

The conformation of a transnational discursive community: anti-communist intellectuals in Latin America during the Cold War

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 **Julio Lisandro Cañón Voirin**

Ph.D. in Contemporary History at the Santiago de Compostela University (USC). Professor at the History Department of the Oviedo University. Oviedo – SPAIN

historia.uniovi.es/.../canon-voirin-julio-lisandro
juliolisandro.canon@gmail.com

 orcid.org/0000-0001-7590-5064

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Abstract

In this paper, we present the study of a transnational discursive community: the Inter-American Confederation of Continental Defence. This became the institutional meeting point for Latin American anti-communist intellectuals who, during the Cold War, articulated a conservative and counterrevolutionary nucleus of power. In the framework of the Cold War, this discursive community placed communism outside of humanity, and only contemplated its extermination. Thus, we analyse the discursive materiality that gradually colonized the state structures and gave rise to a systematic persecution against the communists and all those who, from the spheres of power, were typified as a threat. We structure the text in a chronological account that allows us to know the evolution of the Inter-American Confederation of Continental Defence, from its origins to its last continental congress. We use a wide documentary corpus (correspondence, minutes, bulletins, manuscripts, notes and speeches) compiled in Argentina, Mexico, Spain and the USA.

Keywords: anti-comunist; discursive community; intellectuality; Latin America.

A conformação de uma comunidade discursiva transnacional: intelectuais anticomunistas na América Latina durante a Guerra Fria

Resumo

Neste artigo, apresentamos o estudo de uma comunidade discursiva transnacional: a Confederação Interamericana de Defesa do Continente. Esta se tornou no ponto de encontro institucional dos intelectuais anticomunistas latino-americanos que, durante a Guerra Fria, articularam um núcleo de poder conservador e contra-revolucionário. No quadro da Guerra Fria, essa comunidade discursiva colocou o comunismo fora da humanidade, e apenas contemplou seu extermínio. Assim, analisamos a materialidade discursiva que gradualmente colonizou as estruturas do Estado e deu origem a uma perseguição sistemática contra os comunistas e todos aqueles que, dentro das esferas do poder, foram tipificados como ameaça. Estruturamos o texto em um relato cronológico que nos permite conhecer a evolução da Confederação Interamericana de Defesa do Continente, desde suas origens até seu último congresso continental. Utilizamos um amplo corpus documental (correspondências, atas, boletins, manuscritos, notas e discursos) compilado na Argentina, México, Espanha e Estados Unidos.

Palavras-chave: anticomunismo; comunidade discursiva; intelectualidade; América Latina.

From the Inter-American Confederation of Continental Defence Against Communism to the World Anti-Communist League

The term commonly used to refer to active policies of opposition to communism, regardless of their origin, aim and form, is “anti-communism”. This phenomenon, which has encompassed countless demonstrations – reactionary, counterrevolutionary and oppositional – against communism dates back to the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*. Nonetheless, it is clear that between the *Manifesto*’s appearance in 1848 and the start of the Cold War, the meaning and content of the concept changed. Undoubtedly, the key reason for this change is that the widespread acceptance of the framework proposed by Marx and Engels aroused enormous fears in the ruling classes – although it was their organic intellectuals who were in charge of shaping, resignifying and implementing these ideas in society. During those almost one hundred years, the *Manifesto* went from belonging to the League of the Just to becoming the cornerstone of one of the two powers that had polarised global attention since the end of World War II, as well as a guide for countless movements struggling to free themselves from the colonial yoke or change the structures of capitalist exploitation.

From the Truman Doctrine (1947)¹ onwards, anti-communism and the fight against Marxism became central in the history of the Americas. Indeed, the development of the Doctrine is one of the elements that led to changes in the states of the Americas, which began to implement policies that were no longer of opposition, but of persecution, harassment, repression and annihilation of communism and communists. Such policies undoubtedly had an impact on the reshaping and reorientation of state apparatuses towards persecutory state violence (CAÑÓN, 2017, p. 301-312). The Dominican Republic is an exception; since 1936, under the Trujillo regime, the nation had already begun a process of

¹ TRUMAN, Harry. *Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey: Address of the President of the United States Delivered Before a Joint Session of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Recommending Assistance to Greece and Turkey*. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office: 1947.

systematic elimination of the political opposition in general, and of communism in particular.

Apart from this exception, the major change in policies against communism occurred with the Truman Doctrine. The Doctrine constituted not only a projection of the interests of the United States – erected as a hegemonic capitalist power after the end of the Second World War – towards Europe, but also one of the key aspects in a confrontation for world domination. It was a new phase of North American interventionism and a clear offensive against communism. An immediate correlation in the Americas was the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (1947). The Treaty marked a shift from the so-called containment policies of communism to those of defence: a transition that materialised in the functions of war ministries, which gradually assumed and incorporated the management and coordination of the internal security of their respective countries within their traditional duties. Also developed under the same umbrella of defence against communism were: the Ninth and Tenth Inter-American Conferences (1948 and 1954 respectively); the Fourth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (1951); and the report Strengthening of Internal Security (1953).

With such favourable conditions, it is not surprising that prominent anti-communist intellectuals from six American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru) tried to institutionalise what had, until then, been informal ties. For this reason, among others, they began to organise a continental meeting. At the end of May 1954, in Mexico, the First Congress Against Soviet Intervention in Latin America was held. It was the first coordinated effort to formalise relations between the main anti-communist organisations of the twenty Latin American nations. With the backing of the Catholic Church, some governments of the Americas and the CIA, nearly 400 anti-communist militants were able to discuss and share their initiatives. This success reaffirmed their intention to create a large anti-communist continental organisation, which would soon take shape: the Inter-American Confederation of Continental Defense (IACCD).

The IACCD was formally established during the Second Congress (1955, Brazil) through agreements reached by the delegates of the Latin American countries, accompanied by observers from the US, Europe and Asia. While National Federations of the IACCD were being formed, some of them with governmental recognition and support, preparations were underway for the Third Congress (1957, Peru). Attending this congress, as well as the Fourth Congress (1958, Guatemala), were representatives of all the Federations plus delegates from Canada and the US, as well as guests from other continents.

