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Two types of liberalism in the National Democratic Union (UDN): Afonso Arinos and Lacerda between consensus and conflict

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Abstract:

Udenistic liberalism did not limit itself to the scope of Parliament or Executive proceedings, but rather helped construct a broad spectrum of reflections about Brazil. In this manner, it is possible to refer to different types of udenism as specific veins in Brazil's liberal tradition. This article seeks to establish some distinctions within this tradition, focusing on the discussion of two particular veins, each of which is deeply identified with two great personalities of the time: Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco and Carlos Lacerda. These veins are differentiated mainly by two points: how conflict is perceived and the role attributed to the elite in political dispute. In this manner, there is pedagogical udenism, which views conflict in a negative light and assigns a mediating role to the elite. This is the viewpoint represented by Afonso Arinos. Conflictive udenism, on the other hand, involves the elite in political struggles and considers confrontation with the enemy to be the essence of political dispute. This is the viewpoint championed by Carlos Lacerda.

Keywords

UDN, liberalism, Afonso Arinos, Carlos Lacerda.

“There are two types of movement in politics: one of which we are part of even though we presume to be immobile, much like the movement of the Earth which goes unfelt; and the other that we ourselves set forth. In politics, few are aware of the first. However, it is perhaps the only one that is not a mere agitation.
(Nabuco, 1999, ch. XV)¹

Introduction

The UDN's (National Democratic Union – UDN) celebrated liberalism did not limit itself to parliamentary or executive proceedings, but rather helped construct a broad spectrum of reflections about Brazil. Besides being the main opposition party of the period between 1946-1964, the UDN was the main champion of liberal ideas of its time,² thus conjoining political practice with the country's fertile liberal ideas. Thus, in this manner, we can speak of the existence of specific types of *udenism*,³ as veins of Brazilian liberalism defined by the complex interaction between political practice and reflection.

We must highlight, however, that *udenism* is not synonymous with the UDN, despite the deep bond between the party and the mode of liberal expression mentioned earlier. Not only does *udenism* extend beyond the party's formal bodies, it is also present in other parties. It is not a partisan doctrine, but rather a specific group of political beliefs and practices that strongly defined the UDN's and other parties' mode of action and intellectual production.

Udenism is structured upon many different points of view and perspectives and not on a sole and completely coherent ideology, as if deductively based on general premises. It contains several different strains and distinctions that run through its relationship with political reflection and practice, if we consider that ambiguity is one of its core modes of action. Such ambiguity relates to political pragmatism, but also surges from the search for protagonism in a political sphere strategically dominated by adversaries. In this manner, therefore, this article seeks to establish some internal distinctions within these ideas, starting with the delimitation of two forms of *udenism*.

The criteria for delimitating what differentiates them are based on two points: how conflict is perceived and the role attributed to the elite in political dispute. There is, in this manner, a type of *udenism* that I shall denominate *pedagogical*, which views conflict in a negative light and assigns the elite, above all, with the role of mediating it. Its biggest representative is Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco. Another form of *udenism* is *conflictive*,

and it involves the elite in political struggle and considers confrontation with the enemy as essential to political dispute. Carlos Lacerda stands out as its main representative. By comparing and contrasting these two forms of udenism, we intend to shed some light on the existing liberal interpretations in Brazil in the period of 1946-1964.

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Some notes about udenism

Besides delimitating a doctrine, the term *udenism* identifies some of the directives that run through the discourse of the UDN. Although self-representation and documents – such as programs and manifestos – used to proclaim a party's ideology are without a doubt fundamental to better understanding what a party stands for, they are insufficient to cover its complexity. The distinction between political theory and practice is, in fact, greatly unreasonable. If we consider that discourse and practice are inseparable in politics, pronouncements are, at times, more relevant than alleged “concrete political action,” such as the proposal and approval of laws. Beliefs, representations and myths are all constitutive of the political phenomenon.

A discourse analysis of *udenism* becomes even more relevant when we consider the ample intellectual production of some of its members, who were constantly concerned with coming up with public justifications and reflections about their partisan acts. This characteristic derives from the intellectualized composition of the party, which was highly representative of the intellectual milieu of the time.⁴ Also due to this profile, the party's intellectuals always sought to include the UDN in the history of Brazilian political thought, portraying it as an updated version of a liberal tradition that dated back to Teófilo Otoni. The party's concern with attributing greater meaning to any act and inserting its conduct into a specific line of thought is self-evident. What is most relevant, however, is that *udenism* is not to be confused with the UDN. Udenism springs from the UDN and, through the party, emerges as an identifiable ideology. Notwithstanding, its ramifications most certainly surpass the originator. Maria Victoria Benevides highlights the following:

Udenism is understood as an ensemble of 'ideologies' and political practices that could indeed reach beyond the institutional limits of the UDN (the political party), but is associated with it by public recognition and by a mutual symbolic feedback circuit. (Benevides, 1981: 147)

