



ARTICLE

# THE ANTICLERICAL NEWSPAPER A LANTERNA AND THE ICONOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE FERRER MYTH (SÃO PAULO, 1909-1916)<sup>1</sup>

Contact

UNESP – Faculdade de Ciências Humanas e Sociais  
Avenida Eufrásia Monteiro Petráglia, 900  
14409160 – Franca – São Paulo – Brazil  
[ana.neves@unesp.br](mailto:ana.neves@unesp.br)

 Ana Paula Neves de Oliveira<sup>2</sup>

Universidade Estadual Paulista “Júlio de Mesquita Filho”  
Franca – São Paulo – Brazil

## Abstract

This article focuses on the analysis of iconographic materials published in *A Lanterna – Folha anticlerical de combate* (São Paulo, 1909-1916), seeking to think about the production, circulation, reception, acclimatization and consequent appropriation of the figure of the Catalan educator Francisco Ferrer y Guardia in the newspaper. The iconographic sources were systematized into three thematic series, which were used to deepen the analysis. Anchored fundamentally in Roger Chartier's theories on *disputes over representations* and Raoul Girardet's theories on *political myths*, the aim is to demonstrate the hypothesis that the figure of Ferrer was constructed as a political myth in order to expand the newspaper's anticlerical discourse. In addition, attention is drawn to the circulation of some of this material, highlighting, where possible, its origin and outlining possibilities for its transnational diffusion.

## Keywords

*A Lanterna* – Francisco Ferrer – Anti-clericalism – Iconography – Brazil's First Republic.

<sup>1</sup> Article not published on preprint platform. All sources and bibliography used are referenced. This work was carried out with the support of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – Brazil (CAPES) - Funding Code 001.

<sup>2</sup> Master's Degree in History and Social Culture, Graduate Program in History, UNESP – Franca, São Paulo, Brazil. PhD student in the same program.



ARTIGO

# O PERIÓDICO ANTICLERICAL A LANTERNA E A REPRESENTAÇÃO ICONOGRÁFICA DO MITO FERRER (SÃO PAULO, 1909-1916)<sup>3</sup>

Contato

UNESP – Faculdade de Ciências Humanas e Sociais  
Avenida Eufrásia Monteiro Petráglio, 900  
14409160 – Franca – São Paulo – Brasil  
[ana.neves@unesp.br](mailto:ana.neves@unesp.br)

 Ana Paula Neves de Oliveira<sup>4</sup>

Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho  
Franca – São Paulo – Brasil

## Resumo

O presente artigo foca na análise de materiais iconográficos veiculados no periódico *A Lanterna – Folha anticlerical de combate* (São Paulo, 1909-1916), buscando refletir acerca da produção, circulação, recepção, aclimatação e consequente apropriação da figura do educador catalão Francisco Ferrer y Guardia no jornal. As fontes iconográficas foram sistematizadas em três séries temáticas, a partir das quais aprofundou-se o trabalho de análise. Ancorado fundamentalmente nas teorizações de Roger Chartier sobre *disputa de representações* e de Raoul Girardet sobre *mitos políticos*, procura-se demonstrar a hipótese da construção da figura de Ferrer na condição de um mito político em prol da expansão do discurso anticlerical do periódico. Ademais, chama-se ainda a atenção para a circulação de parte desse material, destacando, quando possível, sua origem e traçando possibilidades de difusão transnacional.

## Palavras-chave

*A Lanterna* – Francisco Ferrer – Anticlericalismo – Iconografia – Primeira República.

<sup>3</sup> Artigo não publicado em plataforma *preprint*. Todas as fontes e bibliografia utilizadas são referenciadas. O presente trabalho foi realizado com apoio da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Brasil (CAPES) – Código de Financiamento 001.

<sup>4</sup> Mestre em História e Cultura Social, Programa de Pós-Graduação em História da UNESP – Franca, São Paulo, Brasil. Doutoranda pelo mesmo programa.

Founded in 1901 in the city of São Paulo, the newspaper *A Lanterna* circulated until 1904 in its first phase, under the direction of the lawyer and anarchist militant Benjamim Mota. Almost five years later, greatly inspired by the upheavals of the latest events in Spain<sup>5</sup>, a group of his former director's comrades began to organize the return of the publications. Then, the first edition of the second phase of *A Lanterna* came out on October 17, 1909 – exactly four days after the shooting of Catalan educator Francisco Ferrer y Guardia<sup>6</sup> at the behest of the Spanish state. In this phase, the newspaper began to circulate under the subtitle *Folha anticlerical de combate* (“anticlerical combat tabloid”) – making its main flag explicit – and its director was the libertarian printer Edgard Leuenroth, one of the central figures of the Brazilian workers’ movement of his time.

Under the aegis of the anticlerical flag, the tabloid from São Paulo brought together contributors from the most diverse political ideologies, from liberal republicans, socialists and, above all, anarchists, who shared the ideals of anti-clericalism; in a context of re-founding the Brazilian nation in which, under the newly installed republican government, discussions about the secularization of the State were bubbling. Defended by historian René Rémond as an essential concept for understanding modern history, anti-clericalism is not just a rejection of clericalism, but it consists of a particular vision of truth, society and human emancipation, which has served many different groups as a form of inspiration for action (RÉMOND, 1983). In Brazil, the anti-clericalism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was closely linked to the rejection of ultramontanism and Jesuitism, which gave the movement strong political contours and close ties to positivism (RUDY, 2017). During this period, *A Lanterna* was the main propagandist and spreader of anticlerical ideas in the country.

Most of the time, the newspaper’s editorial office was located in the central region of the city of São Paulo, where both the capital’s printing activity and the workers’ rallies and marches were concentrated – one of the weekly’s main target audiences, and where most of its members and contributors also came from<sup>7</sup>. At this point, it is important to observe that the use of images by printed periodicals in

<sup>5</sup> The European country had recently experienced Barcelona’s Tragic Week, which, despite having political motives as its starting point, was closely linked to anticlerical movements. See: PRADA, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Catalan pedagogue, founder of the Modern School in Barcelona, where he applied the rationalist method of education – characterized by integral and scientific education, social and gender coeducation and personal hygiene for kids. In a closed-door war tribunal, he was arbitrarily sentenced to be shot, on charges of having been the intellectual mastermind of Barcelona’s Tragic Week.