During the Third Congress, the Brazilian Delegation presented an initiative that combined two proposals. On the one hand, they proposed putting an end to the continental meetings, and enabling the National Federations to hold regional congresses instead. The other part of the proposal was to convene a World Anti-Communist Congress. This initiative was welcomed by Chiang Kai-shek; through his representative to the Third Congress, Ku Cheng-kang, he invited them to go to Taipei to discuss plans for such a World Congress. At the meeting in Taiwan (October 1957), the representatives of the IACCD and the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League signed a joint declaration of commitment to undertake rounds of negotiations with organisations. Between November 1957 and March 1958, they met with private and governmental groups in Germany, France, Italy and Mexico. In the last destination, the Preparatory Conference for the First World Anti-Communist Congress took place. The delegates there who made up the organising executive committee² agreed on the announcement and agenda for the future first congress, intended to be held in Washington the following year.

Although the gathering scheduled for Washington was eventually abandoned, from 1960 to 1963 the members of the committee continued working to plan the congress. Thus, in May 1963, in New York, the preliminary meeting of the anti-communist congress was held. However, following disagreements between the organisers, the congress itself was postponed once again.

² Ku Cheng-kang, of Nationalist China; George Paik, of South Korea; Carlos Penna Botto, of Brazil; Sergio Fernández Larrain, of Chile; Ernesto de la Fé and Salvador Díaz Versón, of Cuba; Jorge Prieto Laurens, of Mexico; Fritz Cramer and Alfred Gielen, of West Germany; George Dallas, of the UK; Jaroslaw Stetzko, of Ukraine; Feren Kisbarnak, of Hungary; Charles Edison, Lev Dobriansky, Marvin Liebman and Francis McNamara, of the USA.

Nonetheless, in the capital of Nationalist China in 1964, an assembly of delegates resolved to convene the World Anti-Communist Congress. During the Twelfth Conference of the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League (November 1966, Seoul), the Organising Committee of the World Anti-Communist League was established.

More than five hundred people from seventy nations gathered in Taipei (25-29 September 1967) for the long-awaited congress. It was officially opened by Pope Paulo VI, who, through a welcome message and blessing to all anti-communists, condemned “the atheist and anti-scientific doctrines of Marxism-Leninism” (PAULO VI, 1967, p. 19). An elated Chiang Kai-shek, backed by the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, opened the meeting: “As the Communists never limit their goal of aggressive expansion, the free people should not try to fight each of their own battles by themselves alone and run the risk of being defeated one by one. We must adopt a consistent strategy and take concerted action” (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1967, p 37). Such action should lead, according to Chiang Kai-shek, to the annihilation of the communists: “I am sure that with the inauguration of the World Anti-Communist League, [the anti-communist leaders] will be able to dedicate all [their] efforts to the removal of this evil root” (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1967, p 42). The belligerent tone and eliminationist nature of his speech, although characteristic of that time, ought to raise questions about the nature of his intentions.

At the Fourth World Anti-Communist Congress (1972, Mexico), the IACCD was replaced by the Latin American Anti-Communist Confederation: a specific section of the League managed by Banzer, Stroessner and Videla, who led the bloody dictatorships of Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina, respectively³.

The significance of the IACCD is almost self-explanatory, but let us examine what it advocated, the discourses it produced and how it managed to converge in a movement that, with an iron fist, drove processes that are still in place today. Consider, for example, the hundreds of thousands who continue to

³ On the World Anti-Communist League, ANDERSON Scott; ANDERSON, Jon. *Inside the League: The Shocking Exposé of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League*. Michigan-New York: Dodd Mead, 1986.

search mass graves from Guatemala to Argentina, where the fury of a destructive power tried to condemn the disappeared. In this sense, it is worth noting the IACCD's condition as the necessary architect of the counterrevolutionary discursive-ideological phenomenon that has shaped the ways of seeing, participating in and experiencing social life since the middle of the 20th century in the Americas.

The IACCD was the space that enabled the intellectuals of the dominant classes to converge in a discursive community: "a set of individuals that can be interpreted as a community based on the fact that their discursive or oral practices reveal common interests, objectives and beliefs; that is, based on the degree of institutionalisation that the discourse exhibits" (WATSS, 1999). In that space, as they formed signifiers of a conception of the world and disseminated them, they collaborated in shaping the political imaginaries that influenced political practices.

This discursive community not only produced discursive practices but also represented social interests. It interwove the inclinations of different actors involved in the development of a new political order: a new order not of change, but of reaction. Moreover, it constructed a political line of reasoning anchored on a supposed external and internal attack on the foundations of Western and Christian society.

Before continuing, it is necessary to point out that the IACCD's activities and congresses enjoyed the support of several governments of the Americas. Its headquarters were in the Brazilian Ministry of Economy; its congresses were covered by different American, European and Asian newspapers. This wide coverage contrasts with and, at the same time, is inversely proportional to the gap in research referring to this institution with such broad government and media support; in other words, an organisation that was clearly visible in its time and did nothing to stay in the shadows – quite the contrary.

In fact, no book, no chapter, not even a single article refers to the IACCD. There is, on the other hand, a very good paper by Torben Gülstorff, who investigates the Comité International d'Information et d'Action Sociale and tries to compare this European anti-communist organisation with others of

continental scope but from other regions. Although Gülstorff himself mentions the inexistence of research that would allow him to make a comparison between the Comité and the IACCD, he still compares the two. His work, which is not without interest, is quite imprecise as far as the IACCD is concerned, and it refers to partial aspects of the first congress of the IACCD (GÜLSTORFF, 2015).

The reasons for the silence, absence, omissions and gaps are unknown. What we do know is that accessing the documentary material necessary to establish the IACCD's role, place and impact on the historical development of the societies of the Americas is a laborious and patient task. In this case, it involved temporary stays in Argentina, Spain, the USA, Germany and Mexico. In each of these places, we obtained various sources (correspondence, minutes, manuscripts, notes, speeches, personal interviews, declassified CIA documents), which allowed us to verify and fill in those we already had. This text only includes a selection of these sources, which allows us to reconstruct the history of the IACCD and, more specifically, the aspects that link it to an increase in the systematic persecution of communists, as well as all those classified as threats by those in power. As a necessary consequence, in this text we only address partial aspects, which will be completed with a broader investigation currently in progress⁴.