The UDN's political practices are just as relevant for understanding it as are its theoretical formulations, for *udenism* is more than a doctrine – it is a mode of political action and can eventually defend contradictory positions in terms of content, however remaining coherent in terms of the way they are put to use. Its flexible nature allows one to act not only in the nationalist field of the Oil Campaign (*Campanha do Petróleo*, in Portuguese) by criticizing Getúlio Vargas's project, but also in defense of foreign capital, against the much contended idea of profit remittance. At times, practice can mold ideologies, transmuting their apparent meaning. Ambiguity is more than an occasional consequence of ideology; *ambiguity* is the very core of ideology. This ambiguity does not refer to eventual ideological infidelities with regard to the electoral process, or to the ethics of responsibility that undoubtedly define political vocation.⁵ Beyond exploiting ideology, the ambiguity inherent to *udenism* portrays a certain degree of uneasiness between political agents and the reality in which they are immersed. The distance between what “should be” and an ontology that inevitably returns, many times personified through figures such as Vargas, is what conditions all of *udenism's* political practice.

On numerous occasions, the party's central figures acknowledge the UDN's multiplicity. This is greatly due to its creation as an anti-Vargas front, making it as imprecise as anything that constitutes itself through negation.⁶ However, the distinction between the party and the ideology allows us to affirm that certain currents within the UDN, such as *Bossa Nova*, are more removed from *udenistic* practice than actors who are not institutionally inserted in the party, as is the case of Raul Pilla's Liberation Party (*Partido Libertador*, in Portuguese).

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Nonetheless, there are distinctions within the party regarding different types of public performance of *udenistic* agents. The divergences between groups, however, were not limited to what theses they stood up for (although without a doubt these are of importance), but were due to their styles of action, how they understood political dynamics and how one must act. This point helps us understand *udenism*: besides a doctrine, it is a way of proceeding. Filiations are not always important, or at least are not as important as how they are used. As Maria Victoria Benevides points out:

The differences between these groups inside the UDN were more diffuse and in a certain way unrelated to practical issues — such as positions regarding economic or social politics, for example — in terms of the characteristics of their 'style', or in other words, the characteristics that best identified traditional 'udenism'. We have already discussed the hypothesis of the UDN as a 'party of the middle classes.' Also, we must remember that there was another manner of identifying the UDN — as the 'party of the remarkable,' as opposed to a party of the 'masses.'⁷ (Benevides, 1981)

However, based on the distinction between party and ideology, we can safely point out some characteristics inherent to *udenism*, lending it some unity, even with the existence of several UDN's. Elitism, moralism, a law-enforcing view of politics, bachelorism, and coupism are all present, to different degrees, in the discourse of *udenism's* several representatives. Notwithstanding its obvious inspiration by Brazilian liberal tradition, *udenism* brings together new issues and discards other more classic ones, producing an ideology different from that of the most celebrated branches of Brazilian social thought.

The combination of liberal and anti-liberal references, *udenism's* main feature, does not imply in a certain kind of theoretical imprecision or infidelity to liberalism. To speak of "liberalisms" is certainly more accurate, given that there are several points of view within the doctrine mentioned earlier. Ambiguity rises from the standards of the liberal paradigm, always marked by conundrums that have yet to be solved. Liberalism, similarly to other ideologies, suffers from contradictions between discourse and reality. Brazilian reality makes liberal ambiguities explicit in a much more intensely than in central nations,⁸ for the gap between its material and historical conditions of development expose the intricacies of liberal praxis.

Udensitic discourse emphasizes the illegitimacy of the institutions in place and the corrupt representation, in clear continuity of the First Republic's brand of liberalism championed by Rui Barbosa and Assis Brasil, among others. Another possible similarity between the two historical periods is in the references made to the quality of public figures, a discussion which is also found in *udenistic* moralism. There were many similarities, as Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos well points out:

After Vargas's fall in 1945, politicians that considered themselves liberals all joined together under the flag of the UDN — National Democratic Union — whose practical program implied that any liberal government, whether economically or politically, must erase all traces of the

policies supported by Vargas (...) The liberal doctrinaire's political and economical agenda did not differ that greatly from the liberal agenda before 1930, nor had the problems changed all that drastically (...) In other words, the fundamental cause of social and economical problems remained the same, that is to say, privileges conceded to corrupt politicians by a system rooted in a past of authoritarianism, corruption and illegality. (Santos, 1998: 40)

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Notwithstanding, something did change after 1945, a transformation that can be attributed not only to the profile of the “new liberals,” but also to the transformation of the context in which they found themselves. The pathways to transform Brazilian reality surged before their eyes in ways that until then had been rare. Instrumental authoritarianism began making itself present in liberal vocabulary. It was understood as a necessary remedy for overcoming the damage caused by Vargasism. The disastrous legacy left by the Estado Novo demanded stronger remedies than those offered by democratic institutions, corrupted by the “bunch of varguists” that took over the Brazilian State. The purity of liberalist premises, created in reference to non-pathological social formations, was incongruent with the political scenario being formed at the time. As Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos well highlights:

Only one change took place in liberal thought and action after 1945, but it was not congruent with the premises of liberalism. Being the doctrinaires that they were, the liberals before 1930 held on most firmly to ideology. Consequently, they demanded and proposed reforms, but wanted them to be executed by liberal means. On the other hand, the liberals after 1945 held different opinions on how to ascend to power. (...) Since the system was lacking in legitimacy, it was perfectly correct and within pure liberal tradition to try and take it down even by violent means, if necessary. (...) This convenient syllogism transformed the UDN, a liberal party in terms of its social and economical perspective and its rhetoric, into the most subversive party of the Brazilian political system from 1945 to 1964. (Santos, 1998: 40).