<sup>7</sup> Despite this, *A Lanterna* is not considered by many historians to be a workers’ newspaper. Due to its anticlerical flag, the tabloid was well received by other strata of society, especially the educated middle classes of the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, where it also attracted contributors. See: RUDY, 2017; OLIVEIRA, in press.

general was greatly facilitated in the context of the modernization of the press in which the capital of the state of São Paulo lived during its *belle époque*. In *A Lanterna*, the use of these images, more than a product of modernity, served as a strategy for a greater reach of its messages, especially among a non-literate audience, such as most of the workers – at a time when illiteracy was still the reality of the majority of the Brazilian population.

Making up what could be called the small press – despite its significant circulation both inside and outside the country<sup>8</sup> – the anticlerical periodical was a tabloid newspaper with four pages, the last of which was usually used for advertisements. This type of configuration required a particular selection of subjects to be published, from the main ones – which would occupy the cover of the edition, following a hierarchy of relevance – to what would be left out – considering the limited space available. Therefore, the iconographic material was also chosen very rigorously, not only because of the issue of space, but because this type of material made printing more expensive – which was not interesting for the newspaper which, it seems, did not have a large financial return, relying on voluntary subscriptions, small advertisements, donations from militants and few regular subscriptions (which often had to be reminded to be paid) as ways of maintaining itself.

During the almost seven years of its second phase, which ended in 1916, the anticlerical periodical never stopped remembering Ferrer y Guardia, so that the educator was not only on the agenda in the run-up to October 13 – the day of his death, which became an ephemeris in libertarian and anticlerical circles – but constantly, in different defenses and disputes waged by the tabloid in the press. The subject of Ferrer recurrently made the cover of the anticlerical periodical's editions – whether in textual or iconographic representations – and was even the subject of the only two special issues published by *A Lanterna* in this second phase – which, in turn, were filled with iconographic material – such was the importance of what was being discussed around the figure of the educator.

Therefore, this article seeks to think about Ferrer's unique reception in Brazil in *A Lanterna*, by analyzing iconographic sources, taken from the periodical, that relate to the Catalan. The main hypothesis is that, based on this dispute of representations around the figure of Ferrer y Guardia, the newspaper elevates him to the stature of a political myth, according to the theorizations of Raoul Girardet (GI-

---

<sup>8</sup> In the first year of the second phase, *A Lanterna* had representatives in São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul. Outside the country, it had a representative in Portugal and received newspapers published in Spain, Mexico, Cuba and Argentina – which at least attests to the existence of a link, to some extent, through transnational circulation.

RARDET, 1987). In *A Lanterna*, this myth seems to have had the role of denouncing the Jesuit plot in Brazil and mobilizing the dispute over the organization and, particularly, the education of the working class at the beginning of the 20th century. In each of the following sections, a different set of symbols mobilized in the representation of Ferrer and his executioners will be analyzed, focusing on the categories of the myths of Conspiracy – very present in the representations of the Clergy – and that of the Savior – present in the representations of the figure of the educator.

The first sub-item, “The list of culprits”, deals with the issue of holding the Clergy responsible for Ferrer y Guardia’s death or naming the guilty parties for the crime that was the decision to sentence Ferrer to be shot. The second, “The great martyr of popular education”, analyzes the representation of Ferrer as a martyr – one who dies for the idea – of popular education and the working class. The last, “Dominated by terror”, draws attention to the iconographic messages of an idea, also widely conveyed in the journal’s texts, that Ferrer’s ideals were disseminated in such a way after his death, that they began to frighten those who were once responsible for taking his life in order to silence them.

In addition, with the aim of shedding light on aspects of the trajectory of the media repercussions of the educator’s shooting, and anchored in a theoretical approach linked to the transnational history of the press, the article also seeks to trace and present circulations of iconographic materials on the subject of Ferrer that were published both in São Paulo’s newspaper and in synchronous periodical presses that were published in the Americas and Europe.

### The list of culprits

The Spanish government’s decision to shoot Ferrer y Guardia had negative repercussions throughout the western world, even generating a political crisis in the European country, which faced a wave of protests after the educator’s execution. In Brazil, *A Lanterna*’s cover article, in its second edition, celebrated the deposition of the then Spanish Prime Minister, Antonio Maura, described in the newspaper as a “Jesuit” and a “zealot thug, the main mastermind of Ferrer’s cowardly murder”<sup>9</sup>. Attention should be drawn to their definition of Maura because, even though he was not a member of the Clergy, the tabloid’s editors evoked the religious element

---

<sup>9</sup> “Bandido carola, principal mandatário do covarde assassinato de Ferrer”. *A Lanterna – Folha anticlerical de combate*, y.4, n.2., August 23, 1909, p.1.

to attack him, calling him a “Jesuit” and a “carola”<sup>10</sup>, in order to make his connection to and support for members of the Church<sup>11</sup> explicit. It should be observed that the same strategy was used by the newspaper when referring, in the first edition, to King Afonso XIII, described at the time as a scarecrow of the clergy. Therefore, the representation of the two biggest names in the Spanish state have their image related to the Church when attacked, the “scarecrow of the clergy” and the “carola”. In other words, although they were not totally exempt from their political responsibilities in Ferrer’s death, the main culprit behind the actions of the statesmen was the Church.

In the newspaper’s iconography of Ferrer, this representation of the Clergy as an evil plot to control the actions of the rulers also appears frequently. In the third edition of the weekly, still celebrating Maura’s deposition, *A Lanterna* published an illustration on the front page entitled “*A eterna comédia*” (The eternal comedy).

Figure 1  
*A eterna comédia*  
**A eterna comédia**



Source: *A Lanterna*, no.3, p.1.

<sup>10</sup> The word “carola”, in Portuguese, means something like “religious fanatic/zealot”, in a pejorative way and critical of such behavior.

<sup>11</sup> The word “Church” in this article will always be used as a synonym for the institution of the Catholic Church, considering the newspaper’s anti-clericalism.

It is possible to identify, due to the signature in the top right-hand corner of the image, that this is an illustration by Voltolino, a renowned Brazilian caricaturist and modernist, whose work was published in various press bodies of the First Republic, including satirical and combat ones (BELLUZZO, 1992). In the picture, King Alfonso XIII of Spain is depicted kicking the now former Prime Minister Antonio Maura, who in turn is carrying an envelope in one hand – possibly in reference to a letter of resignation. The symbolic elements mobilized by Voltolino to represent the scene are part of the imagery of two political mythologies theorized by Girardet: that of the Conspiracy, when it comes to the representation of the Clergy, and that of the Savior myth, when it comes to Ferrer's representation.

