

ELECTIONS IN BRAZIL'S FIRST REPUBLIC 1889 ~ 1930



Brasília
TSE
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Foreword





Years ago, the political scientist Jairo Nicolau wrote that *few countries have an electoral history as rich as Brazil's* (Nicolau, 2012, page 7). This book reveals to the broad audience of readers the complex history of the federal elections during the period of the First Republic (1889-1930). Even nowadays, it remains mostly known for being a period dominated by the rule of the so-called *colonels* (named *coronelismo* in Portuguese) and its consequences for the system of political representation of those times, particularly voter coercion by political bosses who aimed to manufacture false electoral results.

Gathered together by a common interest in revealing the complexity of the electoral history during the First Republic, going beyond the usual field of the rule of the colonels and electoral fraud, the authors of the chapters that follow have engaged in multidisciplinary collaboration to shed light on forgotten aspects; they reconstruct the contests behind the naming of presidential candidates; they recall the central role of political parties in organizing federal elections; they present the electoral rules as tools that linked power relationships, and the politicians themselves as political entrepreneurs. The final product of the work is the sketching of a new view of the set of actors who took part in the First Republic elections.

The book has two parts. The first part deals with broader issues, such as electoral rules, including those that established the electoral calendar (Jaqueline Porto Zulini). This item also includes the process of voting and counting the results of the elections to the National Congress, partly regulated by the internal rules of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate (Jaqueline Porto Zulini and Paolo Ricci). Another chapter focuses on the careers of elected senators, whose trajectories reveal how politicians sought to make careers out of joining political parties, even though the law did not oblige them to join a party to stand for election (Lucas Massimo). Another pattern emerges from reflecting on the electoral results of the contests for the Chamber of Deputies. In line with a recent comparative debate, electoral fraud may be thought of not only as an expression of the violation of

certain individual rights, but as a mirror of the competition for controlling the local electoral bureaucracy (Paolo Ricci).

The second part of the book delves into the study of presidential races. The introductory chapter provides an overview of the complexity of the process for deciding who the candidates would be, strongly influenced by the country's federal dynamic, comprising national conventions and continuous negotiation between state elites (Cláudia Maria Ribeiro Viscardi). Next, each presidential election from 1891 to 1930 is treated individually, but focused on two central points: the pre-election contest from the selection of the candidate endorsed by the incumbent president through the electoral race itself all the way to the official recognition of the elected candidate.

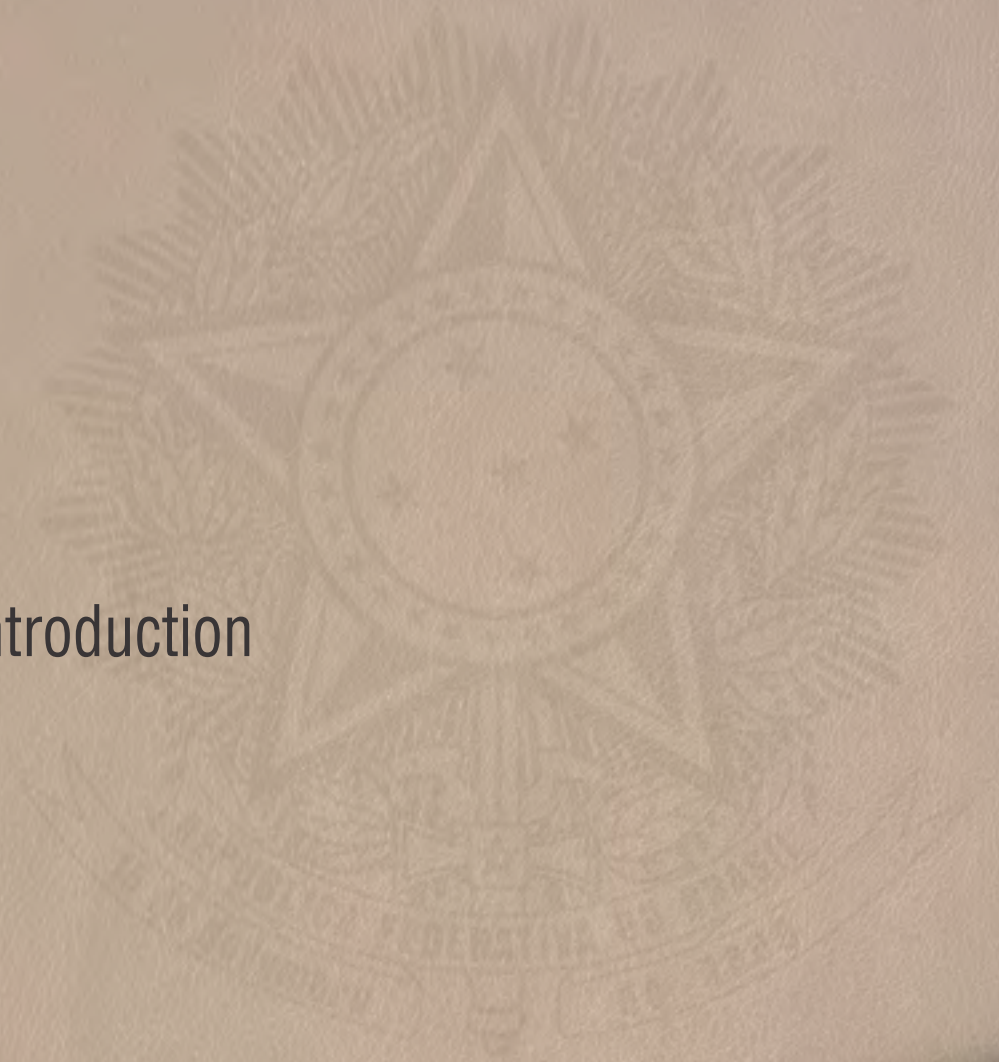
All the chapters are illustrated with photographs and cartoons from that period in order to recover part of the forgotten electoral history of the First Republic. It was only possible to gather this archive material thanks to the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional's invaluable work of digitalizing newspapers and magazines. We wish to thank the institution and hope that the reader enjoys this more playful and vivid immersion in the electoral history of the First Republic. We would also like to thank the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico, (process no. 306071/2017-7) and the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP) (processes no. 13/25053-0 and no. 18/23060-2) for their financial support.