The specificities of the Brazilian political scenario complicate the schematic simplicity of dichotomies. While Oliveira Vianna, the most influential of iberist personalities, compromises modernization in order to execute tradition,⁹ the UDN – the main liberal agent of 1946-1964 – resorts to the archaic in order to achieve modernization. The limits of Americanism and its approximations to the world it proclaimed to fight against are revealed.

Incapable of constructing a lexicon for the new world of mass democracy that was rising at the time, liberals find themselves obligated to resort to the authoritarian remedies they so criticized. Instrumental authoritarianism, justified by the circumstances, exposed the limits of udenistic liberalism.

The much divulged udenistic coupism derives from the repercussions of this instrumental authoritarianism, which gains intensity the further away one is from power. Nonetheless, more than an efficient form of maintaining power, its eclecticism of means contributes to the udenistic incapacity of remaining in it. Whether with Café Filho, Jânio or Castelo Branco, whether conquered backstage or by the ballot, the UDN's time in power was always fleeting. The commitments imposed by their rhetoric, as small as they may have been, made it difficult for them to overcome such difficulties. Linking State to corruption, as well as criticizing the configuration of national political representation, impeded the party from naturally taking on the role of government. It rang strange when a partisan political group attempted to enter into the very institutional archetypes in force, institutions that they had criticized and allegedly were against.

The ascension of a revolutionary discourse that defended a radical change of order was also incompatible with the national elite's preference for white change,¹⁰ the only kind capable of keeping the masses at a safe distance. The UDN drifted between the complete acceptance of democratic institutions and the fear of owning up to their disagreement with the rules of the democratic game, incapable of putting together a feasible plan of power. Maria Victoria Benevides explains:

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Due to this evident ideological uncertainty – the shame of being ostensibly authoritarian and the fear of being entirely democratic – the UDN always loses whatever power it gains. This also means that the UDN's political unrealism possesses, in its core, the belief that an authoritarian regime will be temporary and necessary for obtaining democracy. In other words, the UDN of the liberals would end up defending State intervention in order to "save democracy without falling into fascism or communism." (Benevides, 1981: 134)

Indeed, this impasse was not due solely to the occasional strategic mistakes of udenistic actors. The limitations that Brazilian reality then imposed upon the liberals were responsible for the mismanagement of these ideals. Their analysis of the means to power was flawless: an alliance with Vargas, the industrial bourgeoisie and the proletariat would, in fact, not lose in the ballots. The liberal lineage, represented by udenism, found a means towards hegemony by structuring an opposition to the project that emerged victorious from the Revolution of 1930, something that, at the time, was unattainable.

One can only understand the party's progressive march towards instrumental authoritarianism by means of the anti-Varguism that characterized the UDN. In a sense, this march portrays Vargas's transformation from a dictator intensely supported by the industrial bourgeoisie and the Army to a president trusted by the masses. Not that his popularity had been low between 1930 and 1945, but it was only as elected president that Getúlio began to associate the government's legitimacy with the approval of the people. Aware of his unpopularity among a major portion of the economical elites, the media and many sectors of the Army, Getúlio saw in the lower classes the only form of resisting the attacks coming from the opposition.¹¹ In order to achieve this drastic change, Vargas makes use of a series of measures aimed towards improving work and salary conditions, as well as a discourse more directed towards the lower classes. If the majority of social policies and creation of rights originates in the period of the *Estado Novo*, only now is it clear what side Getúlio has chosen. Therefore, by means of a guaranteed cohesion through anti-Varguism, the UDN marches towards the role of conservative opposition, since competing with Vargas for the popular vote proved to be more and more difficult.

João Almino asserts:

Two years later, while addressing Congress, Vargas will say that his fall was not due to the problem of democracy, but to the nation's current conjuncture. In fact, Vargas was right. Not because this conjunction created the basic conflict leading to his fall; but because indirectly, it was from this configuration, with the passing of the "Malaia Law" and the discussions that followed it, that Vargas's new political re-articulation came about. By bringing the working class to the active scene, he frightened all those who had proposed the opening of the regime – the *liberals identified with the bourgeoisie, who wished to bring about democratization through the top and without popular participation*. (Almino, 1980: 64, emphasis added).

Vargas's choice also should not be understood as an example of ideological purity. He attempted an approximation to the opposition, including the UDN, like when they defined

the candidate based on a cross-party agreement, in 1949.¹² Only after realizing that it would be impossible to achieve an elite composition, in line with the model of 1930, did an alliance with the lower classes appear to Vargas as a primordial option.

