



# Catholicism and the Cold War in Latin America

International Conference  
Oxford, 21–22 November 2024

What role did Latin America play in Roman Catholicism's Cold War? How did religion shape the global Cold War? This conference brings together members of the "Global Pontificate of Pius XII. Catholicism in a Divided World, 1945–1958" research network and leading scholars from three continents to discuss these questions across two days at the University of Oxford. Despite being home to a plurality of the world's Roman Catholics by the mid-twentieth century, Latin America has often been relegated to the peripheries of transnational accounts of Catholicism's Cold War. Similarly, considering the role

of religion broadly opens new understandings of the course of the Cold War. The assembled papers place Latin America at the center of transnational networks, conflicts, and discourses that structured the experience of a global faith tradition and institution of an equally global conflict.

Topics covered by the papers include Catholic Action and student movements, mass communications, Christian Democracy, missions and Indigenous peoples, Vatican diplomacy and outreach, the role of the US Catholic Church, and liberation theology.

Fig.: Protest of the Cost-of-Living Movement, Praça da Sé, São Paulo, Brazil, 27 August 1978 (photo credit: Fundo Jornal Movimento, Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo).

## Conference venue

St Antony's College  
Dahrendorf Room  
Founder's Building  
62 Woodstock Rd  
Oxford  
OX2 6JF  
[www.sant.ox.ac.uk](http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk)

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*In-person event. Only the Latin American History Seminar will be held as in-person event and on Zoom.*

**To join online, please register in advance:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZlufuyqqzouH9Yn8Z4BnCIMc3lTHgicwOPN>

Thursday, 21 November 2024

1.00 pm Opening Welcome Remarks

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## I - Cold War Ideals

1.15 pm Victoria Basulto | South Bend, Indiana  
"Dios, Patria, y Libertad". Cristeros, Martyrs, and Global Catholicism in Cold War Mexico (1952–1968)

Anna Cant | London  
"Trabajando como guerrilleros sueltos". Transnational Connections and Organizational Challenges in the Work of Unda, International Catholic Association for Radio and Television

Stephan Ruderer | Santiago  
Joseph Cardijn, Social Catholicism in Chile and Argentina and Anti-Communism

2.45 pm Coffee Break

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## II - Missionaries, Humanitarianism, and NGOs

3.15 pm Piotr Kosicki | College Park, Maryland  
– Chile in Caracas. Pinochet, the Adenauer Foundation, and the End of Venezuela's Global Leadership

4.45 pm Massimo De Giuseppe | Milano  
Indigenous People, Missions and the Cold War. Pius XII's Missionary Renewal Project in Latin America

Sam Kuijken | Leuven  
"Ni whisky ni vodka / Ron / sano, sabroso y cubano."  
The Juventud Obrera Cristiana and the Catholic Attempt to shape the Cuban Revolution

### Latin American Centre

5.00 pm Latin American History Seminar (in-person and Zoom, to join online, please register:

6.30 pm <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/824BnCIMc3lTHgicwOPN>)

### Latin America in Catholicism's Global Cold War

Joint talk by editors Daniel McDonald | Oxford - Jaime Pensado | South Bend, Indiana – Simon Unger | Roma

Friday, 22 November 2024

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## III - Cold War Diplomacy

8.30 am Daniel McDonald | Oxford  
The Papal Volunteers for Latin America. The United States in the Inter-American Catholic Cold War, 1960–1972

Nina Valbousquet | Manchester  
"Unwanted" Refugees in Latin America. Jews and Communists in Vatican Postwar Migration Policies

Bonar Hernández Sandoval | Ames, Iowa  
Guatemala and the Vatican during the Cold War

Joaquín M. Chávez | Chicago, Illinois  
The House on Fire. The Catholic Church's Mediation in El Salvador's Civil War, 1984–1989

10.15 am Coffee Break

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## IV - Liberation Theology and the Left

10.45 am Sandra Londono-Ardila | Miami, Florida  
– The Latin American Secretariat of Catholic Students. Committed Activists in the Works of a Changing Church and Society, 1962–1973

12.30 pm

Stephen Andes | Eugene, Oregon  
Filming Theologies of Liberation in the Americas. Aldo Francia's *Ya no basta con rezar* and St. Claire Bourne's *Let the Church Say Amen!*

Rosie Doyle | Warwick  
Sergio Méndez Arceo, Bishop of Cuernavaca, Mexico and the "struggle against imperialism colonialism, neo-colonialism and other forms of exploitation"

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## V - Rethinking the Right

2.15 pm Luis Herrán Ávila | Las Cruces, New Mexico  
– The Path to Salvation. The Paramilitarization of Catholic Right-Wing Youth in Cold War Latin America

4.00 pm

Martina Weisz | Jerusalem  
Saving the Western Christian Civilization in a Latin American Context. The Argentinean Province of Jujuy as a Case Study

Gema Kloppe-Santamaría | Cork, Republic of Ireland  
The Politics of Religious Violence in Cold War Mexico and Colombia (1945–1958)

Isabella Villarinho Pereyra | Rio de Janeiro  
A Religious Cold War. Family Rosary Crusade and the U.S. against Communism in Brazil