Behind the main scene it is possible to see the figure of a bishop who, by the gesture he makes with his right hand, seems to be blessing the king's attitude. A strategy often used by anticlericals, the illustration evokes symbols related to the Catholic religion in order to criticize the Clergy, playing on the ideas of incoherence and hypocrisy. In this sense, Di Stefano's thesis about an essentially religious anti-Catholic dissent in the Ibero-American world can be observed, insofar as both the logic guiding this criticism and the symbolic capital at stake are religious (DI STEFANO, 2008). The engraving features some elements such as the "oppressive trinity" (POLETTI, 2011) – in this case the Clergy, the State and the Police – and the obese clerical figure, a representation of the sins of gluttony and avarice, in order to generate a sense of the Clergy's abundance in contrast to the workers' penury in the context of life's famine in Brazil. In the Church-State relationship, in a monarchical regime, the image also reinforces a hierarchy in which the pope is in charge and not the king, even though the latter appears in the foreground. Following the logic of the symbolic legend of the conspiracy, the cleric appears there strategically out of the spotlight, sneaky, manipulative, controlling, truly responsible for the situation.

In the background, amidst a smoke screen, the scene of Ferrer's execution is depicted. In it, the educator appears with his hands raised in a cry for mercy, as an innocent victim. In contrast to the representation of the other characters, including the soldier who shoots Ferrer in a robust, upright and straight posture, the educator is represented as a martyr. The martyr is the one who dies for the idea, so the imagery of the death scene constitutes a very strong message of this concept. Composing the same legend of the "providential man", the "chief", the "guide" and the "savior", Ferrer's martyrdom is conceived as a "symbol character", through which a coherent and complete vision of collective destiny is expressed (GIRARDET, 1987, p. 70) – in the case of *A Lanterna*, a guide to social revolution.

Moreover, it's important to note that both the title and the caption added to the illustration by the tabloid's editors reiterate these representations. "The eternal comedy" is a play on words that satirize the situation: the tragedy of Ferrer's death

– the result of an authoritarian decision by the king, under the control of the Clergy – plays on the imagery of the relationship between the eternal and the divine and attributes the decision for Ferrer’s execution to an inquisitorial attitude by the Church. The caption, on the other hand, is arranged in such a way as to sound like a sentence from the king to his subordinate, and reinforces that Maura’s dismissal was nothing more than a strategy by Spain’s Catholic Monarchy to mitigate public pressure on the government, following the events of Tragic Week.

Figure 2  
*A Santa Aliança*



Source: *A Lanterna*, no.4, p.1.



Along the same lines of iconography, which focus on denouncing the clerical plot in the Ferrer affair, two other Brazilian illustrations published in the pages of *A Lanterna* can be mentioned. The first of these appeared on the cover of issue number 4, still in 1909, and was also signed by Voltolino. In a graphic representation that mixes caricature and free drawing, the artist reproduces the scene of what appears to be the moments following the shooting of Ferrer y Guardia. In the illustration, four of the six characters are not merely fictitious, and, except for Ferrer, they appear caricatured: King Alfonso XIII in the main scene and, in the background, Pope Pius X and, it seems, Tomás Costa y Fornaguera, the archbishop of Tarragona – the archbishopric to which the bishopric of Barcelona answered. The other two characters, freely created by the cartoonist, represent the institutions of the Church itself, in the form of the cleric, and the State/police apparatus, in the form of the soldier.

Once again, the clerical conspiracy is denounced. In the background, reinforcing their manipulative role, the members of the highest Catholic clergy watch the scene from afar. The pope makes a gesture of blessing, despite his somewhat choleric appearance, while the archbishop looks on with the air of a pupil. In front of this, you can see Ferrer's body – the only one depicted with dignity, without the caricature exaggerations – lying on the floor and surrounded by representatives of the “oppressive trinity” or “*Santa Aliança*” (Holy Alliance), as the newspaper satirizes the title of the work. The people present are the king, the main representative of the Spanish state, who holds the educator's corpse; a soldier, representing the police apparatus, who wields a rifle from which the smoke left by the shot still comes out – which gives the aforementioned air of something instantaneous – and a priest, representing the Church in the main scene.

Appropriating the symbolism from what Ernest Gombrich would come to define as the cartoonist's political bestiary (GOMBRICH, 1999), Voltolino represents these last two characters with animalistic features. The royal soldier has a grotesque appearance, his nose is flattened and looks more like a snout, and his fingers are long and pointed, like claws. The priest, on the other hand, resembles a bat, wears black robes – in a contrast with the light and shadows, in which he is the darkest character – has large wings, a pointed ear and nose and is feeding on the blood he extracts from Ferrer y Guardia's corpse with his mouth. According to Gombrich, animals are the most typical type of cartoon symbols, whose meaning is universally facilitated due to a fixed meaning linked to *animalia* since the fables of Aesop and La Fontaine. It is therefore not difficult to relate the soldier-beast and the bat-priest, together with the caricatural exaggerations in the other characters – such as Alfonso's very thin, almost skeletal face and crown full of small skulls – to something nefarious and disgusting. Gombrich's studies demonstrate the potential of caricatures in journalistic polemics. By reducing the physiognomy of the characters to a convenient formula, car-

icatures allow the equivalence to be amplified to the point of becoming a visual fusion. As the historian explains, “many orators must have called many ministers ‘parasites’, but making identity visible is another matter” (GOMBRICH, 1999, p.135). In *A Lanterna*, adjectives such as evil, vile, cruel and manipulative are attributed to clerics all the time, and Voltolino’s work does just that by making them visible through graphic representation.

Figure 3  
Cover of the 1910 special edition



(DESENHO DE CUPUM.)

Para maior gloria de Deus!

Source: *A Lanterna*, no.53, p.1.

The second Brazilian illustration published in the anticlerical newspaper that can be categorized as denouncing the Jesuit plot is signed by Gigi Damiani, under the pseudonym Cujum. A regular contributor to *A Lanterna*, the Italian-born anarchist militant had been a member of the workers' newspaper *La Battaglia* and the São Paulo's Modern School Organizing Committee. Published on the cover of the special commemorating edition from October 13, 1910, Damiani's grim illustration features a clergyman wielding and extending a crucifix in an apocalyptic setting.