All that the liberals had left was to set up an opposition more strongly based on ideology, and not concern themselves with the immediate rise to power. This project was summarily defeated by the party with its decision to support Dutra's administration in 1946, conducted by Otávio Mangabeira's¹³ group at the expense of Virgílio de Melo Franco's¹⁴ partisans. A more pragmatic cut-off point was put in force in the party, with Virgílio removing himself from the position of Secretary-General and riding off into the sunset with the idea of a liberal programmatic opposition.¹⁵

The Brazilian anomaly as seen through the eyes of udenists led them to opt for different means closer to authoritarian tradition. In order for them to act freely, they needed to rid themselves of the State, and such a process would not arise from political practice, from the custom of self-governance. Instead, it would arise from the immediate change of the powers at be. The self-proclaimed "luzias" of the UDN, the party that revived Teófilo Otoni and April 7th, conceived Brazil much in the fashion of the "saquarema" politics of the 1840's. They considered authoritarianism to be a step towards actualizing liberalism. The scenario idealized by udenism was now in place. Vargas and Varguism represented the obstacle to liberal order as a means and an end. The only way to achieve modernization was to remove them by force. As shown by the reigning disorder, the rulers were not being fully followed.

Udenism, a trend within Brazilian liberalism, was an ideology that constantly defied order and therefore was perceived as illegitimate. This inclination was due to the masses' inaptitude for direct suffrage, which led them to choose the least adequate candidates for government office instead of those who, by tradition and character, were naturally focused on the exercise of power — the udenists. When facing an illegitimate government, all actions designed to take it down and destabilize it can be considered legitimate. The superiority of the traditional elites allowed them to discern the deviations practiced by the people, who could not see such deviations due to their inherent myopia.

The entire dispute arose from the value given to reality, derived from how one conceived order as delineated by the ideologies mentioned earlier. The law-enforcing view of political dynamics, understood as an effective way of setting the political players in order, was present in both groups.¹⁶ The problem lied in what type of order should be in force and how political interaction could better be determined.

The reigning anarchy so alluded to in udenistic discourse did not arise from the absence of police order in Brazilian society, but simply from the enforcement of another order, different from that which they intended. The disorder they condemned was nothing more than another previously existent order — that left by Vargas. This arrangement had already been convenient in the tumultuous 1930s, but now, due to the excessive participation of the lower classes, was no longer an acceptable solution.

Arinos and Lacerda: two styles of udenism

In general, broad, sweeping arguments make details go unnoticed, a necessary sin in order for the big picture not to get lost amidst the endless complexity of minutiae. However, it is not simple to reach the appropriate measure of generalization, since too much of it can harm the thesis under construction.

This intellectual exercise is relevant when delimitating a set of ideas or ideologies, be they liberalism, communism or udenism, since, ultimately, these delimitations reduce unique thinkers to labels. There are many different ways to perform this exercise and if they are concerned with intellectual complexity, they must constantly remind the reader that beyond the general categories being discussed, there is a universe of particularities. In order to discuss the category of udenism, framing it within the tradition of Brazilian political thought, this article reiterates the numerous particularities of each of its agents. Even though it might be obvious, it is still necessary to provide the reader with this reminder. We can certainly refer to “udenisms” – to different manifestations of this style of thought, in such a way that the thinkers to it associated can have distinct divergences and loyalties in relation to the characteristics of udenism (which have already been covered here) but can still be referenced back to it. Ideology is defined in such a way that it cannot be completely identified with any one of these personalities, but at the same time, it partially represents all of them. Udenism is a construction linked to the several discourses of its members, but separate from each one of them, since it captures what they have in common, the similarities – not the divergences. Two names emerge as extreme manifestations of this ideology: Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco and Carlos Lacerda.

A first distinction is in order. For Lacerda, politics is conceived only through practice, it is always connected to the performance of political actors. He does not seek at any time to act as a political theoretician, thinking about politics beyond its insertion in state-partisan dynamics. On the other hand, Afonso Arinos was one of the most relevant Brazilian political thinkers and he possessed a solid body of work on political history, political theory and constitutional law. This difference must never be forgotten when analysing each author’s political literature. It is fundamental when defining these two perspectives. On the other hand, however, we must not use this distinction as the ultimate cause for all other differences, for they supersede the mere distance of the author’s origins.

