith in the policies of the government; the most outspoken Church traditionalist was Francisco Mária de Silva, the Archbishop of Braga, for whom Salazar was 'the bold and tenacious man at the helm who restored the nation's unity around the sacred symbol of the redeeming Cross'.[81]

The African situation and the uncertainty about who and what would succeed Salazar who celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday in 1964, heightened the intransigence of Catholic traditionalists linked to the regime. The malaise which gripped the institutional Church in turn encouraged Catholic liberals to channel their energies into overtly political activities even in the confined space tolerated by the regime. An ageing hierarchy was unable and unwilling to strike a balance between the Catholic intelligentsia of the cities and traditionalists in the north. Indeed a public breach occurred between Catholic progressives and the vast majority of the hierarchy in the second half of the 1960s. The founding of the Study Group for the Inter-change of Documents, Information and Experience (GEDOC) by priests and laity revealed the extent of the polarization. Letters and documents were addressed to the hierarchy concerning their failure to heed encyclicals such as *Mater et Magistra* (1961), *Pacem in Terris* (1963), and *Populorum Progressio* (1967). Seventy-eight priests signed a letter to Cardinal Cerejeira in December 1968 which pointed out that 'little positive activity was taking place in the archdiocese and the malaise of the clergy was great'

The hierarchy reacted harshly to critics who had written about 'an infection weakening all the ecclesiastical
p. 153 body like a leukemia'. GEDOC disappeared following ↳ a Statement by Cerejeira in February 1969 which amounted to a virtual interdiction.[82] The priests aligned with GEDOC had expressed their determination to 'fight from within the church so that she…becomes involved in the difficult but rewarding process of renovation',[83] but between 1969 and 1974 there was little debate and no innovation and many of the Church's most dynamic elements simply left or retreated into isolation. In the slightly freer conditions which existed under Marcelo Caetano, who became prime minister in October 1968, following the collapse of Salazar's health, *Broteria*, the leading Jesuit publication, carried an article in 1972 which acknowledged the parlous state of the Church:

> Nobody can argue that there exists…dialogue or a taking of a position at the diocesan or national level which mobilises laymen, priests and bishops to take up the renovation of our Catholicism in confrontation with the problems of our country as is taking place, for example, in neighbouring Spain…The conditions form a post-country as is taking place, for example, have not been created.[84]

In Spain, the emergence of a Church with a strong progressive wing prepared to contribute actively to securing a democratic transition from Francoism had been encouraged by the Vatican and its papal nuncio on the spot. But even during the papacies of John XXIII and Paul VI the nuncios sent to Lisbon proved to be conservative figures who failed to assist the progressives trying to implement the encyclicals of the Second Vatican Council.[85]

The biographical parallelism between the leaders of Church and State finally ended in 1969 when the Cardinal primate retired a few months after Salazar had ceased to perform his prime ministerial functions. Cerejeira's successor, Antonio de Ribeiro, was not yet 40 but he was prepared to operate within existing parameters. This was shown by the incident which occurred in the Largo do Rato chapel, Lisbon in the last day of 1972 when a group of Catholics tried to commemorate the Pope's Day of Peace. The wars in Africa were discussed and a statement was issued questioning the motivations behind Portuguese policy. This was a signal for the police to arrest all the participants, some being sent to prison while those employed by the State lost their jobs.

Cardinal Ribeiro kept a judicious silence, neither condemning the gathering nor supporting those arrested.[86] Earlier, the Church had been accorded some additional concessions by the Caetano regime which included permission to found a private university (the New University of Lisbon) and to launch a radio station, *Radio Renascenca*. But Caetano, like Salazar before him, showed every sign that in return for State preferment, he expected a compliant Church prepared to bestow legitimacy upon the government even though its foolhardy policies in Africa had left it steadily more isolated and discredited even among former well-wishers.

p. 154 The failure of the dictatorship to mount even limited resistance to the coup of 25 April 1974 mounted by junior officers, showed how moribund the political system devised by Salazar forty years before, had become. Thrust into the vacant seat of government were officers and civilians who espoused different forms of political radicalism. But the Church was largely ignored perhaps because to Portugal's exultant revolutionaries, it seemed archaic and irrelevant. In the face of a tidal wave of change, the Church leadership was as disorientated as its predecessor had been in 1910 but in the summer of 1975 many priests used the pulpit to urge popular resistance against what seemed like an authentic Bolshevik revolution threatening to tear asunder the Christian character of the country.[87]

In mid-197 5 the Church joined an increasingly powerful coalition that included the democratic left which campaigned to save newly acquired liberties from being extinguished by pro-Communists. Local priests in northern districts blessed crowds which attacked Communist offices and drove out their occupants. By the end of 1975 political gradualists had snatched the reins of power from the divided and incoherent forces of the far left, among whom not a few radical Catholics were to be found.