The Inter-American Confederation of Continental Defense

In the Americas, the IACCD was the first organisation of a private and continental scope created expressly to fight communism. In addition, it was the institution that – after the Church, the United States, and in parallel with the armed forces – thoroughly addressed communism as a problem and framed it as a problem. While there had been a first wave of intellectuals, inclined towards

⁴ Investigations that, laterally, refer to the CIDC are JIMENEZ, Mario. Entre “hispanistas” y “pro-yanquis”. El Primer Congreso contra la Intervención Soviética en América Latina, México, mayo de 1954. **Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos**, 2017. CASALS, Marcelo. Against a Continental Threat: Transnational Anti-Communist Networks of the Chilean Right Wing in the 1950s. **Journal of Latin American Studies**, v. 51, n. 3, p. 523-548, 2019. BOHOSLAVSKY, Ernesto; BROQUETAS, Magdalena. Os congressos anticomunistas da América Latina (1954-1958): redes, sentidos e tensões na primeira guerra fria. *In*: BOHOSLAVSKY, Ernesto. (Org.). **Pensar as direitas na América latina**. São Paulo: Editora Alameda, 2019, p. 439-459.

fascist proposals, who had taken a stance against communism, the wave was gradually diluted and reduced to a trickle under the turmoil of the Second World War and its alternatives.

Although there were certain points of contact between them, the members of the IACCD defined themselves as liberal Catholic intellectuals opposed to all of the three regimes that they considered expressions of totalitarianism (fascism, Nazism, communism). As a counterpart, in their imagination, the Franco regime in Spain was an evocative leader in the direct fight against communism. They viewed the regime as a guardian of Catholic traditions and a vivid realisation of the confrontation on the battlefields, where Catholicism had defeated communism.

According to the reconstruction that we have been able to carry out, the members of the IACCD occupied positions of responsibility or were otherwise influential in public life. Among them were: politicians, members and founders of organisations and political parties; legislators; judges; officials of governmental and multinational institutions; university faculty and rectors; diplomats; priests; businessmen, industrialists, landowners and bankers; military members; constituent legislators and drafters of constitutional reforms; Catholic worker and student leaders; journalists, directors or owners of the media; and also war criminals, responsible for the Ustaša (Croatia) and the Balli Kombëtar (Albania).

They thought of the IACCD as a space to standardise points of view, establish links and coordinate lines of action. In this sense, within the broad counterrevolutionary movement underway since the second half of the 20th century, the IACCD fulfilled the role of providing frameworks for the interpretation and representation of the reality of its time.

This was an era in which the campaign led by Senator Joseph McCarthy was advancing and challenging the very Constitution of the US. It was also a time when the discourse of many governments of the Americas were converging with social discourses; the supposed national identity of each society was deemed the ideal way to oppose communism, to work for the consolidation of democracy and capitalism. However, from the IACCD, as we will see, the proposal was to

apply an active policy of persecution and harassment against communism and communists, as well as against anything and anyone considered as such.

We cannot ignore that, among many other things, the Cold War marked the entrance on stage of an actor whose leading role at the time is beyond doubt: the CIA. As a manifestation of North American imperialism, the CIA occupied a prominent place in the defence of American interests. To meet its objectives, it relied on a diverse range of allies and collaborators. Naturally, the latter were not, or at least not always, mere passive mediators; as we will see, in the specific case of the IACCD, there was an autonomous and independent actor which was beyond their control.

In any case, the IACCD was established in 1954, officiated, financed and promoted by the CIA, which in the midst of a campaign to destabilise the government of Jacobo Arbenz, contacted a group of intellectuals gathered in the Popular Anti-Communist Front of Mexico. The Front, in turn, was related to groups from other countries and was preparing a continental meeting. One of the goals to be achieved through that meeting was the formation of an organisation that would serve as a stable core reference from Mexico to Argentina. All these groups, showing similar willingness, had responded to President Truman's call, initiating or intensifying contacts with the US embassies in their countries.

On that basis – and as a specific part of a propaganda operation, the PBSUCCESS⁵ – the CIA provided them with the means to could carry out what they had not yet been able to, due to a lack of economic resources. Despite the gracious contributions of United Fruit, American Airlines, the government of the State of Morelos and the central government of Mexico, they still needed a hundred thousand dollars – an amount provided by the CIA. From that moment, February 1954, the preparations for the congress accelerated.

In the luxurious Geneve hotel in Mexico City, meetings were held between members of the RNSHIELD group (the code name assigned by the CIA to the

⁵ Name by which the covert operation of the CIA to destabilise and overthrow the Arbenz government was known. It was the first CIA operation in Latin America, and it consisted of planning, organising and executing the coup. Later, PBSUCCESS became the model for future CIA activities on the continent.

Popular Anti-Communist Front of Mexico) and CIA field agents. The encounters were marked by agreement, but also by differences. Before the CIA appeared on the horizon of the congress leaders, they had planned to call it the Pan-American Anti-Communist Congress. However, the North American specialists in psychological warfare proposed calling it the Congress Against Soviet Intervention in Latin America. Reasoning that the congress could be another means of propaganda, the specialists wanted to instil the idea of the imminent landing of the USSR in the Americas, and the idea that the “subversive communist movement was in the hands of professional agitators” (CIA, 23/05/54) that responded directly to Moscow’s orders. Meanwhile, for the future members of the IACCD, what really mattered was so-called communist infiltration. The CIA agents revealed their disappointment in the autonomy of some actors, who were heading in a direction different to their own: “the anti-Soviet issue became an anti-communist issue, thus losing part of its incisiveness (...) a weakness in Latin American thought that we tried to minimise by naming the Congress (Against Soviet Intervention)” (CIA, 02/06/54).

At other levels, there were also differences between CIA agents and analysts. The agents, when evaluating the instrumental value of the organisation, consider it hardly worthwhile. Furthermore, they believed that they could not control their main contact, RNSHIELD, to the extent that in their first reports to the PBSUCCESS Headquarters on the congress sessions, they were cautious about – if not against – the possibility of maintaining funding, even though they recognised its importance (CIA, 02/05/54). For their part, the analysts considered the organisation a valuable asset and, contrary to the agents’ suggestion, decided to continue financing it (CIA, 05/06/54): a decision that later brought them inestimable benefits, since it allowed them to have an established network of contacts for their agents distributed across the Americas.

First Congress Against Soviet Intervention in Latin America (27-30 May 1954, Mexico)

If, as previously mentioned, the Truman Doctrine was a first call for these anti-communist intellectuals, then the Fourth Meeting of Consultation of Foreign

Ministers (1951) renewed their enthusiasm. An agreement was reached at this ministerial summit to work for “the common defence against the aggressive activities of communism” (UNIÓN PANAMERICANA, 1951, p. 160). Definitive backing came with the Tenth Inter-American Conference (1954), where the US, through its representative, John Foster Dulles, presented a declaration that not only condemned communism but also encouraged the intensification of measures against it (UNIÓN PANAMERICANA, 1956, p. 321).