Paolo Ricci (coordinator)





Introduction





I – The book

This book is a study of the parliamentary and presidential elections in the period of Brazil's First Republic (1889 to 1930). Based on cooperation between the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) and the Universidade de São Paulo (USP), through its Núcleo de Estudos Comparados e Internacionais, the publication seeks to uncover details of the electoral process in that period.

The research and the texts in the book were carried out and drafted by various academic specialists. The Information Management Secretariat (SGI) of the TSE was responsible for its layout and publication. We want to highlight the valuable support of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, of the Museu da República and of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República, which kindly granted and authorized the use of their outstanding archives. The book, which has been written using robust, extensive and in-depth research, will certainly be a valuable reference for those who engage in the study of Brazilian elections.

The studies published herein reveal the complexities and particularities of each presidential election, with their contests between parties and electoral rules that were little known until that point. The conflicts between the parties, the control of the process by the local oligarchies, and the competition for control of the electoral bureaucracy are some of the themes which are analyzed.

II – Brief reflections on elections during the First Republic

Brazilian republican history is traditionally divided into six periods. The first one—dealt with in this book—lasts from the Proclamation of the Republic, in 1889, until the Revolution of 1930.





During the Empire, the right to political participation was restricted in various ways: based on politics, religion, education, economic status, race and gender. The Constitution of 1824 brought in indirect and censitary voting, and vetoed candidates who did not follow the State religion. An analysis of corruption in the Empire shows the electoral manipulation carried out by the central authorities or local political bosses, who controlled the electoral process and thwarted any free choice by voters and electors. The elections of 1840 became known as the Truncheon elections, such was the violence used and the fraud committed in the counting of the votes.

The country's first electoral reform came with the so-called Saraiva Law (Decree No. 3,029, of January 9th, 1881), which established direct elections for senators and deputies, prohibited voting by illiterate people and maintained demands that restricted which candidates could take part. To give an idea of the scale of the restrictions on suffrage in the elections of 1881, there were only 150,000 citizens registered as voters, the equivalent of 1.4% of the total population.

With the Proclamation of the Republic, there was some progress. The income requirements for exercising political rights were abolished, although the exclusion of the illiterate was maintained. The literacy rate among the Brazilian population, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was about 15%, while participation in the electoral process was less than 6%. Women suffrage was only introduced in Brazil by the Electoral Code of 1932, and illiterate people were only allowed to vote after the Constitutional Amendment of May 15th, 1985, though they were still prevented from running for elected office.

In the First Republic, elections were characterized by reduced popular participation, by their linkage with the colonel system, and by fraud and violence. In an era when candidates were not registered and there were no official ballots, any name could be freely chosen by voters. Rui Barbosa, for example, received votes in all the direct elections for president of the Republic, until his death in 1923.

Violence, combined with the partisan dominance of the administrative machine, ensured that the political elites remained in control of the results from the ballot boxes. The control of this bureaucracy comprised command over all the stages of the elections: from voter registration and qualification, through the composition of the receiving boards to the official recognition of the winning candidates by the boards responsible for counting the votes. One could say that the history of the Brazilian Republic was, for many decades, the history of electoral fraud.

Open (as opposed to secret) voting facilitated vote-buying (known in Brazilian Portuguese as *voto de cabresto*), thought which local political leaders could control who electors voted for. In addition, there was vote-rigging (*voto a bico de pena* as it is known in Portuguese) where the boards responsible for counting the votes altered the results, including votes from deceased people or even completely manufacturing official voting tallies. These and other types of irregularities characterized the elections of the First Republic and led to uprisings such as the Lieutenants' Movement and the Revolution of 1930.

These unfortunate practices began to be countered by the introduction of the Electoral Justice System in 1932. From the moment when this specialized and independent body of the Judicial Branch came into being, the power to control elections was taken out of the hands of the Executive Branch. Since then, all electoral work—registration, tallies, and the recognition and certification in of winning candidates—came under the responsibility of the Judicial Branch. The unbiased and non-partisan work of the Electoral Justice System has been decisive in fighting fraud. The continued improvement of its services and procedures resulted, sometime later, in the establishment of the system of electronic voting machines that we have today and in the biometric identification of voters.

III – Conclusion

The creation of the Electoral Justice System in 1932 was justified by the desire to overcome the behaviors practiced in the so-called *Old Republic*. To understand



the political contests of the old oligarchies is to also understand the role allocated to the Electoral Justice System in history. Reflecting on the past sheds light on the present. In other words, understanding the dilemmas of yesterday's Brazil helps us deal with the challenges of today.

This book reinforces confidence in the potentialities of the Electoral Justice System and in democratic institutions. In the year in which we celebrate 89 years of the Electoral Justice System and 132 years of the republican regime, we present to Brazilian society, to readers, researchers, professors and students, this important publication, extensively illustrated with cartoons and photographs from the period.

Justice Luís Roberto Barroso

President of the Superior Electoral Court of Brazil



Political representation in the First Republic (1889-1930)

Jaqueline Porto Zulini
Fundação Getulio Vargas — Rio de Janeiro
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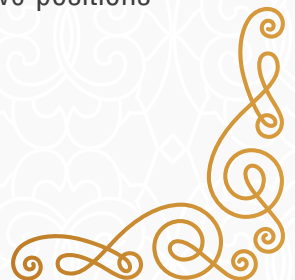
Following the Proclamation of the Republic, a provisional government was formed to establish the foundations of the new regime and dismantle the institutional legacy of the monarchy. A key step in this process was the calling of elections on September 15th, 1890, to choose members of the Constituent Assembly tasked with drafting the new republican Constitution of Brazil.

The new Constitution, promulgated in 1891, marked the beginning of the republican regime in Brazil, organized under a federal system. This structure divided the country into three levels of government: municipal, state, and federal. Political representatives at each level were selected through elections. The exercise of power across these three levels of government was split among the Legislative Branch, responsible for making laws; the Executive Branch, responsible for enforcing them; and the Judicial Branch, whose members, while not elected, were appointed for their remarkable legal expertise to adjudicate, according to the legislation of that time, conflicts among citizens, entities, and the state.

The number of elected members was extensive. The Legislative Branch was organized similarly to the present system. At the municipal level, the City Council acted as the legislative body. At the state level, most states had a unicameral Legislative Assembly, composed of state deputies, mirroring the current system. However, six states (Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Bahia, Pernambuco, Alagoas, and Pará) had a bicameral legislature, dividing legislative power between a State Assembly and a Senate. At the federal level, the system followed the current bicameral format, with the National Congress split into two houses: the Chamber of Deputies, representing the people, and the Federal Senate, representing the states. The current structure of the Executive Branch is reminiscent of that period. The mayor headed the municipal level, the governor led at the state level, and the president served as the head of state at the federal level. This institutional framework created a complex electoral process, as elections were held for numerous legislative and executive positions across all levels of government.