Using the technique of light and shadow, the artist highlights the bishop, whose pointed mitre almost forms horns. He holds one of his hands behind his back in an attempt to hide a kind of dagger or knife from which possibly blood is dripping, in an almost diabolical representation of a character who, among his own, would be considered sacred. Once again, it is possible to see the use of religious symbolic capital in the anticlerical critique. As Di Stefano points out, "anti-clericalism, as a questioning of the clergy itself or its tendency to monopolize religious capital, is driven by the same logic" (DI STEFANO, 2008, p.160). In this sense, the artist appropriates the religious dialectic of the sacred and the profane when, in order to represent the priest in an evil way, he gives him traits considered "diabolical" in the Catholic imaginary itself.

Other Christian symbols make up the image, reiterating the air of ecclesiastical conspiracy, such as doves, usually related to peace or the holy spirit itself, a chalice, a book entitled "St. Affonso", referring to the Spanish king, and the acronym "A.M.G.D.", the motto of the Society of Jesus – which translates as "for the greater glory of God", from the Latin "*ad maiorem dei gloriam*". The scene is also made up of symbols that would represent, for the anticlericals, the degradation of the working class, such as the church, the jail, the brothel and the tavern (RAGO, 1997 [1985]). The sky is dark and there is also another human figure – below the clergyman, in what would be a kind of underground area. It is on this underground figure that all the blood coming from the surface drips. Considering the context in which the illustration was published, it is plausible to infer that this is Ferrer y Guardia's body after having been shot.

Finally, attention should also be drawn to the graphic composition of this issue of the newspaper. The special editions of 1910 and 1911, as will be seen below (Figure 8), were also extraordinary in their configuration – they came out smaller than the regular ones, with twice as many pages and images, more copies and in color<sup>12</sup>.

---

<sup>12</sup> This data was collected in an in-person survey at the Edgard Leuenroth Collection (AEL-UNICAMP). For more on these particularities, unpublished at the time in historiography, about the special issues of *A Lanterna* in honor of Ferrer, see: OLIVEIRA, in press.

With the reader's reception in mind, it is possible to hypothesize that the editorial staff made a rational choice of the color used to compose the graphic design of these editions, especially considering the illustrations selected for the respective covers (Figure 3 and Figure 8, to be analyzed later)<sup>13</sup>.

Damiani's illustration (Figure 3), whose central message is to criticize the plot and the clergy, not only made up the cover of the edition, taking up two of the four columns in the center, but was also printed in red. Considering the analysis of the work carried out above, and highlighting the presence of visceral elements such as blood and fire, it is possible to reflect that the color red helps to generate an aggressive feeling of urgency, alarm, danger and cause even more impact on the reader's reception of the iconographic message. Therefore, in line with the anticlerical discourse, the image draws attention to the role of the Clergy as the main culprit behind the educator's death, leaving the Spanish king on the background. In addition, several of the elements discussed so far are present as components of the symbolism of the plot, transmitting and spreading this message in a visual way. In a much simpler and more direct way, this is the same idea conveyed by Figure 4 ("What dominates in Spain").

**Figure 4**  
**What dominates in Spain**  
**O que domina na Espanha**



(Do *Lustige Blätter*).

Source: *A Lanterna*, no.14, p.1.

<sup>13</sup> In this hypothesis, it must also be considered that there was a choice – albeit within a possibly limited spectrum. What allows this second hypothesis, which complements the one set out in the body of the text, is the consideration that different colors (red and blue) were used within a one-year period, even with different psychological messages and in accordance with the imagery messages of the pieces chosen to make up the respective covers.

Unlike the others, in this case it was not possible to identify the authorship of this illustration. However, it is possible to say that it is not national work, as the editors of *A Lanterna* left, below the picture, the source from which it was originally taken. Also published on the front page, the illustration was part of the editorial project for issue number 14 of the newspaper, at the beginning of 1910. The composition of the image is much simpler than the others, simply depicting a priest – in black robes and with a hat covering his eyes – sitting on a coffin from which blood is pouring and where Ferrer’s name can be read. The strong anticlerical tone that characterized the pro-Ferrer protests was not unique to Brazil. In Europe, the execution of the Catalan professor had an exceptional impact in France and Italy, Latin countries that were home to large-scale anti-clerical movements, but there were also many protests in other parts of the continent, such as those that took to the streets in Belgium, England, Germany, Switzerland, Romania, Greece and Russia; the same applies to the Americas, which saw protests in countries such as the United States, Argentina and Paraguay, as well as Brazil.

As far as the Ibero-American world is concerned, Di Stefano and Zanca draw attention to a specific imaginary of anti-clericalism, which would have produced and consolidated a real “anticlerical culture” shared by certain groups. According to historians of religion, “the spheres of sociability typical of modernity: freemasonry, societies of freethinkers, organizations linked to socialism or anarchism, served to transmit an ideology and a set of shared images” (DI STEFANO; ZANCA, 2013, p.19-20). As for Europe, although in each context anti-clericalism took on different nuances – such as in monarchical Spain, in the France of the Third Republic and in papal Italy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries – according to Lisa Dittrich, the movement had a common goal: the secularization of the State and society (DITTRICH, 2014).

This illustration, for example, was taken by the editors of *A Lanterna* from *Lustige Blatter*, a German satirical illustrated magazine<sup>14</sup>. Published in Berlin since 1885, the magazine circulated for almost sixty years, closing its doors in 1944. By crossing the Atlantic and being printed in the pages of *A Lanterna*, however, the anticlerical content of the piece takes on a particular reading, as it is acclimatized to the context of the First Republic. Besides, the Brazilian newspaper’s appropriation of the image

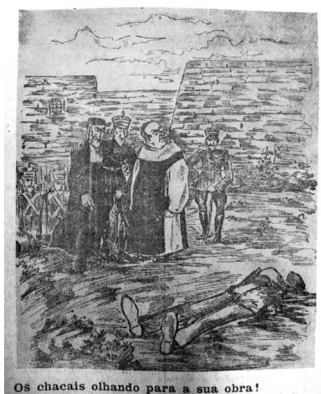
---

<sup>14</sup> It was not possible to locate in which issue of the magazine the illustration was originally published, although it is possible to infer that it was still in 1909, in the midst of the unrest caused by the shooting. The hypothesis comes both from the date of publication in *A Lanterna* and from research into the issues of *Lustige Blatter* published in 1910, digitized by the University of Heidelberg, in which the illustration was not located (it was not possible to access the year 1909, however).