The opposition between Afonso Arinos’ more idealistic attitude and Lacerda’s pragmatism follows the same lines of the divergence mentioned earlier but is not restricted to it. They represent separate traditions and disparate modes of political action. Arinos comes from a traditional family of politicians from the state of Minas Gerais. His father, Afrânio de Melo Franco was a Vargas minister, and his grandfather, Cesário Alvim, president of a province during the Empire. All of his political life is anchored in this tradition, as is well demonstrated by the dedication he dispensed when writing a biography about his father in the style of Joaquim Nabuco.¹⁷ He comes from a tradition of baccalaureates,¹⁸ and therefore his insertion in politics emerged almost as if from family vocation. Fernando Lattman-Weltman points out:

In fact, in the memoir Arinos frequently puts forth the exterior and exteriorly imposed characteristic that his political career had – or used to have, or ended up having – for him. Descendent of a family tree overflowing with politicians, many a time Arinos referred to political practice as a type of burden or duty entrusted to him, like an inheritance from his forefathers and, more specifically, from his father. (Lattman-Weltman, 2005: 21)

Public life also characterized Lacerda’s family. His grandfather, Sebastião Lacerda, had been the minister of the Federal Supreme Court, and his father, Maurício de Lacerda, a representative, assemblyman, diplomat and political agitator. However, his family history did not condition him as in Arinos’ case. His political career was influenced by the context he lived in, but his past references and Brazilian political tradition do not act upon him in the same manner. The tradition of the Lacerda family was not built upon continuity, like

in the Melo Franco family, but through ruptures – be they of his father in relation to his grandfather, or that of Carlos himself before the leftist tradition of his father and uncles. After abandoning the baccalaureate, Lacerda gains notoriety because of his viciousness as a journalist in the “Correio da Manhã”, “Tribuna de Imprensa” and, posteriorly, in his own newspaper, “A Última Hora.”¹⁹

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In a certain way, Arinos and Lacerda synthesize two classical types within the UDN. Arinos is perhaps the greatest representative of the party’s historic liberals. He represented the rhetorical, genetic and intellectual prerequisites of the UDN’s distinguished wing, which was composed of the men that justified its title as the “party of the remarkable.”

In turn, Lacerda distanced himself from the pretentiousness of such figures. He was closer to pragmatism of Otávio Mangabeira, critical of the revolutionary “legalist” proclivities that characterized the baccalaureates.²⁰ Political performance was engulfed in aggressiveness, no beating around the bush or tergiversation. It resulted from the creation of a unique personal style of political expression. “*Lacerdismo*” emerges as an autonomous line of thought within the heart of the UDN, always supported by its social base in the Federal District and bound to the personal charisma of its leader.²¹

The gap between the two, however, was not due solely to their style of operation of rhetoric idiosyncrasies: the content of their ideas diverged as well. Although the main theses of *udenismo* can be found in both, elitism and moralism especially, their political objectives and how they conceived politics was different. It is very difficult to place Lacerda ideologically, for as we stated before, his ideas are constantly adjusting to practical obstacles. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Lacerda’s discourse and text take on stronger tones than those of mere instrumental authoritarianism. He did not restrict himself to the cleansing action of a regime of exception, a necessary step towards consolidating posterior democracy. There is an ideologically authoritarian aspect to Lacerda’s ideas, despite his liberal-democratic rhetoric. Democracy itself always seems to be submitted to a type of pedagogy cast in anti-liberal molds. Guita Grin Debert highlights: “Thus, in the moment when freedom appears as an almost natural birth right to all, democracy is seen as something that can only be attained by educating the population.” (Debert, 1979: 118) Tolerance makes for a virtuous ruler, but he must act as an arbitrator by distinguishing situations in which evil is fully present and effectively threatens national interests. The public man discerns precisely what is of national interest, going beyond the superficial conflicts of politics.

Defending democracy is just an indication and not evidence of the existence of egalitarian ideas, for notorious ideological authoritarians, such as Francisco Campos, also wished to construct a so-called democratic order. The issue at hand is: what democracy? If the answer involves state pedagogy and the intense involvement of a charismatic leader as an arbitrator – then authoritarian ideas are most definitely present.

The exception discourse makes itself manifest. In order for rules to be instituted, a state of normality is necessary. Since the law was created having in mind standard conditions, if these are destabilized, what stands is the exception, not the rule. One manifestation of this discourse was the opposition to the 1955 elections, a central argument to the *lacerdistas* of the time, always invecting against the existent institutions due to the subversions and misguidances caused by Vargas’s order. Faced with the corruption present all throughout public institutions, all the opposition had left was to refuse to recognize the system’s legitimacy. Lacerda’s own words illustrate this point precisely:

It was then that I began to defend the thesis that lent me the title of coupist and even that of fascist (...) I stated that not only was an electoral law reform necessary, but a profound reform of the country as well, and that these reforms, more than necessary, also held the advantage of giving Brazil some time to detoxify. The country had gone through several years of dictatorship, several years of demagogy and several years of personal propaganda of a myth. In my opinion, holding elections in the coming year just because they were scheduled was a terrible mistake that would lead a people traumatized by such drama to make a decision that they would not make in normal times. Therefore, far from a democratic act, this act was deeply totalitarian. It was the act of leading a people by force of a coercive emotion, and not reason, to make a decision against itself, a decision it would not make were it in condition to reason normally. (Lacerda, 1977: 147-148)

The masses are always characterized by instability and passion, incapable of choosing the most adequate paths towards their own interests. Without the enlightened, strong elites in power to conduct the people by means of their virtue and awareness, the evils of disorder will inevitably make themselves present. According to Lacerda, in a speech published in the *Correio da Manhã* newspaper:

... Nothing is more opposite to the truth and to the interest of the people than denying them the need and the value of an enlightened elite, capable of attending to Rousseau's recommendation: may the ignorant learn from the wise and the wise from the ignorant. For any progressive objective to be attained, the elite must feel in its thoughts the living and lucid presence of the people. This cliché must be made explicit, for so many intellectuals forget it and submit themselves to partisan action without considering the consequences of completely subordinating themselves to it, whatever it may be." ²² (Lacerda, 2000: 35)

Notwithstanding, the elite must not act by accommodating different interests, but by imposing that which is most appropriate. There is no room here for trying to arbitrate and appease different factions, as in the *varguista* way of governing. The State must impose modernization forcefully. According to Lacerda, the masses take on a role similar to that of Hobbes's *authors*, represented only formally by the *sovereign actor*, whose opinions are not imposed.²³ The people limit themselves to the ruler's "thought", to the interpretation given by him, with little heed to what they actually desire. Unaware of their own rights, it is good for the masses that their ruler should ignore them during critical moments and necessarily subvert their lawfully expressed will. For this reason, Lacerda never hesitated to fight against elected administrations, as he did on the eve of Juscelino and João Goulart's election, in 1955: "These men cannot take office, must not take office, will not take office." (Lacerda, 1955)

Arinos, on the other hand, held another point of view.²⁴ Since he supported the kind of conservative liberalism that did not stray from tradition, he did not come close to any trace of ideological authoritarianism. The best regime came from a synthesis of progress and tradition, order and movement, in the best conservative liberalism fashion from the time of the Empire. References made to personalities such as Bernardo Pereira de Vasconcelos and José Bonifácio demonstrate this connection. The author points out:

The idea that moderation is synonymous to indifference, abandon, skepticism or surrender is false, but it is present among the fanatical and those submitted to it. Nothing could be further from the truth. As a moderated partisan leader, many a time I've had to confront this erroneous assumption. In fact, rational moderation does not exclude enthusiasm or even temperamental violence. Old Bonifácio had an exalted temperament, sometimes even a violent one, although rationally and politically, he was a moderate. All of his actions are proof of this and if they reached

the success they did because he knew how to always stay on the moderate line, between the extreme radicalisms of his time. The same can be said of another great man of our past, Bernardo de Vasconcelos. Moderation frequently serves as proof of a soul's strength. Radicalism, on the contrary, can denote hysterical weakness and ungoverned will. (Franco, 2005: 43)

Liberalism does not oppose itself to tradition, but rather completes it. As Lattman-Weltman well points out:

In effect, even when he talks about progress, in enlightenment and in 'typical liberalism,' never does Arinos oppose these entities to the cultivation of good habits, principles and proceedings of traditional character. Nothing could be further from 'his' liberalism and his individualism than any form of radical or iconoclastic rationalism, any form of materialism, mechanicism, pure social physics, 'invisible hands', or the production of public virtue from the exercise of private vices. (Lattman-Weltman, 2005: 42)

*Iberismo*²⁵ is manifest in Arinos' constructions. Tradition is perceived as a necessary step towards modernization. The dialectics between order and movement, which we discussed earlier, well portrays his political position against dissension, which is a greater evil that must be avoided. Fundamentalisms of order are harmful as well, for it is not a matter of adopting a reactionary position, but of the conservative spirit which needs a certain amount of change in order to endure. In turn, this movement ignores the contributions that the best, the elite full of statist, have always offered, for they are blinded by their radicalism. In order for politics to be stable, it is necessary to join together the essence of these two currents of thought. This necessity is at the core of Arinos political work, especially after Vargas' death. Arinos foresees the imminent rupture that would take place in 1964 and in a tone of forewarning, points out that the Left would be the most harmed: "Regarding the Left, it should also be concerned, for if radicalization can lead to anarchy, it can also lead to dictatorship and a dictatorship would strangle all of the Leftist parties, especially the non-communist ones." (Franco, 2005: 69)

Ruptures were defended only when strictly necessary, like before both of Vargas' terms, in 1945 and 1954, or in face of the excessive radicalization on the eve of 1964. Authoritarianism, when it emerged, did justice to the adjective "instrumental". Arinos incarnated with perfection the serene response of traditional liberals to the new Brazil that was emerging. However, he did not deny his times, but searched for a solution through the top, as did many before him. A desirable way out would conjoin order and movement, offering a new form of the *varguista* undertaking of 1930. Since such a resource was impossible, a coup emerged as the only possibility.

Lacerda's progressive strengthening within the UDN is due to the accumulation of electoral failures and the difficulty of historical liberals amidst the new order of mass politics. The liberalism of such personalities such as Arinos and Milton Campos was not capable of moving the urban masses, an element of increasing importance in the post-1945 period. It was incapable of responding to the political demands of its time, which asked that parties, politicians and the State take on a different role. The elite's mediating role and the idea of a *statist* government²⁶ no longer were adequate to the dictates of the new conjecture which demanded that politics go beyond the walls of the palaces and parliaments.