O Malho of 01.05.1918, cover.
Artist: K. LIXTO (Calixto Cordeiro – 1877/1957).
The collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.





The electoral rules and statistics for municipal and state elections were decentralized, and much of this information remains unknown today. In contrast, the newly discovered information on the electoral process at federal level, presented below is complete and reveals the effervescence of Brazil's representative regime during the First Republic.

The rules and timetable for federal elections

Unlike today, presidential elections were not held at the same time as congressional elections. The Constitution set the presidential term at four years and prohibited re-election. It specified that presidential elections would always take place on March 1st of the last year of the president's term, *i.e.*, in the fourth year of the mandate. In contrast, the term for deputies was three years, and for senators, it was nine years, with ordinary legislation determining the regular election dates. However, the Constitution stipulated that congressional elections for both chambers would occur simultaneously, as one-third of the Senate had to be renewed every three years. This arrangement meant that the president's government had to navigate two different legislative bodies during its term. An important distinction in the legislative elections of the time was that no alternates were elected for the legislature, unlike in the case of the presidency, in which a vice-presidential candidate was also elected. If a vacancy occurred in the Chamber of Deputies or the Senate—due to resignation, death, or other reasons—supplementary elections had to be held.

Table 1 below outlines the dates of the regular federal elections held during the First Republic and the presidential administration in office at the time.

Table 1 – Dates of federal elections held in the First Republic (1890-1930)

Election dates	Chamber of Deputies	Federal Senate	Presidency and Vice-Presidency of the Republic	Federal government
9.15.1890	Constituent Congress (1890-1891)			Deodoro da Fonseca (November 1889 – November 1891)
3.1.1894	x	x	x	Floriano Peixoto (November 1891 – November 1894)
12.30.1896	x	x		Prudente de Moraes (November 1894 – November 1898)
3.1.1898			x	
12.31.1899	x	x		Campos Salles (November 1898 – November 1902)
3.1.1902			x	
2.18.1903	x	x		Rodrigues Alves (November 1902 – November 1906)
1.30.1906	x	x	x	
1.30.1909	x	x		Afonso Pena (November 1906 – June 1909)
3.1.1910			x	Nilo Peçanha (June 1909 – November 1910)
1.30.1912	x	x		Hermes da Fonseca (November 1910 – November 1914)
3.1.1914			x	
1.30.1915	x	x		Venceslau Brás (November 1914 – November 1918)
3.1.1918	x	x		
4.13.1919			x	Delfim Moreira (November 1918 – July 1919)
2.20.1921	x	x		Epitácio Pessoa (July 1919 – November 1922)
3.1.1922			x	
2.17.1924	x	x		Arthur Bernardes (November 1922 – November 1926)
3.1.1926			x	
2.24.1927	x	x		Washington Luís (November 1926 – October 1930)
3.1.1930	x	x	x	

Source: Authors' own drafting based on the Arquivos da Câmara dos Deputados (1890-1930).



The Constitution of Brazil, by leaving the date for legislative elections to be determined by ordinary legislation, allowed for greater flexibility in scheduling congressional elections. From 1891 onwards, four main laws governed the electoral process at the federal level. The first was Law No. 35, passed on January 26th, 1892, which framed federal elections until 1903. This law set October 30th of the final year of the legislative term as the date for elections to the positions of deputy or senator. In 1904, Law No. 1,269, also known as the Rosa e Silva Law, reformed the electoral system and set new rules in place until the 1915 elections. Under this law, the date for federal legislative elections was moved to January 30th, after the conclusion of the previous legislature. In 1916, two more electoral reforms were introduced: Law No. 3,139, which regulated the voter registration process, and Law No. 3,208, which outlined the procedures for conducting the elections. Law No. 3,208 also established the rule that congressional elections should occur after the end of the previous legislature, with the election date set to the first Sunday in February. While the electoral calendar for federal legislative elections was followed only during the period regulated by the Rosa e Silva Law, the relaxation of other election dates did not significantly disrupt the formation and installation of new legislatures.

Regarding the timing of presidential elections, regularity was generally maintained. The only notable deviation occurred under the rule of Marshal Floriano Peixoto, who, in a period of authoritarian rule, postponed elections. The only other deviation from the regular schedule involved supplementary elections, triggered by the death of President Rodrigues Alves. Elected on March 1st, 1918, for what would have been his second term, Rodrigues Alves died before he could take office. According to the law, supplementary elections should be held if the presidency or vice-presidency became vacant within two years of the start of the term. As a result, Rodrigues Alves' vice-president, Delfim Moreira, served as interim president for approximately eight months. The subsequent elections were held in 1919, resulting in the election of Epitácio Pessoa.

Recommended further reading

AGUIAR, L. de Souza. *Palácio Monroe: da glória ao opróbrio*. Rio de Janeiro: Arte Moderna, 1976.

SARMENTO, Carlos Eduardo. *Com o passado a nos iluminar: as representações da memória sobre a nação no prédio do Palácio Tiradentes*. Rio de Janeiro: CPDOC, 1997.

Monroe Palace housed the Chamber of Deputies from 1914 to 1922.
Collection of the Museu do Voto (Superior Electoral Court).





The elections for the National Congress (1894-1930)

A contested process from voter registration to the formal certification of the winning candidates

Jaqueline Porto Zulini
Fundação Getulio Vargas/Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil — Rio de Janeiro (FGV/CPDOC-RJ)

Paolo Ricci
Universidade de São Paulo (USP)



Voter registration, choosing electoral receiving boards, counting votes and formally recognizing winning candidates were the four fundamental stages of the holding of elections during the First Republic. As the Electoral Justice System did not yet exist, all the work was left in the hands of the various players, who were mostly politicians with an interest in the results of the elections. The level of detail created by the legislation ended up creating a *true bureaucracy, in charge of enabling the development of the electoral process*.

The geography of political representation

The geographical logic underlying the federal elections varied according to the position being contested. The whole of Brazil functioned as a single electoral constituency for the election of the president and vice-president of the Republic, who were elected by direct suffrage and by an absolute majority of the votes cast. Each voter could choose one name for president and another one for vice-president, written on different ballots.