In this way, the intellectuals who had responded to Truman felt fully supported by US policy to officially convene the Congress: “each country has the right to forge its own destiny, within the limits set by its sovereignty, its customs and its idiosyncrasy, and to defend its institutions, as well as the Christian traditions of its people” (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. I, p. 23). Obvious though they may seem, it is important to point out the institutions that the IACCD insisted on defending, especially since they were said to be encouraged by the spirit of the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931): private property, Catholicism and capitalist social relations. Communism was portrayed, in clearly condemnatory language, as a great force that threatened them.

This is the context in which some two hundred delegates and associate members from the twenty Latin American countries met at the Cervantes Theatre in Mexico City to coordinate and unify efforts in the fight against communism⁶. Accompanying them in almost equal numbers as observers were government officials, diplomats and members of anti-communist organisations from Asia and Europe. They also received messages of congratulations and support from Catholic, labour, student, professional and business organisations, as well as governments and ecclesiastical dignitaries.

So-called communist infiltration, as cited in the previously mentioned CIA reports, was the centre of concern. This was clearly visible in *The Case of Guatemala*, a report presented by the Guatemalan delegation, which denounced

⁶ The delegations came from: Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Costa Rica, Bolivia, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Peru, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela. Delegates from Chile, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Honduras were unable to attend, although there were associate members from these latter countries with voice, but without vote, in the Congress sessions.

the USSR for having “directed and financed the seizure of power by its local agents” (COMITÉ COORDINADOR ANTICOMUNISTA, 1954, p. 32). In short, for the congress participants, Guatemala was the most obvious case of successful Soviet penetration⁷. Beyond the context, the obvious interests and the clear objectives that make the report intelligible is what is left unsaid: that it was no longer because of the autonomy that Guatemala acquired in its foreign policy, nor because of the advances in the process of social, political and economic democratisation, but the conviction that this was what was dangerous.

The dominant idea within the Congress was that the dangers posed by the expansion of communist infiltration would be resolved on political and ideological battlefields. However, sooner rather than later, this veered into war itself. Even before those of the Congress, the Church had used the language of war to outline the conflict between Western and Christian civilisation and atheistic communism. In this way, perhaps unknowingly, they began an irreversible conflict of interests and paved the roads to bloody-mindedness. Their hostility towards the communists obliterated the possibility of exploring avenues of comprehension, cutting all bridges to understanding – if understanding was ever the intention, since the question on the table was: “How to dialogue with an adversary who wants our capitulation?” (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. I, p. 55).

The various positions that manifested in the Congress can be reduced to two main currents which, while not antagonistic, presented significant differences. On the one hand, the key objective of the first current was to act; its purpose was to bring together all the “uncontaminated” forces of their societies while taking a cautious approach to any possible agreement with the governments of their countries, which were considered indifferent to the communist threat (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. I, p. 123). Conversely, the

⁷ Based on the aforementioned report, Congress resolved to send the following statement to the Organisation of American States: ‘After having studied the documentation presented by the Guatemalan delegation, the First Congress Against Soviet Intervention, declares: That the governments of Juan José Arevalo and Jacobo Arbenz have endangered and continue to endanger peace in America, due to their constant interventions in the affairs of other countries, already fomenting armed revolts and supporting these with money, weapons, supplies, people, etc., already agitating in labour or agricultural lands, encouraging or financing strikes, already introducing Marxist propaganda surreptitiously, in the form of books, pamphlets, graphs and even sending technicians in the work of communist proselytism. That the government of Jacobo Arbenz is at the service of international communism.’

second current, which was also the predominant one, differed from the first in emphasising the need to influence their governments; to establish specific state institutions to control communism; and to carry out outreach and propaganda work. Moreover, in strictly operational terms, this current underlined the advantage of taking a closer position to other entities such as the Church and the armed forces.

While the meeting in itself was already significant, the approval of the Declaration of Anti-Communist Principles was central to the architecture of this discursive community. The purpose of the Declaration was to analyse the plans to fight against Marxism and to define the group's data and premises, while also indicating their identity: "We proclaim ourselves an anti-communist movement, for the defence of democracy (...) functional and humanist democracy that (...) must take charge of the banner of the peoples' social demand" (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. III, p. 175)⁸. It was a formulation loaded with meaning, implying from the outset that functional and humanist democracy consisted of a break with the democracy of the 19th century and with that of the masses: with the former, due to its aristocratic bias; with the latter, because the people, who "neither reason nor discern", were not up to the task (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. III, p. 202).

The group did not reject democracy – at least that is what they claimed – but they understood that democracy could no longer be that of the oligarchy nor the masses, and that the time had come for them – landowners, plutocrats, industrialists – to "turn to charity, reaching out to the helpless" (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. III, p. 206). Thus, functional and humanist democracy responded to the forms that the fight against communism should take. But was that all? Democracy, they said, required a specific political interpretation, because as long as the communists "can tell the masses we are going after social welfare; and we talk to them about the news and about poetry, we will never be in a position to confront them" (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. III, p. 208). Therefore, in their arguments, democracy should be a practical instrument that would

⁸ The principles of this anti-communist manifesto arose from the merger of two papers, 'Llamado a la América Latina', and 'Teoría y práctica del frente comunista', belonging to Jorge Prieto Laurens and Eudocio Ravines, respectively (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. III).

respond to social injustice but avoid drifting into populism and communism. Poverty “had given wings to social justice and populism”, leading to a dead end or, worse still, to communism (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. III, p. 208). In this sense, the manifesto foreshadowed and established a discourse of, on the one hand, the conflict between the interests of the ruling classes and the aspirations of the subaltern classes, and on the other, the conflict between democracy and the means to combat communism.

Finally, one of the most important results of the First Congress was undoubtedly the creation of the Permanent Commission of the First Congress Against Soviet Intervention in Latin America, which was the foundation on which the IACCD would be formed. The IACCD, with its minutes and regulations, consisted of a Permanent Commission, a General Secretariat and Local Committees⁹. Thus constituted, the Commission proposed to promote, by private means, the anti-communist objectives of the Tenth Inter-American Conference (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. IV, p. 44).

