

Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

TFP moves to stir up rural violence

The TFP and Moon cult are on the right, and Liberation Theology on the left, of a plot to block land reform in Brazil.

The Gnostic sect Tradition Family and Property (TFP), the armed branch of the Portuguese royal family Bragança e Orléans, in cahoots with the Catholic "liberationists" and the radicals of the Workers Party (PT), is on a war footing to conduct a dangerous right-left scenario to overturn President José Sarney's government. The goal is to torpedo his Agrarian Reform Plan, an effort to change the feudal agricultural structure of Brazil. The only interests that would be hit by this are the landholding families whose power is linked to the European oligarchy.

It turns out that those preparing this violent scenario are the same integralist-synarchist networks that backed Portuguese dictator Salazar in the 1930s and admired Benito Mussolini. Formed in their ranks was the man who later set up TFP, Plínio Correa de Oliveira; as well as liberation theologian Helder Camara, then an activist in the paramilitary Green-shirts, which attempted a coup against the government of Getulio Vargas, and today backs the proscribed Catholic liberation theologian, Leonardo Boff.

In mid-June, Sarney announced he would apply the 1964 Land Statute. Shivers went through the London banking community. The weekly *The Economist* on July 13 noted that when José Sarney talks about agrarian reform, "he means it."

The Plan proposes to gradually distribute 130 million hectares of now-idle land, based on an as-yet modest program of agricultural infrastructure.

To give an idea of what this means, Brazil has 850 million hectares; private rural property amounts to 567 million hectares, of which 409 million are big latifundias, and half produce nothing—except ground rent.

On May 29, the minister of Agrarian Reform, Néelson Ribeiro, anticipating the pressures which would come up against the Plan, said, "We have more than 1,000 cases of agrarian conflicts today, and they are getting more violent by the day. . . . What we want to do is a capitalist reform."

Pope John Paul II, in a commentary to Brazilian bishops, gave his blessing to the land redistribution by saying, "How is it possible that such a big country has land problems?"

On June 22, TFP published a big ad in the daily *Folha de São Paulo* stating that the Agrarian Reform is "communist" from "Moscow's *Pravda*." Since then, TFP's paramilitary groups have fanned out into the potential conflict zones, organizing against the Agrarian Reform and offering aid to the latifundists, who also have begun to arm. On June 16, the Federation of Farm Workers of Rio Grande do Sul charged that the big landowners in the state's north were buying arms to defend their property.

In Porto Alegre, a workers association said that TFP militants were passing out huge numbers of leaflets calling the Sarney government communist. A democratic parliamentarian, Algir Lorenzon, charged: "Before, they were merely arrogant with their medieval standards in the streets,

but today they clandestinely spend their time visiting landholders, asking for donations to agitate against the agrarian reform."

The pretext for the alleged communist threat against which TFP agitates is given by anarchist and provocative actions of radical groups such as the PT of labor leader Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. The actions carry the blessing of the liberation theologians led by Leonardo Boff and his mentors, Helder Camara and Cardinal Evaristo Arns, who is unruffled by the fact that his priests celebrate mass in TFP chapels.

As part of these provocations, on Aug. 6, the rural affairs secretary of the CUT (Unified Center of Workers), José Gómez Novaes, stated that Center is roundly opposed to the Agrarian Reform, and instead pushes land invasions; he added that the Center is making a map of the lands to be targeted for such actions.

The oligarchical project which the TFP serves, was well expressed by Pedro de Bragança, pretender to the throne of the non-existent Brazilian empire. On June 27 he told the daily *O Globo* he will come back to Brazil in November to take part in the mayoral elections, and added, I "would like" Brazil's new Constitution "to be monarchist."

TFP already has plans for intense political activity at the coming Constituent Assembly. It is even weaving alliances. On July 7 Causa Internacional, the Reverend Moon cult, held an international conference in São Paulo. Moon is considering moving his headquarters there. After the meeting, there were discussions to seal a TFP-Moon alliance that would elect its own men to the Constituent Assembly. The Moonies are also seeking support from top military figures; Prof. Jorge Boaventura of the Superior War College is among their sympathizers.