The elections for the Senate, the states' house of representatives, were carried out by federal unit. The winning candidates were those who received an absolute majority of the votes, in a scenario where each voter chose just one name to replace the senator whose mandate had finished. When there was more than one vacancy to be filled at the same time, voters had to cast separate ballots to fill each of the positions. The constitutional text itself set the size of the Senate, composed of 3 senators per state and 3 for the Federal District. At the time, Brazil was divided into 20 states, as well as the Federal District, which meant a total of 63 federal senators.

The electoral geography changed when voting for the Chamber of Deputies, which followed an electoral system typical of the nineteenth century and one that was quite different from the current one where the rule of absolute majority was applied in the so-called multi-member districts. More than one deputy was elected





per electoral district, and the states did not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of the electoral districts, since the more populous states were sub-divided into smaller electoral districts.

The Constitution of 1891 established that the number of deputies should be set by law in a proportion never greater than *one per seventy thousand inhabitants*, subject to a minimum of 4 per state. In practice, it left it to the ordinary legislation to detail the number of representatives and to define the electoral districts. In the case of the districts, Law No. 35/1892 took responsibility for this and set the geography of the electoral contests: states that elected at most 5 deputies constituted one single district, while the others were divided into districts of 3 deputies each. Any fractions thereof were added to the district of the state capital. Thus, for example, where a state elected 7 federal deputies and was therefore divided into 2 districts, the capital district would elect 4 of its 7 representatives. Decree No. 1,542, of September 1st, 1893, which approved the instructions for the federal elections, limited the number of deputies to 212, and outlined, in line with Law No. 35/1892, 63 electoral districts.

Table 1 – Number of federal deputies and electoral districts per state (1892-1930)

States	Number of deputies	Number of districts set by law	
		Law No. 35/1892	Law No. 1,269/1904
Minas Gerais	37	12	7
São Paulo	22	7	4
Bahia	22	7	4
Rio de Janeiro	17	5	3
Pernambuco	17	5	3
Rio Grande do Sul	16	5	3
Distrito Federal	10	3	2
Ceará	10	3	2
Pará	7	2	1
Maranhão	7	2	1
Alagoas	6	2	1

(Continuation)

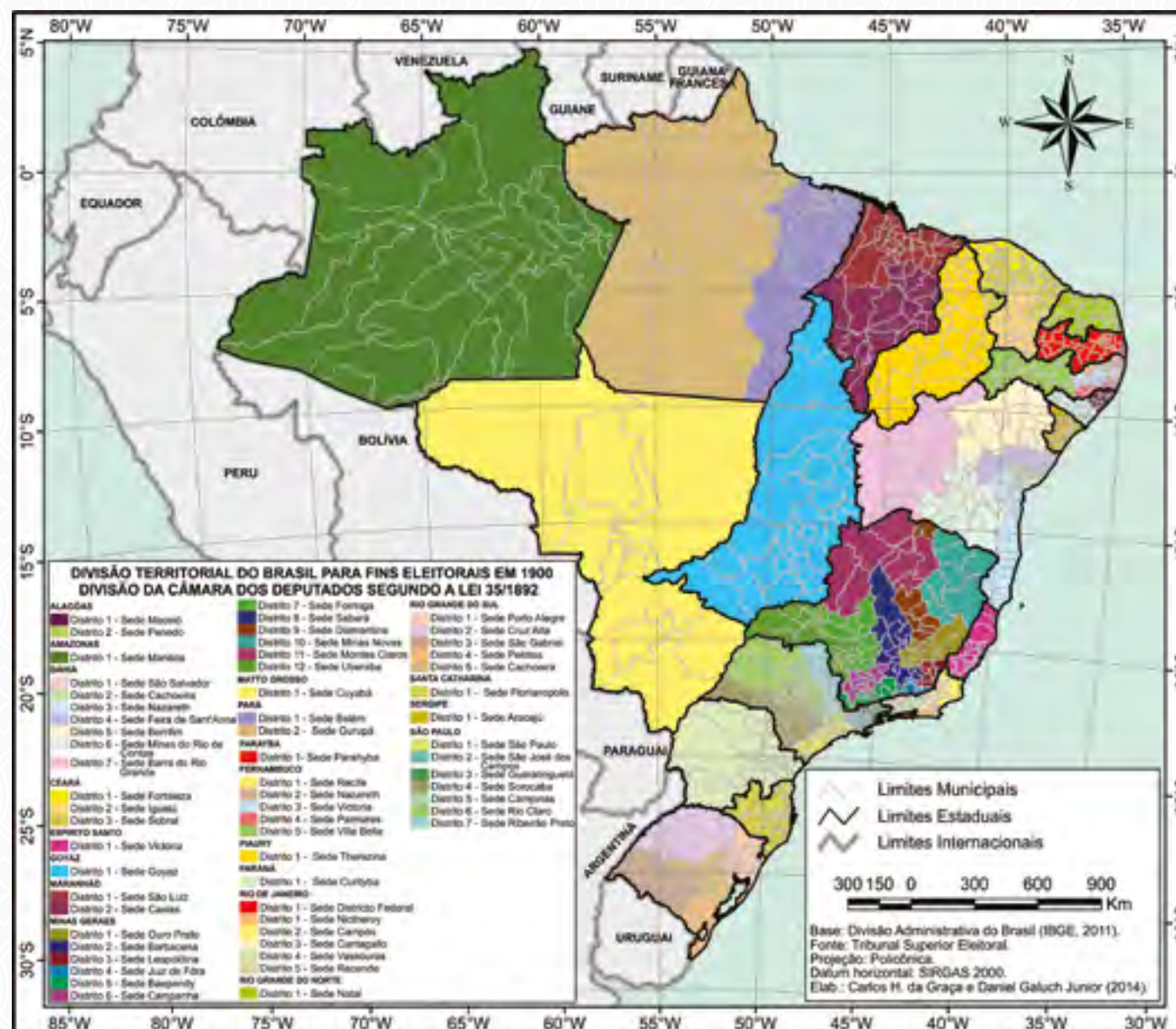
States	Number of deputies	Number of districts set by law	
		Law No. 35/1892	Law No. 1,269/1904
Paraíba	5	1	1
Piauí	4	1	1
Sergipe	4	1	1
Rio Grande do Norte	4	1	1
Paraná	4	1	1
Santa Catarina	4	1	1
Goiás	4	1	1
Amazonas	4	1	1
Espírito Santo	4	1	1
Mato Grosso	4	1	1
Total	212	63	41

Source: Authors' own drafting.