Second Congress Against Soviet Intervention in Latin America (22-26 August 1955, Rio de Janeiro)

After the First Congress, negotiations and campaigning began for convening the Second Congress. The attendees at this meeting congratulated themselves on the overthrow of Arbenz, for which they perhaps took excessive credit. Regardless, by extolling their role, that proud claim clearly showed that what concerned them were the interests of their class – the ruling class. Democracy, its respect and validity were subordinate to these interests.

The strength of the terms with which the Second Congress was convened, heralding the imminence of a social war led by communism, are an unequivocal testimony to how they viewed the reality of their time: “we are entering the

⁹ The members elected to the Commission were: Andrés de Cicco (Argentina) Admiral Carlos Penna Botto, President (Brazil); Jorge Prieto Laurens, secretary (Mexico); Rafael Velázquez (Colombia); Mariano Quiroz González (Costa Rica); Federico Neilsen Reyes (Bolivia); Eduardo Alfonso Figeac (El Salvador); José Baquero de la Calle (Ecuador); José Calderón Salazar (Guatemala); Aurelio López (Panama); Héctor Gambetta (Peru); Carlos Adán Espinoza (Nicaragua); Isabel Arrua Callejo (Paraguay); Omar Ibargoyen (Uruguay); Luis Felipe Belleria (Venezuela). They were later joined by those from Haiti, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

second phase of the struggle undertaken to (...) obstruct and nullify the intervention of the stateless Bolsheviks, who make up the satanic fifth columns, who back-stab the countries of their birth” (CIDC, 1955, t. I, p. 29). Revulsion and condemnation appear systematically in the welcome address, in those of the delegations and in those of the invited organisations. To speak otherwise in a congress of this nature would evidently have been extremely rude, as well as a mistake. What is surprising is the verbal harshness; in an increasingly energetic position against communism, they stigmatised not only the communists (stateless, satanic, traitors), but also the social and political situation of the Soviet countries. Undoubtedly, what underlines the gravity of their interpretation of reality is the specific image of a situation of war.

Each and every one of the attendees mentioned that, in one way or another, the world was immersed in the Third World War. For the most fatalistic, like the priest Damián Rodin, nuclear war was imminent, and it was better to let the atomic bomb destroy the whole world rather than allow the triumph of communism. For the majority, an atomic conflagration seemed unlikely, and they did not believe that a war between armies would break out; however, if it did, they said they were willing to take their rightful place and give up their lives, if necessary (CIDC, 1955, t. I, p. 9).

For them, it was not merely a struggle against communism, which they considered secondary, but more importantly a struggle for the West: a war for its survival. They considered it futile to focus their efforts on containing the communist movement; they wanted to destroy it. Their decision was to fight it on practical grounds, in order to realise what they yearned for: “to banish communism from the face of the earth” (CIDC, 1955, t. I, p. 33). The former Minister of the Interior and former Commander-in-Chief of the Albanian Armed Forces, José Luzay, declared: “communism must be burned with fire” (CIDC, 1955, t. III, p. 77). The targets of the war they proposed were not military, although they did not rule this out. In reality, by declaring war on communism, they were declaring an internal war against civil society.

Only one congress participant, taking refuge in his pacifist beliefs, allowed himself to disagree with such declarations of war. Those who took the trouble to

answer him, emphasising the aggressive nature of communism, argued that war was the only way to completely destroy it. Such convictions foreshadowed the violence of subsequent events.

The first topic on the agenda established for the congress was “Communism in Theory”. The presentations on this topic repeated the idea that communism was enemy number one because it opposed the spiritualist principles that shape Western civilisation. In this way, those who defined themselves as the defenders of democracy and capitalism – “we are, in our days, the defenders of the capitalist world (...) the combatants for capitalism” (CIDC, 1955, t. II, p. 82) – not only presented themselves as the protectors of the rights that define Western civilisation (and that, in reality, ensured their pre-eminence as the ruling class), but claimed this responsibility of safeguarding as their moral reason for being. This conviction and this task had their counterpart in the consideration of the communists as representatives of an inferior culture. Communism, for them, meant descending to the level of beasts.

Indeed, they presented communism as the culmination of a progressive animalisation of man. They addressed this process with meticulous effort, marking its beginnings in the Renaissance, and more specifically in the philosophy of Descartes. According to these arguments, from that moment on, man had descended to animalism until the blossoming of the French Revolution. Finally, at the point of greatest decline and least cultural density, communism had emerged in the name of social justice (CIDC, 1955, t. II, p. 44). This degradation of the communist (as a species and as a social condition), positioned beneath the human condition of the Western and Christian man, enables us to understand how and why they fought on imaginary battlefields (but with real flesh-and-blood victims) against a mythical entity: communist-inspired subversion.

The speakers coincided in the belief that the communists not only professed a satanic and amoral ideology but were dedicated to the “degrading task of subverting the social order, an order that is based on the pure principles of Christian morality” (CIDC, 1955, t. II, p. 71). Of course, this was, in their view, the biggest problem posed by communism; preventing or avoiding it was their mission. This perceived sense of mission was so strong that during the first

motion to establish the IACCD, they proposed calling it the Anti-Communist Crusade. But, though it was an important part of their identity, they saw crusading for anti-communism as only one aspect of their most important task: the defence of Western civilisation and its link with Christianity.

The Plan of Operations of Communism in Latin America¹⁰ clearly outlined the role of the IACCD as agent and factor in an active policy to combat communism. It was a very meticulous and detailed diagnosis of communist methods to subvert order, and an argument to delegitimise any social or political demands. Furthermore, the considerations raised in this document made it dangerously undemocratic; it considered all measures that could counteract infiltration and subversion to be appropriate, even if they “upset the normal game of democracy” (CIDC, 1955, t. V, p. 11). Finally, the Plan was surprising for the directness with which the authors referred to the subaltern classes; there was no circumlocution in referring to them, nor in referring to the privileged place that they themselves occupied. It was they who were in a position to “explain to these misled people what communism really means” (CIDC, 1955, t. V, p. 62). This mistaken understanding was effectively upheld by ‘the poor who have the deepest insecurities against society, because of their misery, because of their poverty; they ignore the foundations and consequences of the communist cause they defend’ (CIDC, 1955, t. V, p. 66). Obviously, this idea, anchored in denying the subaltern classes their autonomy, was related to the role the authors felt called to fulfil and the measures they deemed necessary: promote nationalist doctrines, of Christian nationalism, to defend homeland, religion and family (CIDC, 1955, t. V, p. 42).