The Church could draw some comfort from the findings of an exhaustive sociological study of the role of religion in Portuguese society, published in 1980, which showed that 95 per cent of Portuguese declared themselves to be Roman Catholic and 90 per cent had been baptized in Church.[88] But the low weekly attendance figure of 29 per cent for mass was more indicative of the relevance of the Church in the lives of citizens. Moreover, the ability of the Church to fulfil its customary role was being undermined by the shortage of priests which, in some southern areas, was acute. Between 1957 and 1977 candidates for the priesthood attending senior seminary declined from 1,263 to 348. In terms of religious behaviour, the country remained divided along North-South lines. Mass attendance in the two main northern cities of Oporto and Braga was 35.1 per cent and 50.2 per cent respectively compared with 11.5 per cent in Lisbon. Civil

marriages, while only 2.6 per cent of the total in Braga and 8.3 per cent in Oporto, were 43.8 per cent in Lisbon and 58.3 per cent in Setubal.[89]

A number of factors bound up with the dramatic social and economic changes witnessed in Portugal from the 1960s onwards, have weakened the ability of the Church to shape public attitudes and behaviour patterns even in those areas of the country where its deep implantation had enabled it to withstand persecution. The drift to the cities, the growing influence of foreign ideas and lifestyles popularized by returning emigrants, the decline of a family-based economy, and Portugal's absorption into a consumer-based international economy, have eroded the traditional values which enabled the Church to function as an important national institution. If its loss of ↳ influence and respect has been steeper than in comparable countries such as Spain and Italy, then some of the reasons for this can be found in the compliant role it played in public affairs for most of this century. Catholics were only encouraged to play an innovative role in politics after 1910 when the Church's survival as a viable institution was briefly threatened. Thereafter, the Church fell into the role of being a compliant vassal of an authoritarian regime whose claim to embody Christian values in its governing practice was met by increasing scepticism as its tenure of power lengthened. By the 1950s large numbers of Catholics were coming to realize that the Church was being badly damaged through its close association with a regime notorious for its tolerance of gross inequalities and appetite for repression. But voices which proclaimed that Catholic ascendancy in public affairs had been obtained at the cost of the respect and affection of the most vital elements in society, were stilled by those who could have harnessed their energy in a way that would have strengthened the prestige of the Church. The institutional Church was disinclined to act as a mediator between an isolated, autocratic regime and the popular forces that eventually would overwhelm it. Those in positions of religious authority thought that the New State, with or without Salazar at the helm, was the context in which they would function for the indefinite future. Only the Bishop of Oporto seems to have realized that the Church would have to prepare for more challenging times. If democracy's chance had come in the late 1950s or early 1960s, rather than in 1974, Catholics could have played an important role in defining the shape of the new politics. The Church and its lay offshoots had many public-spirited individuals within its ranks at that time whose dedication to the cause of political and economic justice was shaped by profound religious convictions. But most of them would subsequently channel their energies in other directions as the space in which to express political and social concerns within the church became increasingly circumscribed. The impact of Vatican II was surprisingly muted and even orthodox churchmen keen to see the Church influencing national affairs could see no validity in Portugal following the path of Italy where political Catholicism became a central force following the overthrow of Mussolini.

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The verdict of future historians may yet be that fate was more cruel to the Portuguese Church during the deceptively secure Salazar era than in the more challenging times of the secular republic when the entry of Catholic laymen into politics opened up a route followed by Catholics in other European countries but one which had reached a dead end in Portugal before the era of Christian democracy in Europe had properly got under way.

Notes

1 S. G. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, ii (Madison, Wise. 1973), 410.

2 For religious conditions in the Alentejo during the mid-20th cent., see J. Cutileiro, *A Portuguese Rural Society* (Oxford, 1971), 249–70

3 T. Gallagher, 'Peasant Conservatism in an Agrarian Setting: Portugal 1900–1975', *Journal of Iberian Studies*, 6/2 (1977), 60.