With the promulgation of the Rosa e Silva Law, it was decided that there would be a rearrangement of the electoral geography. States that elected up to 7 deputies would from now on become a single district—in other situations, districts would be made up of 5 deputies. The change reduced the number of districts from 63 to 41, but did not affect the number of deputies, which remained at 212 for the whole of the First Republic. Where the number of deputies was not perfectly divisible by 5, in order to form the districts, the remaining fraction was added to the district of the state capital and, occasionally, to the first and second districts, each of which would elect 6 deputies (Article 58). The state that elected the most representatives to the Chamber of Deputies was Minas Gerais, which had 37 seats. Next were São Paulo and Bahia with 22 deputies each, Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro with 17, Rio Grande do Sul with 16, and other states with representations varying between 4 and 10 members. The following maps help to visualize this new reconfiguration of the electoral districts.



Figure 1 – Territorial division of Brazil into electoral districts according to Law No. 35/1892



Source: drafted by Graça, Carlos H. from Graça and Daniel Galuch Jr. based on Electoral Law No. 35/1892.



Figure 2 – Territorial division of Brazil into electoral districts according to Decree No. 1.542/1905



Source: drafted by Graça, Carlos H. from Graça and Daniel Galuch Jr. based on Electoral Law No. 35/1892.



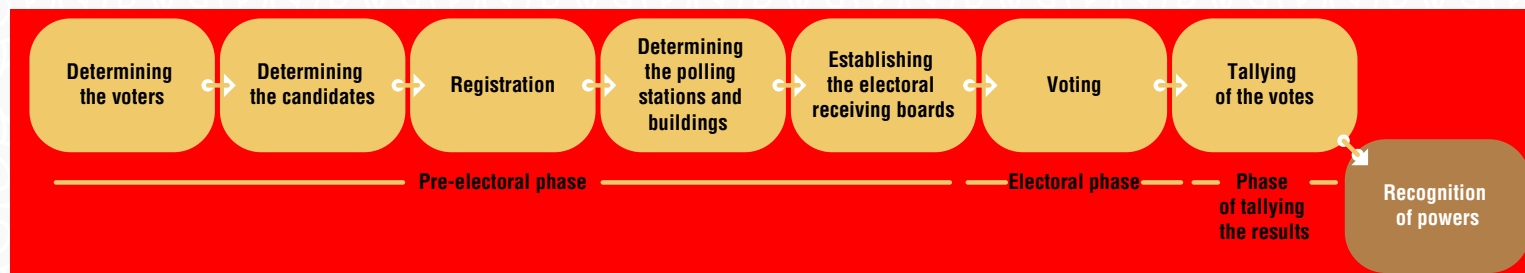
The electoral process from voter registration to the formal certification of the winning candidates

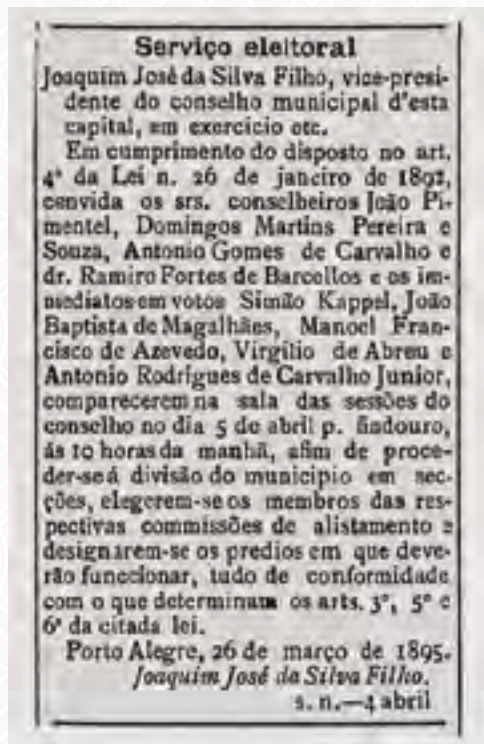
The electoral process can be understood as the set of stages that make up an election. During the First Republic, various actors and different institutions were involved in the federal electoral process, since the Electoral Justice System did not yet exist to take on all the work. In general terms, everything centered around three essential phases. The first of them was the pre-electoral phase, in which the territory was divided up into districts and the electoral receiving boards were established. Election day was the intermediary phase which triggered the tallying of the results. Finally, the last phase—also known as the *third count*—always remained in the hands of the federal legislators, appointed by the Constitution to formally recognize the powers of the winning candidates. In the case of the presidential elections, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate were supposed to meet in a joint session in the National Congress to analyze them. As for the elections for the legislative houses of the Congress, it was up to each one exclusively to judge the election of its respective members. The following flow diagram summarizes the three stages.

Voter registration

Law No. 35/1892 assigned voter registration to the municipal sphere. It was established that each municipality would be divided into at least four electoral districts, where ward committees would be responsible for preparing the registration work, later reviewed by a municipal committee (Articles. 2 and 3). To start the process, the law set an annual date for the members of the municipal government (Chamber of Deputies, City Hall, or Council) to meet with those who had received fewer votes than them in order to divide the municipality into electoral districts and choose the ward registration committees (Article 3). It was up to the president of the municipal government to issue the call for his colleagues to meet with those who had received fewer votes. The meeting decided on the division of the municipality's territory into electoral districts, and chose, from among the voters of the municipality, five full members and two alternates to form the ward committees. At this time, a decision was also made about the place where the ward registration committees would be established. There were no specific criteria for this task, since the law merely suggested dividing the municipality into "convenient electoral districts" (Article 39), a very general notion that allowed for some discretion in identifying the areas. After this work was finished, it was enough to record the respective minutes in the book of the municipal government's ordinary sessions, signed by all those present. The conditions were thus created for the ward registration committees to be established, also annually, with each one choosing, on its first working day, a chairman and a secretary.