Along the same lines as what we have been analysing – the conflicts between democratic principles and the means to combat communism – were a series of measures called actions to strengthen democratic institutions. These, as the talks on this topic argued, were intended to ensure the full validity of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It goes without saying that the flagrant

¹⁰This report presented to Congress was intended to serve as a manual that would standardise explanations about communism and contribute to the task of dissemination, to ‘illustrate to the peoples how absurd communist ideology is in theory and nefarious in practice’ (CIDC, 1955, vol. V).

lack of democracy in fifteen of the twenty Latin American countries, which were ruled by dictatorships or “special case” governments, was not a matter of concern. On the contrary, these regimes, far removed from democracy and its channels of institutional participation, were not considered a problem, nor were they condemned. In fact, if such regimes were committed to fighting communism, the IACCD participants were in favour of collaborating with them (CIDC, 1955, t. V, p. 75).

Thus, the IACCD approved the ‘Instructions for the delegates to the Second Congress Against Soviet Intervention in Latin America to assist their governments’, for the purposes of

rousing governments and parliamentarians, universities, professional colleges and academies, workers’ unions and employers’ unions, so that, according to their respective spheres of influence, they may soon proceed to legally organise national institutions in such a way that the constitutional and legal sphere will be closed to communism, in all its orders (CIDC, 1955, t. II, p. 92).

The objective was to encourage the use of coercive methods, police measures and military intimidation. What was the purpose of these measures, in an organisation that claimed to be convinced of the value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

The euphoria and enthusiasm with which the group experienced the establishment of the Guatemalan dictatorship and its determined action to end Marxism had its counterpart at the Bandung Conference (1955). They interpreted the latter as the beginning of a siege manoeuvre on the West, whose purpose was none other than to destroy the Christian family, the homeland, nationality and private property. Their interpretation and their proposals increased tension in social relations; they claimed to be in a “struggle to which we must all dedicate ourselves, with the sacrifice of our own lives, if necessary” (CIDC, 1955, t. I, p. 22). The shift that this implied was extremely serious. They were talking about killing or dying, transferring the situation to the battlegrounds of war; this was not a metaphorical use of the expression.

Third Congress Against Soviet Intervention in Latin America (10-14 April 1957, Lima)

Their hard-line stance, which unceremoniously rejected any diversity or divergent thinking as threats within their rigid framework, would gradually increase. The terms of the call to the Third Congress testify to this: “At the present time, the civilised world is the target of one of the most atrocious threats that have weighed on its existence, since a struggle is being posed which may result in the extermination of the basic principles of Christian Civilisation” (CIDC, 1957, t. I, p. 18).

In this new call to congress, which represented another step toward their objectives, the political logic was presented as a fight to the death, and the political struggle as a fight of extermination, where the supporters of an ideology (in this case Marxism) were considered enemies, for whom only their extermination was contemplated. On the other hand, the idea of a single and true civilisation – Christian civilisation – with the exclusive right to exist was taking shape. Nonetheless, the congress still revealed an apparent pessimism that can be understood through the question they posed: “Why have the subversive teachings been successful?” (CIDC, 1957, t. I, p. 23).

The answer, which was systematically collected in the talks and sessions, could not have been weaker: due to poverty and hunger (CIDC, 1957, t. I, p. 33). However, the answer was not as elementary as it seems. In reality, it was part of the contempt and condescension with which they positioned themselves before the subaltern classes, and which, in turn, was not without religious connotation. Both issues were intertwined in a statement they made, not without concern: democracy was far from being a reality on the continent.

This concern did not stem from the existence of dictatorial regimes, but from their belief that democracy had enabled or could enable the have-nots to rise to power (CIDC, 1957, t. III, p. 29). Stopping communist expansion and reversing the advances of mass democracy were almost synonymous when placed in the perspective of these concerns. For them, communism was not the only problem; mass democracy represented a real obstacle to reaching their

goals, which were: “to unite capital with labour; practise Christian social justice; eliminate hateful prejudices of fortune, race and creed” (CIDC, 1957, t. III, p. 45).

In an odd portrayal, through which they outlined the classification of communists, they established the ways to rectify what they understood to be errors of democracy. They said there were three types of communists:

The poor communists, who know nothing about communism, who, ignorant and long-suffering, living at a low standard, accept the false and treacherous promises of the Soviet agents. They are worthy of pity; it is necessary to enlighten their brains, help them and cure them. The bourgeoisie and the pseudo-Marxist intellectuals; many of them are simply opportunists, or broken, failed people. They are very harmful people, these imbeciles; by virtue of having a certain social category, they are seen as examples by the unhappy of the first group. Lastly, the communist agents are people of the worst kind, incurable. Communists belonging to the first category are perfectly curable, through persuasion and clarification. But clarification will not be enough in order to cure. It will also be unquestionable to take measures of a constructive, democratic and Christian nature. Communism finds a favourable environment in poverty, in misery, in social injustices. With the attenuation of misery, communism will disappear (CIDC, 1957, t. III, p. 51).

Evidently, they considered the subaltern classes inferior and believed it was their duty to educate and save them. At the same time, the communists of the second and third group were beyond saving, and thus became criminals, delinquents and, consequently, punishable. Thus, they believed that Christian social justice allowed them to work on the first group, while for the others, the only options were repression and punishment.

Practicing the Social Doctrine of the Church carried the virtue of softening the conditions of exploitation without substantially altering the class order. But their decision was not limited to eliminating “the hatred caused by social inequalities” (CIDC, 1957, t. III, p. 64); they were launching a genuine restoration of Christian order. As the delegate for Colombia stated, “America is only America because of the cultural heritage of Rome, through Spain” (CIDC, 1957, t. I, p. 65); that is, they proposed a return to centuries-old roots, a thorough revision of the guidelines for the political organisation of their societies. This religious counterattack would be accompanied by an economic programme, based on the

neoclassical economic version of the integration of the Latin American economies into the international market: “How to raise the standard of living in Latin American countries and immunise them against the communist virus” (CIDC, 1957, t. III, p. 89). It was a framework opposed to industrialisation and a restructuring of dependent capitalism toward a new kind of highly diversified primary export model.