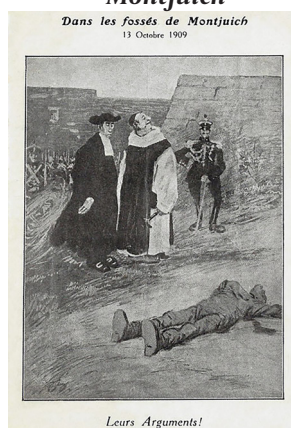
doesn't stop there – the editors have written the weekly's name over it (bottom left). In this sense, the question remains as to whether this illustration circulated from Brazil – if it did, whether inside or outside the country, whether in Latin America or back in Europe, could it be that the authorship was attributed to the Brazilian anticlerical newspaper? In any case, it seems like a good form of propaganda on the part of the editors.

Along the same lines of transnational circulation of iconographic material, Figures 5, 6 and 7 stand out.

**Figure 5**  
**The jackals looking at their word**



**Figure 6**  
**Dans les fossés de Montjuich**



**Figure 7**  
**Leurs Argumets**



Sources:

*A Lanterna*, n.160, p.1

French postcard, 1909

*Le Libertaire*, y.6, no.3, p.1.

As with the previous illustrations, the symbolism mobilized by the artists in making these works was related to the myth of Conspiracy. The first of them (Figure 5, “The jackals looking at their work”) was published on the cover of issue 160 of *A Lanterna*, an edition that commemorated October 13 in 1912. The second (Figure 6) is a postcard, which was produced and distributed by the editorial staff of the Parisian newspaper *Le Libertaire*. With a very similar composition, the scene depicted in the illustrations is that of a group of people looking at a bloody corpse lying on the ground – which represents Ferrer y Guardia shot. In both illustrations, a group of soldiers and a fortress can be seen in the background, a reference to Montjuich. But while in the version of *A Lanterna* the group that appears in the foreground is made up of four characters who, judging by their clothing, are a soldier, a king and two clergymen – a priest and a bishop – in the version of the anarchist periodical

by Louise Michel and Sebastian Faure, there is one less element. In *Le Libertaire*, the king is absent, whereas in *A Lanterna* he appears between the two clergy characters.

Although it was not possible to identify the authorship of the illustrations, it is plausible to think that the version published in Brazil was produced in the country, possibly appropriating the French version. Before being published as a postcard, the same drawing was on the cover of issue number 3 of *Le Libertaire*, published on November 14, 1909 (Figure 7). The French newspaper's editorial staff began advertising the sale of the postcard in the next issue, on November 21. Considering, therefore, that this version of *A Lanterna* was produced in the same year it was published, it is a later illustration and, then, it can be inferred that it is the result of an appropriation of the one that appeared in *Le Libertaire* and then circulated in postcard format.

Regardless of the possible exchanges between Figures 5 and 6, it should be noted that the iconographic representations depicting Ferrer y Guardia's corpse are strongly emotional and, in the case of those published in São Paulo's anticlerical periodical, they maintain a very similar composition, always featuring the clerical element as the main culprit in the firing squad, although they don't completely exonerate the Spanish state – as in the illustrations by Voltolino (Figure 2) and Gigi Damiani (Figure 3) analyzed above. It is therefore interesting to consider how, in the Brazilian context, it is important to represent, in the midst of the Plot, the State element – even if it is under the intellectual domination of the Clergy. So, in *A Lanterna*, these illustrations take on a unique meaning: that of identifying those who make up the enemy camp, which is done by identifying those responsible for Ferrer's death. Putting an end to the educator's life means an attempt to repress the ideas represented by the martyr, many of which were the flags of the anarchists who made up the editorial board of the anticlerical periodical, especially concerning popular education.

Therefore, this similarity between the pieces allowed them to be categorized in a series of image representations of the denunciation, through the Ferrer affair, of the clerical-State plot that should be fought. As a political myth, Ferrer y Guardia seems to be used here as a key to explaining the real – what is shown through this iconography is the power and influence of the Church in State matters, State oppression, in agreement with the Clergy, over dissenters and combatants and, above all, the use of the military apparatus of the national States to repress dissenters and the less well-off classes, a situation that the working class in São Paulo felt in the flesh, with arrests and compulsory expulsions of militants<sup>15</sup>.

---

<sup>15</sup> It is important to emphasize that this is the context in which the “Law on the Expulsion of Foreigners” or the “Adolfo Gordo Law” was created and first published (BRASIL, 1907).

## The great martyr of popular education

Another line of iconographic representation of Ferrer is that of him as a martyr for popular education and the working class. In *A Lanterna*, many of the images depicting the educator as a martyr were published in the issues that paid tribute to him on the occasion of October 13. For this analysis, attention is drawn to three illustrations that were published on the covers of editions that commemorated Ferrer y Guardia, in 1911 (Figure 8), 1912 (Figure 9) and 1914 (Figure 10) respectively.

**Figure 8**  
**Ideal**



*A Lanterna*, no. 108, p.1

**Figure 9**  
**The martyr Ferrer**



Sources:  
*A Lanterna*, no. 212, p.1

**Figure 10**  
**October 13, 1909**



*A Lanterna*, no. 263, p.1.

Regardless of their particularities, the three illustrations all contain elements of the imagery of the political myth of the savior-hero as characterized by Girardet. In all of them, Francisco Ferrer y Guardia has a kind of monument to himself through which he is admired or adored by a group of people. There are also other elements in common between them, such as the presence of women and children, a symbol of childhood – to whom his work was directed – as well as muses – allegories of Liberty or even the Republic, in order to emphasize the secular ideals under which the idol is erected. An interesting feature of Figure 9, used more than once by São Paulo's tabloid, and which may have been produced by one of its contributors, is the presence of adult men. There, for the first time, Ferrer is directly related to the working class element in the iconographies published about him in *A Lanterna*. This



link between the figure of the educator and the workers' agenda seems to essentially serve the anarchist flag of the newspaper.