Figure 3 – The electoral process of the federal elections





Detail of the decree summoning the members of the electoral board to start the work of registration published in the newspaper *A Federação* of 3.26.1895, Rio Grande do Sul, page 3. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

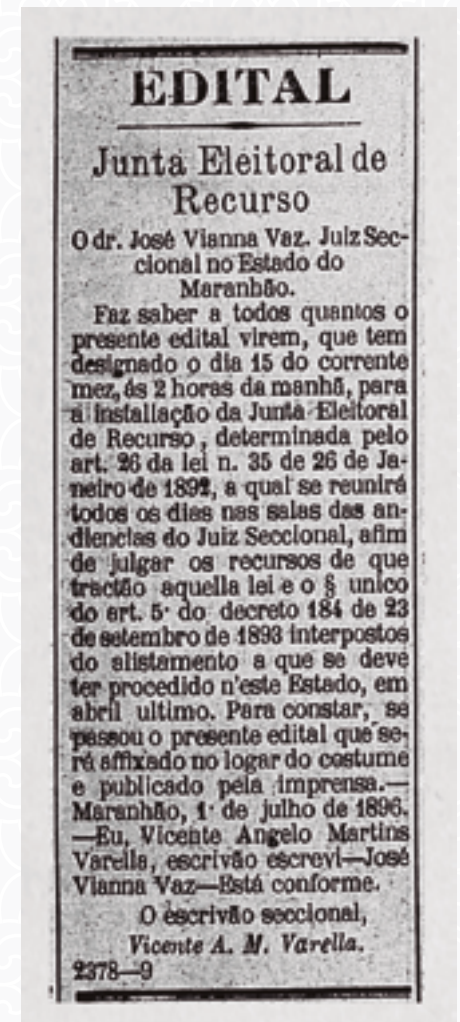
To conclude the voter registration process, each municipality would have the involvement of a municipal committee, *made up of the chairmen of the ward committees and chaired by the president of the municipal government*. The law established that this municipal committee would meet in the municipal government building. Its work would follow a similar logic to that of the ward committees, continuing for 20 calendar days in public sessions and with the daily making of official records in a special book belonging to the municipal government. Once the register had been entered in the municipal government's book, there would then be a period for the extraction of two copies of this register: one for sending to the *governor* and another one for the *ward judge*. All the books and electoral papers

In practical terms, the work of the ward registration committees would last 30 calendar days. Each would begin by reviewing the previous registration process in order to incorporate into the new one all the names of the voters who lived there, regardless of any requests. However, the ward committees could not register anyone without a request or unless they knew them personally, even if the citizen was well known to meet the criteria to be a voter. At the end of the work, it was expected that the chairmen of the ward committees would be able to report all those who were included and not included in the register, recorded in daily records, more specifically: the names of deceased voters; the names of those transferred to another electoral domicile (with a declaration of the new domicile); and of those who had lost political capacity. Organized thus, by wards, the general register would show voters' names in alphabetical order, numbered successively, with an indication of their age, their civil status, their profession and their parents.

of the ward committees and of the municipal committee were supposed to remain in the custody of the municipal government.

Appeals were allowed against the municipal committee's decisions on inclusions and non-inclusions of citizens in the registration, as well as eliminations. Appeals could be lodged within the pre-established deadline by any citizen not included or eliminated, and by any voter in the municipality, in the case of inappropriate inclusion or non-elimination. Then the chairman of the municipal committee was supposed to submit each appeal to the committee's decision, and if it upheld the appealed decision, it would send the appeal to an *electoral board*, by Registered Mail.

The central role of the Mail Service in the sending of the electoral documents, however, continued after the decisions on all the appeals, since all the papers went back to the municipal committee via this service. Acting in the state capital, the electoral board would consist of the ward judge, his substitute and the ward prosecutor; therefore, composed solely of judicial authorities. The ward judge was in charge of taking all the essential measures for the composition and establishment of the electoral board. The law established that the board's activities would take place on consecutive days and for the time necessary to decide on all the appeals submitted. If the board did not give its ruling on an appeal, it was considered automatically granted.



Detail of the decree summoning the members of the Electoral Appeals Board for the start of their work published in the weekly newspaper *A Pacotilha* of 07.04.1896, Maranhão, page 1, with the list of the citizens registered for the federal elections.



Finally, the end of the registration work took place after the meeting of all the municipal committees, when the decisions of the electoral board on the relevant inclusions and exclusions were taken into account. It concluded with the final publication of the register and the making of three copies: one for sending to the *minister of the Interior*; another one to the *state government*; and another one to the ward judge. The minister of the Interior, for his part, had to print the same copy and send the original to the secretariat of the Chamber of Deputies.



Cartoon making fun of the era's bureaucratic requirements for registering a voter, published in the magazine *Revista da Semana* of 4.9.1905, Rio de Janeiro, page 3.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

At the request of each municipal committee, the list of the electors qualified according to the recently concluded registration would be transcribed in the register of the notary, who would give a receipt to whoever asked for one.

After the publication of the Rosa e Silva Law, in 1904, there were significant changes in the voter registration process. The first major change was the abolition of the ward committees, which prepared the register by electoral districts in the municipality. This task was transferred to a special committee, which took over the preparations for registration in each municipality. The criteria for choosing the members of these committees were the second crucial innovation triggered by the Rosa e Silva Law, which brought back the criteria for restricted suffrage, formally abolished by the Federal Constitution of 1891. According to the new electoral law, the wealthiest citizens were obliged to take part in the task of voter registration



Detail of a photograph showing citizens seeking to register as voters in Oliveira, Minas Gerais, published in *O Malho* of 8.5.1905, page 9.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



In order to identify the wealthiest citizens, it was established that the *states' tax offices* should provide the books with the tax entries. Thus, the *tax collectors or officers in charge of public revenue* could list the *30 largest taxpayers in the municipality*, 15 of them payers of the urban property tax, and the other 15 payers of the tax on rural property or on industries or professions. Various provisions set out deadlines and conditions for sending the books with the tax data, the official records, the initials and other formalities necessary to ensure that there was enough information in time for the summoning of the voter registration committee.