Undoubtedly, the IACCD proposals produced and reproduced cultural and economic relations that were dependent, on the one hand, on old colonial ties with Spain and, on the other, on the more recent alignment with the United States. The latter was expressed in a staunch defence of that country: “to assume with courage, with dignity, with firmness, in ideas, in actions and in words, the defence of the United States: the great bulwark of democracy” (CIDC, 1957, t. I, p. 69). This itself was quite difficult, since after the North American intervention in Venezuela in 1904, North American foreign policy towards the countries of Latin America – the Roosevelt Corollary or “Big Stick” diplomacy – generated significant opposition movements.

Anti-imperialism was not unknown to the members of the IACCD. During the first congress, they themselves had faced a demonstration denouncing them as “puppets of Yankee imperialism” (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. I, p. 22). However, they considered such protests not only uncalled for but false, because the alleged US imperialism was but a transformation of anti-American sentiment – which, in part, they proposed to overcome through the Declaration of Lima, incorporating the US and Canadian delegations into the IACCD.

The aforementioned Declaration integrated the following postulates into the Declaration of Anti-Communist Principles, approved in the First Congress: Defence of authentic freedom as a norm of social coexistence, and of effective democracy as a system of government; Respect for the rights of man; Affirmation and defence of our traditions, nationality, institutions and concept of Homeland; Constant struggle against communist totalitarianism because of what state capitalism means; Advocating for freedom of education; Substitution of the Class Struggle, which is permanent civil war, with Class Cooperation, which is social peace and national unity (CIDC, 1957, t. IV, p. 11).

Fourth Continental Anti-Communist Congress (12-16 October 1958, Guatemala)

By 1958, repression and institutional violence were so widespread that the Archbishop of Guatemala, Rossell Arellano, said the following at the inauguration of the Fourth Congress:

I have not come to speak with the anti-communists who believe that communism is defeated with bayonets and gunfire, nor with those who believe that being an anti-communist is to exploit the workers and farmers, nor with the employers who reduce the salaries of workers and take away their social rights in the name of anti-communism (...) I have come to speak with the only authentic fighters against communism: the Christians (CIDC, 1958, t. I, p. 23).

The archbishop, who had actively participated in support of Castillo Armas's coup, now distanced himself from his successor, Ydígoras Fuentes. While on the one hand, the archbishop marked a watershed in Guatemalan politics, on the other, he was clearly calling attention to the onslaught that was taking place in almost the entire continent. Investigation commissions against communists were unleashing real persecutory state violence (to mention just three cases: Guatemala with the National Defence Committee against Communism; Paraguay with the Office of Technical Affairs; Argentina with the Ministry of State Information). The archbishop's position was clear; it was not a defence of communists but a criticism of the methods applied against them, as well as the conditions of exploitation. Interestingly, the criticism was directed at the governments carrying out the repression and the individuals profiting from the exploitation.

Even if these were not the words they expected to hear, no one dared to publicly disagree with the ecclesiastical dignitary. "I do not believe that any of you, absolutely no one believes, that Monsignor Rossell y Arellano is a socialist or a communist. He spoke precisely of the selfishness of capitalists and employers" (CIDC, 1958, t. I, p. 101). However, in subsequent talks, without denying the reality described by the archbishop, it was mentioned that the situation was necessary, because the nations, so they claimed, were defenceless in the face of acts of corrosion and infiltration. Under these circumstances, they continued to argue,

the police were overwhelmed and unable to repress such acts. To prevent what no legal order seemed to be able to prevent – communist infiltration – they highlighted, and in fact glorified, the role of the armed forces. They saw the armed forces as the reserve bastion of the state for the defence of civil society, both against external enemies and – in a phenomenon that would have dramatic future consequences – against internal ones: “Within each nation, groups of traitors are getting ready to enshroud, to subvert, to create hatred and clashes, to demoralise, to stab the country in the back” (CIDC, 1958, t. I, p. 47).

Vividly revealing the inordinate fear that supporters of social change (reformists, progressives, revolutionaries) would only continue to gain ground, this was one of the concerns that drove the process of constructing a negative otherness. All responsibility and blame for the countries’ troubles and adversity was attributed to the presence of communists; the proposed solution was to deprive them of their rights, expel them or exterminate them. This discriminatory thinking was based on the assumption that the seed of all evils was the penetration of Marxist ideas (let us not forget the question that was posed during the Third Congress).

From the IACCD, in the name of defending the institution of democracy, the supporters of alternative projects were identified as the protagonists of a dehumanisation process who had lost their status as human beings and should be eliminated. The anti-communism of the IACCD was likewise a proselytising enterprise, which they saw as a vocation of Christianisation, a saving crusade: “Communism fundamentally fights against God, denies His reality and His providence; therefore, it is just that in this Congress, we, the representatives of this Continent, turn to Him, who is, like us, persecuted by the enemies of truth, justice and true peace” (CIDC, 1958, t. I, p.62). This representation of communism – this understanding of it not only as opposition but in opposition – marked the peak of their discriminatory thinking. Indeed, from that moment until almost the end of the 20th century, the relationship that was established with communism was based on its lack of social recognition, except in its socially constructed and admitted role as aggressor.

This idea of the communist as aggressor, transformed into a premise, eliminated any chance of dialogue and insisted on the communist's elimination. In the history of this process, the IACCD contributed to the construction of an antagonistic consensus, incorporating traits and characteristics that defined the identity of the aggressor/dispensable group, until it spread a common assumption that subversion was something to be neutralised. One of the spaces that they prioritised for this purpose was the educational field; they considered it an enclave not only of ideological control but also of struggle, because they believed that Marxism had infiltrated that territory more than anywhere else. For the Fourth Congress, they organised the working group 'Communist infiltration in the educational field in Latin America', which by far surpassed any other commission in terms of papers received, as well as in regarding resolutions presented to the plenary session of the congress.

After analysing the situation in each country on a case-by-case basis, the ruling committee of this working group presented a comprehensive and detailed report, preceded by a no less detailed introductory text. The latter stated that the commission's proposals were intended to correct and rectify the deformations suffered by the people, in their concepts and political habits, due to the influence of mass democracy (CIDC, 1958, t. III, p. 128).

The first proposal, practical in nature, was to collaborate with the Church in the field of teaching. This cooperation ranged from the reestablishment of catechism in schools to actively participating in Catholic movements that demanded freedom of education in cases of confrontation with the secular system. Regarding the latter, they took up the recent case of Argentina, where they had actively collaborated with the pro-freedom education movement.