The first image in the series (Figure 8) also has an important particularity and underlines the hypothesis raised earlier, about the coloring of the special issues of 1910 (Figure 3) and 1911 (Figure 8) and the impact on the reader's reception of the message. The illustration entitled "Ideal", as seen, was part of the edition that commemorated Ferrer two years after he was shot. Printed in an extraordinary way, issue 108 of *A Lanterna*, in line with the previous year, also came out in color. This time, however, the color chosen was blue. Figure 8 made up the cover of the edition, also in two of the four columns in the center of the page, making it the main iconographic material in that year's special issue. But in contrast to the visceral red of Figure 3, the blue one carries a message of calmness, confidence and stability. Despite the presence of the clerical element, the focus of the illustration, as seen, is on the figure of Ferrer. It is therefore possible to infer that the choice of blue was intentional, in order to convey a sense of strength and positivity, linked to the figure of the educator – who in this image is represented as honorable and haughty, reinforcing the political myth of the hero.

It is also worth noting that Figures 8 and 10 are by the same artist: Firmín Sagristà. The Spanish painter was also a staunch anarchist militant, collaborating with Ferrer's newspaper in Spain, *La Huelga General*, and with the Magonian *Regeneración* during the Mexican Revolution. Sagristà's illustrations were produced in 1909 and also circulated in postcard format, the medium through which they possibly reached the editorial staff of *A Lanterna*. In the two illustrations by the Spaniard, it is possible to identify an element that is not present in Figure 9 – in the margin of each of them there is a clergyman sneaking a look at the scene. The presence of the clerical element in Sagristà's illustrations is extremely important, as it inserts the homage to Ferrer as an anticlerical agenda.

The illustrator works with the play of light and shadow to convey the message of light against darkness, of denouncing the Jesuit plot and of identifying and holding accountable the enemies of the fight for rationalist education. Recognized in libertarian circles, the artist even spent time in prison for these and other illustrations, in homage to Ferrer, which may even have boosted their diffusion. Both were found in various international press vehicles.

**Figure 11**  
Colorized postcard



**Figure 12**  
Cover *Renovación*



**Figure 13**  
*Hulde aan Ferrer*



Sources:

Colorized postcard      Special edition of *Renovación*, 1911;      "Ideal" in a Dutch-language periodical

The first (Figure 8) was also circulated as a colorized postcard in Europe (Figure 11), as well as appearing on the cover of a special edition in honor of the educator in the Costa Rican magazine *Renovación* in 1911 (Figure 12) and in a Dutch-language periodical that could not be identified (Figure 13).

**Figure 14**  
Cover *Cultura Proletaria*



**Figure 15**  
*E pour se muove*



Sources: *Cultura Proletaria*, no.25, p.1;

*Revista Racionalista*, no.2, p.10.

The second (Figure 10) was also found in the workers' newspaper *Cultura Proletaria*, edited and published in Spanish in New York City, and in the *Revista Racionalista Francisco Ferrer*, published in Buenos Aires – both prior to its publication in *A Lanterna*. The issue of *Cultura Proletaria* (Figure 14) came out in 1910 and was an extraordinary edition in honor of the educator. The issue of *Revista Racionalista* (Figure 15) came out on May 15, 1911. In it, there is a difference in the inscription of Ferrer's memorial, in which it is not possible to read the first sentence. Zooming in the image, it is possible to see that the illustration is folded, so the drawings themselves are overlapping – quite noticeable in the female figure holding out the branches to the educator, for example, where the discontinuity of the body is evident. This may have been due to some carelessness or even precariousness in the resources for printing iconographic material, which was common in the working class milieu, and which also included *Revista Racionalista Francisco Ferrer*.

Finally, in the series formed by the three illustrations analyzed, the set of iconographic representations reinforces the idea of Ferrer as a martyr for popular education. It is essentially on the basis of this category of representation that the anticlerical periodical constructs the figure of the educator as a savior myth, a guide to the social revolution. Therefore, as a political myth, Ferrer y Guardia seems to be used, from this point of view, as a mobilizer of the struggle waged by the newspaper in favor of popular education and the working class.

### **Dominated by terror**

Finally, the last series of iconographic representations, systematized here for analysis purposes, reinforces the construction of the savior myth and articulates the imagery used in the previous series. In it, the educator appears as an immortalized myth, who was once the victim of an evil plot – identified in iconographies such as those analyzed in “Roll of the culprits” – and is now the symbol who not only guides – a representation of the martyr of popular education – but terrorizes the opposing camp by spreading his ideas around. In this iconographic series, therefore, the main motto is the construction of the myth of the savior, who comes to thwart the plot against which the freethinkers gathered around the anticlerical periodical are fighting.

Figure 16  
Ferrer and the priest



Source: *A Lanterna*. no.52, p.1.

The first highlight is to another illustration by Voltolino (Figure 16, “Ferrer and the priest”), which appeared on the cover of issue 52, October 8, 1910. Simpler and with far fewer elements than the others, the illustration depicts an interlocution between two characters: Francisco Ferrer, who appears caricatured, and a member of the Clergy. The latter, who is depicted with a large body, gestures for the educator to remain silent. The Catalan, for his part, is formally dressed and apparently serene, keeping his hands behind his back, his chest open and his eyes fixed on those of the cleric – whose expression seems agitated, whether out of anger or fear. Ferrer’s firm stance towards the religious sends a message of non-resignation in the face of clerical advances. In the caption, the editors of *A Lanterna* reinforce the conspiracy myth in what would be the priest’s speech to the educator: “Be very careful, you ‘overthrower’ of ministries. We’re in charge of this republic...”

It is interesting to observe that the intervention made by the newspaper's editors, when adding the aforementioned caption to Voltolino's illustration, places the Ferrer myth in the context of Brazilian politics – the ministry to which the priest refers is that of Antônio Maura, but the republic is that of Brazil, which is an obvious criticism, by the tabloid, on the power exercised by the Church in State matters. Therefore, on the eve of the first anniversary commemorating the educator, he no longer appears only as a victim. With his haughty and calm demeanor, Ferrer is represented here as a symbol character, a revolutionary guide in the fight against the clerical plot.