4 A. J. Telo, *Decadência e Queda da 1 República Portuguesa*, i (Lisbon, 1980), 81.

5 R. Robinson, 'The Religious Question and the Catholic Revival in Portugal', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 12 (1977),352–3; T. C. Bruneau, 'Church and State in Portugal: Crisis of Cross and Sword', *Journal of Church and State*, 18 (1976), 466–7.

6 D. L. Wheeler, *Republican Portugal: A Political History 1910–26* (Madison, Wisc.1978), 69.

7 M. G. Cerejeira, *Vinte Anos de Coimbra* (Lisbon, 1943), 222.
8 A. J. Telo, *Decadência e Queda da I República Portuguesa*, ii (Lisbon, 1980).
9 A. Matos Ferreira, 'La Peninsula Iberique' in J.-M. Mayeur (ed.), *Histoire du Christianisme des origines à nos jours*, xii (Paris 1990), 406.
10 H. Kay, *Salazar and Modem Portugal* (London, 1970), 24.
11 P. C. Schmitter, 'The Impact and Meaning of "Non-Competitive Non-Free and Non-Significant" Elections in Authoritarian Portugal', in G. Hermet (ed.), *Elections without Choice* (London, 1970), 150.
12 E. Prestage, 'Reminiscences of Portugal', in H. V. *Livermore Portugal and Brazil: An Introduction* (Oxford, 1953), 6 n. 1.
13 Telo, *Decadência e Queda*, i. 89.
14 A certain amount of confusion has arisen about the founding year of the CPP. It is given as 1919 in Telo (ibid. 90); 1915 is the date cited in R. Robinson, *Contemporary Portugal: A History* (London, 1979), 45; while the much likelier date of 1917 is given by M. Braga da Cruz, in his exhaustive study, *As orígens da democracia cristã e salazarismo* (Lisbon, 1980), 264.
15 Braga da Cruz, *As origens da democracia cristã*, 307, 324,326.
16 Ibid. 340.
17 Matos Ferreira, 'La Peninsula Iberique' 406.
18 *Imparçial*, 249 (8 Mar. 1917), quoted ibid. 405.
19 Ibid. 406.
20 Braga da Cruz, *As origens da democracia cristã*, 316.
21 *A União* (8 Nov. 1923), quoted ibid. 316.
22 A speech in parliament delivered by Lino Neto on 9 Jan. 1924 and referred to, ibid. 318.
23 Telo, *Decadencia e Queda*, ii. 81.
24 This account of Salazar's rise within the ambit of the military dictatorship is derived from T. Gallagher, *Portugal: A Twentieth Century Interpretation* (Manchester, 1978), esp. ch. 3; also A. F. Nogueira, *Salazar*, ii (Coimbra, 1977), *passim*.
25 A. Matos Ferreira, 'A Acção Católica—questões em torno da organização e da autónomia daacção da Igreja Católica (1933–1958)', in C. Rosas (ed.), *O Estado Novo: Das Origens Âo Fim Da Autarcia 1926–1959*, ii (Lisbon, 1987), 285.
26 That the Fátima apparition remains controversial is shown by the comment in the standard history of Portugal, A. H. de Oliveira Marquesa *História de Portugal* (Lisbon, 1976 edn.), ii. 225 that 'in May 1917, the Church, or some of its local elements, organised—and certainly exploited—the so-called apparition of Fátima'.
27 Novidades (27 Apr. 1928), quoted in Kay, *Salazar*, 43.
28 Matos Ferreira, 'La Peninsula Iberique', 407.
29 Id., 'A Acção Católica', 289
30 A. E Nogueira, *Salazar*, ii. 95–6.
31 Ibid, iv (Coimbra, 1980), 30–1.
32 Speech of 23 Nov. 1932 quoted in Matos Ferreira, 'A Acção Católica' 283.
33 Braga da Cruz, *As origens da democracia cristã*, 363–71.
34 Matos Ferreira, 'La Peninsula Iberique', 408.
35 Id. 'A Acção Católica' 292.
36 A. O. de Salazar, *Doctrine & Action: Internal and Foreign Policy of the New Portugal*, trans. Edgar Broughton (London 1939), 231.
37 A. Ferro, *Salazar: Portugal and her Leader* (London, 1939), 74–5.
38 M.-E Mónica, *Educação e Sociedade No Portugal de Salazar* (Lisbon, 1978), 131–44.
39 Rev. R. S. Devane SJ, 'The Plight of Religion in the Patriarchate of Lisbon', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (1937), 40.
40 Ibid. 39.
41 Cf. Cf. Matos Ferreira, 'La Peninsula Iberique', 403.
42 T. C. Bruneau, 'Church and State', 477.
43 Devane, 'The Plight of Religion', 40.
44 Braga da Cruz, *As orígens da democracia cristã*, 366.
45 A. F. Nogueira, *Salazar*, iii (Coimbra, 1978), 263.
46 Id., *História de Portugal, 1933–1974* (Oporto, 1981), 184.
47 Bruneau, *Church and State*, 471.
48 Matos Ferreira, 'La Peninsula Iberique', 409.
49 Public Records Office (hereafter PRO), Foreign Office (hereafter FO), 371, 34844: Report from British embassy in Lisbon, 4 Aug. 1943.
50 Matos Ferreira, 'La Peninsula Iberique', 413.
51 Cerejeira, *Vinte Anos de Coimbra*, 215.
52 Nogueira, *Salazar*, iv. 29–30.