However, this proposal to go against educational secularism raised the objections of the delegations of Uruguay and Guatemala, including the Guatemalan Minister of Education, who was present at the congress (CIDC, 1958, t. III, 150). Nevertheless, due to the subsequent actions of the members of the IACCD in the Pedagogical Congresses and in the relevant ministries, the controversy seems to have benefitted those who were committed to freedom of education.

Another of their proposals was what they called preventive education, and it aimed to “resolve the disorder caused by Marxism, exaggerated liberal individualism, and rationalism, which have distorted the true nature of life, giving primacy to matter over spirit, altering customs” (CIDC, 1958, t. III, p. 74). Clearly evident in the proposal was the intellectual rigidity behind the criticism of liberal democracy, atheistic liberalism and rejection of Marxism and communism, as well as the attack on sources of critical knowledge. This criticism also blamed disorder and social crisis on the abandonment of supposedly traditional values of national identity, dating to the Spanish Catholicism of the religious Counter-Reformation (16th and 17th centuries). In this way, the development of national being was linked to Catholicism, which they believed had been misrepresented by secular education.

They believed that preventive education would enable advancements in disciplining the subaltern classes, put an end to “unequivocal subversive manifestations” and re-establish the principle of authority (CIDC, 1958, t. III, p. 66). The objective was to mould the sensibilities of future generations in opposition to communism and to lay the foundations of a Hispanic-Catholic society and culture.

This educational project was firstly aimed at imposing discipline that would destroy all ties of collective identification, in the interest of isolated individuality. Secondly, it aspired to introduce spiritualistic socialisation patterns to the detriment of scientific education. But above all, it aimed at order: the re-establishment of hierarchy and class conciliation. In this way, by denying the class struggle, a harmonious relationship would be built between workers and employers, ultimately preventing the revolution that could bring chaos and contempt for religion (CIDC, 1958, t. III, p. 132).

Conclusion

As the reader may have noticed, and due to the lack of previous research available to provide a consolidated starting point, the first pages of this article are clearly descriptive. Our intention was to give an account of the journey, even if superficially, of the conditions surrounding the emergence of the IACCD, its

members, its congresses, its contacts, its support and endorsements, and its objectives, until the subsequent formation of the World Anti-Communist League and the creation of the Latin American Anti-Communist Confederation. These first sections allowed us to point out the changes in anti-communist policies and the eliminationist quality with which they were imbued.

In this sense, the IACCD systematically advocated for institutional violence against communists which, as we mentioned, had been preceded by the Truman Doctrine. However, in the latter, American interests had prevailed. In contrast, the offensive led by the IACCD, while protecting the interests of the United States, was above all counterrevolutionary. When the members of the IACCD explained their reasons for fighting communism, they did so by appealing to the attainment of a new political order – not of change, but of reaction. They considered the Catholic religion and the Church as their guide, and all warfare and violence as just measures to fulfil their mission: the defence of Western and Christian society, as a synthesis of capitalist democracy. Indeed, the discourse that defined and identified them is traversed by the notions of threat, danger and defence. The constant denunciation of communism as a subversive force sowing chaos and destabilising order through infiltration is articulated in a defensive rhetoric. This rhetoric focused on self-defence against a terrifying enemy: communism. To paraphrase Sartre (1948) regarding antisemitism: if the communist did not exist, the anti-communist would have invented him. Chomsky seems to suggest something similar (2000, p. 32-33): “There’s always an ideological offensive that builds up a chimerical monster, then campaigns to have it crushed.”

Chomsky’s quote allows us to reflect on the IACCD as a discursive community, as well as the performative capacity of these discourses that denied the humanity of the communists – or of anyone they considered as such, and who would be, in the future, destroyed. In other words, for a group to be eliminated, it is necessary to define it beforehand, and that definition must be in terms of dehumanisation. Not only must they be considered undesirable and lacking the qualities to belong to the national community; they must also be deprived of human qualities. Potential victims must be de-subjectivised through the inferior consideration of their status of being, thinking and acting – expelling

them towards inhumanity, and objectifying them. The history of this antagonistic consensus was part of the objective of implementing a new discipline, with the result that any person who rejected it could be considered dangerous, not only for the mission itself, but for the entire nation, giving shape to the idea of the enemy within.

In relation to the above, we find the functions that they believed they were called to fulfil, their commitment to assume an active role as civil custodians in the fundamental task of the state: promoting the common good. This common good was intimately linked to a conception of the state as part of an organic whole that responded to a moral order instituted by God. Their mission was to defend the nation against any attempt to undermine the natural moral order; thus, through an essentialist worldview, they stood as guardians of national being.

They believed that their anti-communism had to have real content, meaning an establishment of the affirmative principles that identified them: a manifestation of their determination. In this regard, the delegates turned to their common Christian and Spanish heritage, declaring that “exotic doctrines”, to use the words of the Costa Rican delegate Rafael Cardona, “had neither roots nor future in this hemisphere” (COMITÉ ORGANIZADOR, 1954, t. I, p. 23). In fact, it is then that their proposals began to take on meaning – when placed at the epicentre of their articulations of the differences between Christians and communists, the latter always identified with inferiorities. This would have the effect of denying all the indicated individuals and groups their permanence in society. In this way, the foundations of any society that presumed to be democratic were shattered.

However, their detachment from the institutions of mass democracy presented no obstacles to proclaiming themselves supporters of functional and humanist democracy, of authentic freedom; that is, of *their* democracy, which specified a rational opposition to social democracy, ideologically based on class cooperation. Democracy, for them, made sense as a way to construct a new state, situated in the mediation of the conflict between the liberal democratic state and the means to combat communism. Hence, the significance in their proposals of ending educational secularism, highlighted by the diagnosis they

made regarding infiltration in the educational field. Their educational proposal, which outlined a new social order in open rupture with the framework of mass democracy, became effective in the launch of war against Marxism. It was a conflict with no room for intermediate positions, where the only resolution was annihilation: either that of the self, faced with the advance of an ideology (in this case Marxism), or that of the enemy, for which only their extermination was contemplated.

Anti-communism became the solution to all problems: poverty, marginalisation, exclusion, class struggle. It was claimed to represent the common interest, and to be above democracy. Anti-communist doctrines undoubtedly existed before the IACCD, but they had no repercussions on the continent. The IACCD gave them shape and substance, and it spread them.

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