**Figure 17**  
Ferrer's wounds



Sources: *A Lanterna*, no. 2, p.1

**Figure 18**  
Overshadowed by Christ



*A Lanterna*, no. 183, p.1

Figure 17, published in the second issue of the newspaper, follows this logic. The author is unknown, but at the foot of the illustration there is an inscription with the name of the weekly, so it is plausible to infer that the work belongs to a contributor or was produced to order for *A Lanterna*. Occupying the cover of the edition, the movement of Christian elements to attack clericalism is quite evident in the image. In the picture, the king appears on his knees, frightened and hiding at the feet of the pope (again obese) who, seated and furious, is watching Ferrer “ascending to heaven”, which is a reference to a spirit or a ghost. The educator then shows,

with an expression of pain, but a certain pride, the chest pierced by the bullets from the shooting, therefore evoking an almost sanctified image of his death, like the martyred Christ who exposes the wounds of his crucifixion – in what can be read as a kind of “transfer of sacredness”, in which the language and symbols of religion merge into a secular mold (DI STEFANO, 2008, p.172).

At this point, attention is drawn to Figure 18, published on the cover of issue 183 of the anticlerical periodical. With a very similar composition, the character who now frightens and hurts the members of the clergy with his light is Jesus Christ himself. According to Di Stefano, Ibero-American anti-clericalism often doesn't directly attack the Church, religion, or the Clergy itself, but rather the “fanatical” part of it, which, among other things, defends the “monarchy against the republic, conservatism against liberalism, [and] obscurantism against science” (DI STEFANO, 2008, p.168). For the author, in this anticlerical critique, religion is reorganized: “it is transferred to patriotic loyalty, to the secular cult of science, to the defense of individual autonomy, to class identity” (DI STEFANO, 2008, p.172). This anticlerical, religious tendency, as the author argues, can be seen in many of the illustrations about Ferrer published in *A Lanterna*, whether in the sanctified representation of the educator, or in the presence of symbolic elements from the political imaginary of republican, socialist and anarchist groups, such as flags and muses – allegories of Freedom, Justice or the Republic itself – always represented in a positive light.

But if in Spanish and Portuguese America the conflicts of colonial rule – a recent legacy of 19th century imperialism – shaped the reception of Enlightenment ideals and the very concept of anti-clericalism on the continent, it is important to observe that, in the case of Ferrer, the viewpoint of the Spanish-American countries had an element that did not appear in Brazil: for them, Ferrer y Guardia was, above all, the victim of a common dominator and oppressor: the Spanish state. With all the similarities in relation to Ibero-American anticlerical culture, in the newspaper with an anarchist tendency, this anti-clericalism is also linked to the discourses of Ernest Renan and Joseph Proudhon, condemning not religion, but the Church institution, and focusing its criticism on the earthly pleasures and exaggerations of the members of the Clergy. In the case of Brazil, in *A Lanterna*, the Ferrer myth seems to represent the struggle waged by the newspaper against the influence of the Church in society, especially in the camp of dispute over education – which, for the anarchists, however, was not enough to be public and secular, that is, handed over to the republican state, but popular and anticlerical: free from the bonds of the State and the Church, made by and for the workers and their children.

**Figure 19**  
**Overshadowed by the Ferrer myth**



Sources: *A Lanterna*, no. 160, p.1

**Figure 20**  
***Ressurrecciones de la Idea***



*Renovación*, no. 19-20, p.326.

In this same sense of representation of the educator, Figure 19 (Overshadowed by the Ferrer myth), despite also denouncing the monarchical-Jesuitical or clerical-State plot, conveys as its main message the strength of the Ferrer myth as Guide or Savior. In *A Lanterna*, the illustration was published on the cover of October 12, 1912, as a tribute to Ferrer and, the previous year, it was part of the editorial project for issue 19-20 – commemorating October 13 of that year – of the aforementioned Costa Rican magazine *Renovación*, where it was entitled “Resurrecciones of the Idea” (Figure 20). The author has not been identified and probably it is not a Brazilian illustration. Indeed, it is even possible that the version of the anticlerical newspaper was taken from the rationalist magazine<sup>16</sup>.

In this work Ferrer is also represented as a monument and, to the left, there is a group made up of clerical and State elements, as well as what appears to be the representation of a member of the bourgeoisie. The gang is frightened and makes a fleeing movement in front of the image of the educator – who, in turn, has a haughty posture and emits a beam of light that rips through the darkness of the background of the scene, bringing out the cartoonish figures. Back to the cartoonist’s political bestiary, one of the characters in the plot – who appears to be a member of the clergy – is wrapped in a snake, while a snail accompanies the gang. As well as being two

<sup>16</sup> In view of the single quote found in *A Lanterna* about the Costa Rican magazine, however, this hypothesis is questionable. *Renovación* had outlets in other parts of America, such as the United States, Cuba, Panama and Argentina, and in Europe, such as Spain, France and England. If the cycle of exchange was complete between the editorial offices of these countries, it could therefore be either an American or a European illustration, and could have arrived in Brazil from any of these continents.

crawling, sticky animals related to disgust, it should be noted that in religious symbolism they are often associated with evil. The snake, for example, was responsible for introducing men to sin, which drove them out of paradise – in the Christian imaginary, the animal symbolizes perfidy and betrayal.

As with the other illustrations analyzed, it is possible to see how the characters in the plot are often represented in a stereotyped way, often dehumanized to the extent that they are built with animal shapes or demeaned by some other characteristic seen as negative. This type of representation of the Other can be seen as a strategy used by anticlerical and anarchist groups to recognize their adversaries. Just as the political myth serves to explain reality, the use of identifying and denouncing images of the enemy camp is also capable of offering “types of representations of the world that start from reality in order to combat and deconstruct it with the aim of creating something new and better, a new perspective in which the State, police and clerical presence would not be felt” (POLETTI, 2017, p.134).

In the construction of the guiding myth, Ferrer is represented next to a garden in which vigorous flowers grow, as a symbol for the fertilization of his ideas. This notion is reinforced by the beam of light which, by illuminating the educator and the environment, scares the characters from the plot away – a metaphor for the idea of light as a visible symbol of good, against darkness, the representation of evil. This notion, as Gombrich points out, “is important in philosophy, from Plato to the Enlightenment, as it is also within the Christian tradition” (GOMBRICH, 1999, p.138). According to Girardet, what seems to be at stake in the illustration is precisely the idea of the reason of science, of spreading Enlightenment ideals, represented by Ferrer’s rationalism, against the darkness of ignorance, obscurantism and barbarism, related to religious faith. Therefore, the imagery not only identifies its enemies, but fights them.