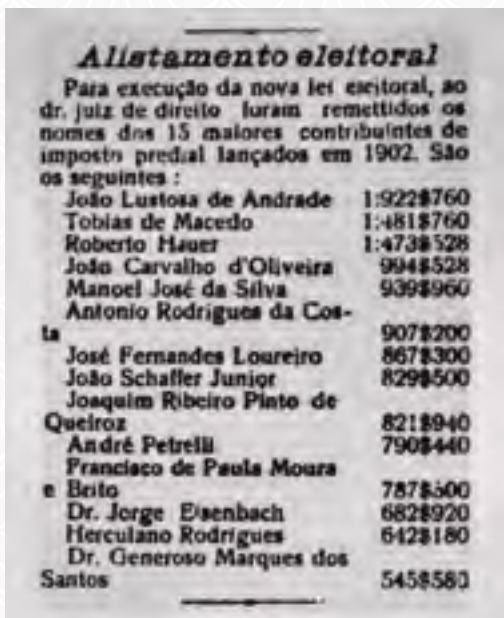
According to the Rosa e Silva Law, the voter registration committee would be composed

[...] at the county level, of the ordinary judge or of his acting legal substitute; in the municipalities that are not headquarters and counties, of the highest state judicial authority, and where there is no state judicial authority, of the assistant to the federal prosecutor, as chairman, with only a casting vote; of the four largest taxpayers resident in the municipality who are Brazilian citizens and know how to read and write, with two of them being payers of the urban property tax and two payers of the taxes on rural property, whatever their denomination, and of three citizens elected by the effective members of the municipal government and those with fewer votes than them, in an equal number. (Law No.1,269/1904, Article 9, our emphasis).

This was with the following caveat:

In the capitals and where there are no payers of taxes on rural property, the two largest payers of the tax on industries and professions (commercial establishments) would serve alongside a similar number of payers of the urban property tax. (Law No.1,269/1904, Article 9).

Detail of the fifteen largest payers of the property tax in 1902, published by the newspaper *Diário da Tarde* of 3.8.1905, Paraná, page 1. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Alistamento eleitoral	
Para execução da nova lei eleitoral, ao dr. juiz de direito foram remetidos os nomes dos 15 maiores contribuintes de imposto predial lançados em 1902. São os seguintes:	
João Lustosa de Andrade	1:922\$760
Tobias de Macedo	1:481\$760
Roberto Hauer	1:473\$528
João Carvalho d'Oliveira	994\$528
Manoel José da Silva	939\$960
Antonio Rodrigues da Costa	907\$200
José Fernandes Loureiro	867\$300
João Schaffer Junior	829\$500
Joaquim Ribeiro Pinto de Queiroz	821\$940
André Petrelli	790\$440
Francisco de Paula Moura	
Brilo	787\$500
Dr. Jorge Eisenbach	682\$920
Herculano Rodrigues	642\$180
Dr. Generoso Marques dos Santos	545\$580

The difference from the procedure that had been followed previously is clear: the judicial authorities and the members of the municipal government continued to be involved in the process of voter registration, but economic power and the acknowledged variation therein between the city and the countryside came into play to share the work with the Judiciary and the political authorities. The 1902 financial year was set as the basis for the first voter registration after the publication of this electoral reform.

The working period of the voter registration committees was extended because the work was not supposed to continue being counted in calendar days and because the urban-rural dichotomy once again became a criterion. In the state capitals, the voter registration committees were to be established for 90 days, working 4 days per week, including on Saturdays. In the other municipalities, it was decided that the committees would operate for 60 days, 4 days per week, with weekends off. Only in the last 10 days would the work of the voter registration committees have to continue daily, both in the capitals and in the interior.

For the first time, the work of voter registration was to be audited. According to the Rosa e Silva Law, the voter registration committees were forbidden to reject, under any pretext, any citizen who qualified for registration and was resident in the municipality, and who, presenting themselves as a representative of any political grouping, asked to be accepted as an auditor of the work of registration. Moreover, the partial records of the work of each voter registration committee and the final records, in which the total number and names of included and excluded citizens were mentioned, were supposed to carry the signatures of the members of the committees and of



Detail of news item about the complaints made by overseers working for candidates in the elections in the Federal District published in the newspaper *Gazeta de Notícias* of 1.31.1909, Rio de Janeiro, page 5. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

the *auditors*. This meant that even the records of the voter registration committees came to declare differing votes, protests and complaints submitted by interested parties or by auditors. An acceptance that different political forces could contest the registration of voters formally entered the rules.

Regarding the electoral appeals around voter registration, there were also significant changes. The main innovation consisted in the involvement of more than one constitutional sphere in the processing of the appeals. According to the previous law, of 1892, this type of appeal could only be brought first to the voter registration committee itself and, if necessary, to the electoral board established in the state capital, which had the final word. With the Rosa e Silva electoral reform, however, there arose the possibility of questioning the decision of the board at the Federal Supreme Court (STF). Another novelty related to the safekeeping of the papers and documents relevant to the voter registration appeals, which previously remained in the hands of the municipal committee. This responsibility was passed to the secretary of the appeals board—in this case, *one of the clerks of the ward judge*. Additionally, a copy of the final voter register, *i.e.*, the one revised with the appropriate corrections, had to go to the Secretariat of the Senate.

As well as all the above-mentioned changes in the logic of the voter registration process, the Rosa e Silva Law also established that the first

voter registration conducted under its rules should become permanent. This significantly changed the way in which the revision of the register was viewed, a task that remained an annual one and followed the same stages as the first registration envisaged, but which due to the legislation itself came to take place during a period of only 30 days.

A new paradigm shift in the voter registration process occurred with the publication of Law No. 3,139, of August 2nd, 1916.

The law definitively broke with the *status quo* by concentrating the work of voter registration *only in the hands of the judicial authorities, excluding from this task the members of the municipal government and those who had received fewer votes, as well as the largest taxpayers in the municipality*. From that point on, citizens could request inclusion in the list of voters on any business day of the year. According to the new law, the registration request should be addressed:

In the States and in the Territories of Acre, to the ordinary judge of the municipality where the prospective voter lives and, where there is more than one ordinary judge, to that of the first court; in municipalities that are not the headquarters of a county, the voter registration process shall take place before the registration judges, where there are any, whatever their denomination in the organization of the State, it being up to the



Cover of the magazine *O Malho* of 2.23.1918 alluding to the positive reputation of the new electoral law in combating fraud. Design: K. LIXTO (Calixto Cordeiro – 1877/1957). Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



ordinary judge to issue the definitive ruling on inclusion or non-inclusion in the register of voters. (Law No. 3,139/1916, Article 4).

The clerk of the court was in charge of receiving the request and the respective evidence attached. It was up to him to pass the case files to the competent judge who, if he decided to reject inclusion, needed to give grounds for his decision. Any citizen who was not included could, in turn, renew their request at any time—moreover, if they felt harmed by the clerk because the latter had created an obstacle to registration, that citizen had the opportunity to complain to the ordinary judge.