Despite his poor regard for democracy, Lacerda understood well his times and stood out in contacting the masses that irremediably breaking into the political scene. Extremely skilled in using the most influential means of communication of the time – the

newspapers, radio and weekly magazines²⁷ — this *carioca* politician saw his popularity increase with each election, in part because of his gifts as a communicator, but also because he expressed the beliefs of a conservative elite and middle class,²⁸ wary of the ascension of the social segments that up till then had been absent from institutional politics. Lacerdist ideas about the people's minority and his authoritarian political performance perfectly outlined the figure of a leader capable of opposing the rise of *varguista* forces in the field that had been dominated by these forces until then: mass politics.

Final considerations — two periods of politics

The meaning of human production, according to Arinos, cannot be found in the present, but can only be understood when a longer lasting meaning is perceived — once its relation to tradition can be determined, whether this relation be harmonious or troubled. Time is not portrayed as a simple consequence of human actions, but exists despite of them, in such a way that it precedes them and takes shape according to their deepest meaning. Nabuco was certainly one of Arinos's greatest influences, and as written in his citation in the article's epigraph, we must take notice of the movement of which we are "part of even though we presume to be immobile, much like the movement of the Earth which goes unfelt." (Nabuco, 1999: 118)

In turn, Lacerda conceives politics by means of the second classification listed by Nabuco. He was an enthusiast of the movement that "we ourselves set forth," (Nabuco, 1999: 118) and was dedicated to politics understood as action. In frank Schmittian terms, the political field was organized around the cleavage between friend and enemy,²⁹ and could only be understood when political action is taken. Resorting to reactionary lexicon, which approximated him to certain sectors of the armed forces, especially the Air Force, and to a significant part of the urban middle classes, Lacerda did not fall back on the search for an idyllic past. Instead, he proposed a reconstruction of society based on virtuous political action. The world could be completely re-configured if a competent leader were in power, a leader capable of re-establishing reality with his actions.

If explanations restricted to instrumental motives simplify the complexity of the *udenista* phenomenon, there are without a doubt some moments of that period that can be appropriately portrayed according to Nabuco's classification. In this sense, nobody comes closer to calculated action than Lacerda, who despite his erstwhile filiations, also takes current data into consideration and uses it to fundamentally motivate his choices. He represents a type of liberalism that is not ashamed to resort to non-liberal means in order to attain desired ends.

Arinos's favorable attitude towards some occasional coups d'état certainly puts him closer to Lacerda's point of view, as well demonstrated by the years of 1954 and 1964. This notwithstanding, there is no doubt that his adherence to external ways of bypassing legality did not emerge in his repertoire as naturally as it did in that of Lacerda. It was an exceptional solution, restricted to moments in which those in favor of movement threatened to destroy the longstanding constructions of the order enthusiasts. The recurrence of such a diagnosis throughout the Republic of 1946 most certainly says something about that period's conjuncture. It also raises issues held dear by Brazilian liberal tradition, of which Arinos was a cherished member. Similarly, we must ask ourselves about the context of a time that brought together men as distinct as Arinos and Lacerda. This, however, is a matter for future investigation.

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Notes

1. I thank my friend Felipe Maia for the conversations about this subjects.
2. SANTOS, Wanderley Guilherme. *Décadas de espanto e uma apologia democrática*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1998.
3. This term was coined by BENEVIDES, Maria Victoria. *A UDN e o udenismo: ambigüidades do liberalismo brasileiro (1945-1965)*. Rio de Janeiro : Paz e Terra, 1981.
4. For more on the subject of the profile of the members of the UDN as compared to those of the PSD, the largest political party of the period of 1946-1964, see: MICELI, Sergio. *Carne e osso da elite política brasileira pós-1930*. In: *História Geral da Civilização brasileira, volume X*. São Paulo: Bertrand Brasil, 2006
5. WEBER, Max. *A Política como Vocação*. São Paulo : Cultrix, 1999.
6. Afonso Arinos portrays the party's division in the following manner: "The UDN's division is not only a matter of leadership; it corresponds to more serious causes. The party is divided between those who wish to put legalism at the service of reaction and those whose wish to put it at the service of progress." (FRANCO, Afonso Arinos de Melo. *Evolução da Crise Brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2005, p. 64). In turn, Lacerda points out: "... the UDN's rallies were extremely exhausting, for the Party was not unified. It had several different factions and movements, and each one had to have a speaker. Precisely for this reason the rallies were so tiresome; sometimes there were 20 speakers..." (LACERDA, Carlos. *Depoimento*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1977, p. 91)
7. On the matter of the UDN's relationship with the middle classes, read: SOARES, Gláucio A. D. *As bases ideológicas do lacerdismo*. *Revista Civilização Brasileira*, 4, 1965.
8. More on the theme: SCHWARZ, Roberto. *As idéias fora do lugar*. In: *Ao vencedor as batatas: forma literária e processo social nos inícios do romance brasileiro / 4th ed*. São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1992.