The presence of the bourgeois element is also important. Although it was not possible to identify the author and the context in which the work was produced, in the context of the publication of São Paulo’s anticlerical periodical, this character denounces the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist system. In this sense, the plot is constituted in the illustration through the amalgamation of the Clergy, the State and the bourgeoisie – the tripod supporting this system, which is why they should be combated. In the iconographic representation, the key to this struggle lies in the dissemination of Ferrer’s educational ideals, whose rationalism supports an education that is free not only from Church, but also from the State and capital, and which, therefore, serves as an instrument for deconstructing this reality and forming a world free from the influence of these institutions.



## Final considerations

From the previous selection of iconographic sources about Ferrer published in São Paulo's periodical *A Lanterna – Folha anticlerical de combate*, and the subsequent systematization of some of the material found, three series were organized for analysis purposes, which formed different sets of representations of the educator. In each of them, presented here as subtopics, we tried to reflect on the main messages conveyed to the public, as well as the references and symbolic imaginaries mobilized by the artists in the production of each image – always keeping in mind their insertion in the Brazilian context of publication of the newspaper studied and, when possible, drawing attention to transnational circulations and exchanges of the selected illustrations.

Above all, the aim was to demonstrate the hypothesis, formulated from the study of iconographic and textual material about the educator in the newspaper, that in *A Lanterna* the figure of Ferrer is constructed and used as a political myth, substantially in favor of the anticlerical agenda of its editors. This construction takes place largely around the iconographic messages published in the weekly, whose mapping of material circulation, traced throughout the text, demonstrates and reiterates the thesis that the newspaper was part of a truly international circuit for the dissemination of anticlerical imagery. Whether as a mobilizer for action or in the didactic role of disseminating rationalist and libertarian ideals, the educator seems to be used in the denunciation of the “Jesuit” plot by the anticlericals, in order to provide a key to explaining the context in which he was evoked, explaining the need and urgency of the agendas gathered around him.

## Sources

*A Lanterna – folha anticlerical de combate*, São Paulo, Brasil, 1909-1916. Collections of the Digital Hemeroteca of the National Library of Brazil and the Edgard Leuenroth Archive – UNICAMP.

Black and white postcard, unknown author, Paris, France, 1909. Cartoliste collection.

Color postcard by Firmín Sagrista, Paris, France, 1909. Personal collection of Eric B. Coullaud.

*Cultura Proletaria*, New York, USA, cover of October 13, 1910. Collection of the Fundació Ferrer i Guàrdia.

*Le Libertaire*, Paris, France, 1909. Collection of the National Library of France.

*Lustige Blätter*, Berlin, Germany, 1910. Heidelberger University archive.

*Renovacion*, San José, Costa Rica, 1911. Archive of the National Library of Costa Rica.

## Bibliography

- BELLUZZO, Ana Maria de Moraes. *Voltolino e as raízes do modernismo*. São Paulo: Marco Zero, 1992.
- BRASIL. Lei Adolfo Gordo. Providência sobre a expulsão de estrangeiros do território nacional. Decreto nº 1.641, de 7 de janeiro de 1907. Diário Oficial – 9/1/1907, p. 194.
- DI STEFANO, Roberto. Disidencia religiosa y secularización en el siglo XIX iberoamericano: cuestiones conceptuales y metodológicas. *Projeto História*, PUC-SP, v. 37 (2), p. 157-178, 2008. ISSN: 2176-2767. Acesso em: 23 out. 2023. Disponível em: <https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/revph/article/view/3050>.
- DI STEFANO, Roberto; ZANCA, José. *Pasiones anticlericales: um recorrido ibero-americano*. Bial: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 2013.
- DITTRICH, Lisa. *Anticlericalismo y vías de secularización en la Europa del siglo XIX: la excepcionalidad española*. Seminario/Aula Máster en Historia Contemporánea. Facultad de Xenografía e Historia, USC, Galiza, España, 2014.
- GIRARDET, Raoul. *Mitos e mitologias políticas*. Trad. Lúcia Maria Machado. São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 1987.
- GOMBRICH, Ernest Hans. *Meditações sobre um cavaleiro de pau*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 1999.
- OLIVEIRA, Ana Paula Neves de. *Francisco Ferrer y Guardia: um mito em disputa nas páginas anticlericais d'A Lanterna*. Prefácio de Valéria dos Santos Guimarães. São Paulo: Intermeios, no prelo, previsão outubro de 2024.
- POLETTI, Caroline. *A imaginação subversiva ao redor do mundo: Imagens, poesias e contos de protesto na imprensa anarquista e anticlerical (Espanha, Argentina e Brasil, 1897-1936)*. Tese de doutorado, Estudos Históricos Latinoamericanos, Departamento de História, UNISINOS, 2017.
- POLETTI, Caroline. *Tão perto ou tan lejos? Caricaturas e contos na imprensa libertária e anticlerical de Porto Alegre e de Buenos Aires (1897-1916)*. Dissertação de mestrado, História, Departamento de História, UNISINOS, 2011.
- PRADA, Antonio Moliner. Clericalismo y anticlericalismo en la España contemporánea. *História: Questões & Debates*. Curitiba: UFPR, jul./dez., 2011, p.59-82. ISSN: 0100-6932 e e-ISSN: 2447-8261. Acesso em 23 out. 2023. Disponível em: <https://revistas.ufpr.br/historia/issue/view/1332>. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5380/his.v55i2>.
- RAGO, Luzia Margareth. *Do cabaré ao Lar: a utopia da cidade disciplinar, Brasil 1890-1930*. (3ª ed.) São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1997 [1985].
- RÉMOND, René. Anticlericalism: some reflections by way of introduction. *European Studies Review*. London, Beverly Hills and New Delhi: Sage Publications, vol. 13, 1983. ISSN: 0014-3111. Acesso em: 23 out. 2023. Disponível em: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/026569148301300201>. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/026569148301300201>.
- RUDY, Antonio Cleber. *O anticlericalismo sob o manto da República: Tensões sociais e cultura libertária no Brasil (1901-1935)*. Tese de doutorado, História Social, Departamento de História, UNICAMP, 2017.

Received: 21/02/2024 – Approved: 21/08/2024

Editors Responsible

Miguel Palmeira and Stella Maris Scatena Franco