53 Matos Ferreira, 'La Peninsula Iberique', 410; J. Canico SJ, *The Church in Portugal* (Brussels, 1981), 12.
54 Nogueira, *Salazar*, iv. 30.
55 T. Gallagher, 'Os 87 Ministros de Salazar', *História* (Lisbon), 28 (Feb. 1981), 11–12.
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57 S. Cerqueira, 'L'Église catholique et la dictature corporatiste portugaise', *Revue Française de Science Politique*, 23 (1975), 496.
58 A. F. Nogueira, *Salazar*, v (Oporto, 1984), 18.
59 Ibid. iv. 494
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid. 512.
62 Kay, *Salazar*, 360; G Grohs, 'The Church in Portugal after the Coup of 1974', *Journal of Iberian Studies*, 5/1 (1976), 36.
63 A. Praça, 'D. António Ferreira Gomes: O bispo que recusou a "Pax Augusta" de Salazar', *O Jornal* (Lisbon), 26 Feb. 1982.
64 Bishop António Ferreira Gomes dossiers, 2878/58 SR and 3953-CI, PIDE/DGS (Portuguese secret police) archive, Fortress prison, Caxias, Portugal. The bishop's dossier consists of two bulky files and the PIDE had a concise list of his pastorals, homilies, conference addresses, etc. from 1950 onwards. His private mail was being opened until the end of 1973.
65 A. Prça, Afonso, 'Gomes'.
66 PRO FO 371,144851 1781, 'Religion in Portugal': Sir C. N. Stirling to J. M. Addis, 5 Feb. 1959.
67 PRO FO 371 136569, 'Relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Government': C. N. Stirling to Selwyn Lloyd, 13 Dec. 1958.
68 PRO FO 371 144851, 'Catholics in Portugal': Sir C. N. Stirling to London, 9 Jan. 1959.
69 PRO FO 371 144851, 'Catholics in Portugal': Marcus Cheke to Sir C. N. Stirling, 23 Jan. 1959.
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71 Ibid.
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73 Raby, *Fascism and Resistance*, 293.
74 J. Canico SJ, *The Church in Portugal* (Brussels, 1981).
75 J. Baptista, *Caminhos para uma Revolução*, (Lisbon, 1975), 31.
76 Matos Ferreira, 'La Peninsula Iberique', 417.
77 E. Keefe, *Area Handbook for Portugal* (Washington, 1977), 16.
78 Raby, *Fascism and Resistance*, 234.
79 Ibid. 235.
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81 Ibid. 64.
82 For this episode, see Bruneau, 'Church and State', 478–9.
83 Cademos de GEDOC (Feb. 1969), 3, quoted ibid. 478.
84 B. Domingues, 'Dez Anos de Conçílio em Portugal', in *Brotería*, 95 (1972), quoted ibid. 473.
85 Ibid. 485.
86 Ibid
87 Gallagher, 'Peasant Conservatism', 63; id., *Portugal: A Twentieth Century Interpretation*, 219. A description of the lengths which the Archbishop of Braga was prepared to go to in order to unseat the revolutionary order is contained in G. Walraff, *A descoberta de uma conspiração* (Lisbon, 1976).
88 *Expresso* (24 Dec. 1980).
89 M. Ferreira and A. J. Cadavez, 'A Hierarquia passou a fornecer a imagem de marca do cristiansmo portugûes', *Expresso*, 22 Dec. 1979.