9. Ver VIANNA, Luiz Werneck. *Americanistas e Iberistas: a polêmica de Oliveira Vianna com Tavares Bastos*. In. *A revolução passiva: iberismo e americanismo no Brasil Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Revan, 1997. 325
10. Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco speaks of a “worldwide heralded tradition of white change.” (FRANCO, Afonso Arinos de Melo. *Evolução da Crise Brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2005, p. 61).
11. This point is very well discussed by ALMINO, João. *Os Democratistas Autoritários: liberdades individuais, de associação política e sindical na Constituinte de 1946*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1980. Another interesting source about this period:; D'ARAUJO, Maria Celina. *O segundo governo Vargas 1951-1954: democracia, partidos e crise política*. 2nd ed. São Paulo: Ática, 1992, GUIMARAES, Cesar. *Vargas e Kubitschek: A Longa Distância entre a Petrobrás e Brasília*. In: Maria Alice Rezende de Carvalho (Org.). *República no Catete*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Museu da República, 2007 and DELGADO, Lucília de Almeida Neves. *PTB: do Getulismo ao Reformismo – 1945-1964*. São Paulo: Marco Zero, 1989.
12. Vargas put forth some names that were agreed upon as an alternative to Dutra and Eduardo Gomes, such as Cordeiro de Farias, Góes Monteiro and João Alberto.
13. A politician and engineer from Bahia, he was one of Vargas' main opponents since the *Estado Novo*, during which he was exiled. He was Governor of Bahia (1947-1951), president of the UDN (1946-1948), Senator (1960) and served more than one term as a House Representative (the first of which was still during the 1st Republic, in 1926). Source: Dicionário Histórico Biográfico Brasileiro pós 1930. 2nd ed. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. FGV, 2001.
14. A politician and lawyer from Minas Gerais, he acted in the public sphere since the end of the 1910's, when he served as Chief of Staff for his father, Afrânio de Melo Franco, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was State Representative (1922), Federal Representative (1933) and actively participated in founding the UDN by signing the *Manifesto dos Mineiros* and presiding over the Minas Gerais directory. His political trajectory suffered great oscillations, as seen by his approximations and dissents with Vargas and his political work that included flirtations with the almost communist National Liberation Alliance – ALN (*Aliança Libertadora Nacional*, in Portuguese), and the fascist Legion of October (*Legião de Outubro*, in Portuguese). Deceased in 1948, Virgílio wrote two important reports on Brazilian political life in the post-1930 period: *Outubro, 1930* and *A Campanha da UDN de 1945*. Source: Dicionário Histórico Biográfico Brasileiro pós-1930. 2nd ed. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. FGV, 2001.
15. Ibidem and DULCI, Otávio. *A UDN e o anti-populismo no Brasil*. Belo Horizonte: UFMG, 1986.
16. For more on this idea of law enforcement: RANCIERE, Jacques. *O Desentendimento*. São Paulo: Ed. 34, 1996.
17. FRANCO, Afonso Arinos de Melo. *Um Estadista da República: Afrânio de Melo Franco e seu tempo*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Aguilar, 1977.

References to Nabuco are present in the most different aspects of this work, inspired by Joaquim Nabuco's biography about his father: *Um estadista do Imperio: Nabuco de Araujo : sua vida, suas opiniões, sua época*. Beyond the obvious references in the title, both books clearly display the authors' effort to justify his own political practice due to a more long-lived political and family tradition. 326

18. The term "baccalaureate" here is being used in its colloquial sense, and not according to the baccalaureate-jurist dichotomy established by Arinos himself.

19. Lacerda's biographical data come from: DULLES, John W. F. *Carlos Lacerda: A vida de um lutador*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2000.

20. BENEVIDES, Maria Victoria de Mesquita. *A UDN e o udenismo: ambiguidades do liberalismo brasileiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1981.

21. SOARES, Gláucio A. D. *As bases ideológicas do Lacerdismo*. Revista Civilização Brasileira, 4, 1965.

22. This text was also published in *Correio da Manhã* newspaper, 01/06/1946.

23. HOBBS, Thomas. *Leviatã ou matéria, forma e poder de um estado eclesiástico e civil* / 2. ed. São Paulo: Abril Cultural, 1979.

24. Arinos' vast work contains a great number of change and inflections, as the author himself points out. In this manner, since his work discusses udenism, Arinos's production as a member of the UDN is of special interest. His membership extends between 1947 and 1965. We highlight that Arinos distanced himself from the work of his youth, criticizing books such as *O conceito de civilização brasileira* (The Concept of Brazilian Civilization) many a time.

25. VIANNA, Luis Werneck. *A revolução passiva: iberismo e americanismo no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Revan, 1997.

26. We use *statist* here in the way Arinos defines the term, which has been explained previously.

27. LAVAREDA, Antônio. *A democracia nas urnas: o processo partidário-eleitoral brasileiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Luperj/Revan, 1999, ch. 6.

28. On the topic of Lacerda's votes in Guanabara see: SOARES, Gláucio A. D. *As bases ideológicas do Lacerdismo*. Revista Civilização Brasileira, 4, 1965.

29. SCHMITT, Carl. *O conceito do político*. Belo Horizonte: Del Rey, 2007.

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