If the obstacle was created by the ordinary judge, it was possible to turn to the appeals board, established in the state capital. The composition of this board remained unaltered: the federal judge of the section (chairman), his substitute and the state prosecutor general. However, the logic of the process changed. As the appeals no longer had any deadline by which they had to be filed, the board was supposed to work on the first few days of every month. In addition, the STF departed the scene as the highest body of appeal, abolishing the initiative created by the Rosa e Silva Law. Thus, the new law centralized the process of voter registration in the hands of judges.

Where did voting take place? Polling stations and buildings

As envisaged, Law No. 35/1892 recommended dividing municipalities into districts for the voter registration process to start, which already occurred in the buildings where the election itself would take place, by polling stations. Each polling station was not supposed to contain more than 250 voters. Until then, no distinction was made between public and private buildings, it being possible for the election to take place in private buildings, even when there were public buildings that were vacant and capable of hosting it.

List of citizens registered for the federal elections by section and the place of voting, published by the official newspaper *Correio Oficial* of 1.26.1921, Goiás, page 4.

Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

CORREIO OFFICIAL			Goiás - 1921	
1ª SEÇÃO - BACALHAU				
Eleitores públicos				
Eleitores				
1 Antonio Ribeiro Vaz	10 Argemiro da Fátima Pinto	83 Joaquim José da Conceição		
2 Amadeu Rodrigues de Moraes	11 Augusto de Sant'Anna e Silva	84 Joaquim Inácio Pereira		
3 Antonio R. do Nascimento	12 Antonio Netto Cerqueira Leite	85 Joaquim Lima da Cunha		
4 Alarim Leite de Sant'Anna	13 Avelino Luiz Pereira	86 José Antonio Pereira		
5 Amiral Monteiro Amaral	14 Alfredo Dias de Oliveira	87 José Maria G. de Sousa		
6 Antonio de Souza Rego	15 Atanásio Vicente Marques	88 Jacinto Gomes Barbosa		
7 Benigno Ferreira Adorno	16 Antonio Luiz Pereira	89 João Candido Leite de Souza		
8 Benedito Rodrigues de Moraes	17 Antonio José de Siqueira	90 João Ferreira Adorno		
9 Benedito Archauze de França	18 Antonio Ferreira dos Santos	91 João Netto Cerqueira Leite		
10 Benjamin de Miranda	19 Azeiteiro José Oliveira Lobo	92 José Alves de Carvalho		
11 Caetano Alberto Godinho	20 Albino Gregorio de Assis	93 José Bueno de Sant'Anna		
12 Carlos Wolp	21 Antonio Luiz de Albuquerque	94 Joaquim Panchato da Cunha		
13 David Henriques do Nascimento	22 Antonio de Almeida Lara	95 José Lemes da Cunha		
14 Domício do Nascimento	23 Anastácio Carlos da Silva	96 Joaquim Caetano de Almeida		
15 Derval Leite de Sant'Anna	24 Antonio Martins de Araújo	97 Joaquim Lemes dos Santos		
16 Domingos Baptista do Carmo	25 Benedito Vicente de Almeida	98 Joaquim de Souza Arraes		
17 Elias Francisco Margarida	26 Benedito José Gonçalves	99 Joaquim Ferreira dos Santos		
18 Francisco José da Silva	27 Benedito Moreira da Cruz	100 João Guilhermino de Albuquerque		
19 Francisco de Assis Lopes	28 Benedito Jesus Dias de Sá	101 José de Souza Arraes		
20 Gregório Pinto Ferreira	29 Benedito Moreira da Cruz	102 João Caetano Fernandes		
21 Gregório Dantas do Nascimento	30 Benedito Pedro Assis	103 José de Paula Pereira		
22 Ignacio Gomes da Silva	31 Benedito Gregório de Paula	104 Jerônimo Braz Per. de Moraes		
23 Joaquim Bruno Pitanga	32 Bento Baptista Leite	105 João Baptista Per. de Moraes		
24 Joaquim A. do Nascimento	33 Benedito Alves de Castro	106 João Luiz Pereira Sobrinho		
25 José Zelenio Ramos Jobé	34 Bento Ferreira Adorno	107 João Antonio Alves		
26 João Evangelista Adorno	35 Benedito Cathurino de Carvalho	108 João Bueno Propheta		
27 João Antonio de Faria	36 Benedito Alino de Assis Lobo	109 José Caetano Linhares		
28 João Paulo do Nascimento	37 Claudio do Carmo O. Pereira	110 João Emigdio Barbosa		
29 José Gomes da Silva	38 Candido Peres Campello	111 Joaquim Marques S. Côté		
30 Joaquim Melchades França	39 Carmindo do Carmo O. Pereira	112 Joaquim Luiz de Paula		
31 Joaquim Pinto Ferreira	40 Cypriano Dias de Oliveira	113 Joaquim Ferreira de Brito		
32 Joaquim Lemes Pimentel	41 Domingos de Macedo e Silva	114 José Hypolito Simioni		
33 José Salomão do Nascimento	42 Domingos Caetano de Almeida	115 Joaquim Candido de Souza		
34 José Joaquim da Luz Arede	43 Edmundo do Carmo O. Pereira	116 João Carlos da Silva		
35 José Luiz de Oliveira	44 Ezequiel Lemes da Cunha	117 José Alves Elestão		
36 Joaquim Pereira Lemes	45 Edmundo Luiz Pereira	118 Jerônimo Vieira do Nascimento		
37 Joaquim Luiz de Carvalho	46 Elisário Alves de Carvalho	119 José Luiz Pereira		
38 José Xavier de Bastos	47 Edmundo Sizenando Ferreira	120 José Rosendo Correia		
39 Joaquim Baptista dos Reis	48 Edmundo Luiz de Carvalho	121 Joaquim de Paula Bueno		
40 João Theodoro dos Santos	49 Francisco Pereira de Mello	122 Luiz Netto C. Leite		
41 José Leite Pereira	50 Frederico Alves de Sant'Anna	123 Lazaro Francisco Borges		
42 Luiz Pitanga	51 Francisco J. de Oliveira Lobo	124 Manoel Gonçalves da Silva		
43 Marinho Henri da Luz	52 Francisco de Paula Sobrinho	125 Manoel Benedito de Paula		
44 Manoel Antonio de Bastos (1ª)	53 Francisco Nacionico Ferreira	126 Manoel Raymundo Arraes		
45 Manoel Marcelino Cordeiro	54 Francisco Caetano Fernandes	127 Miguel Francisco de Sá		
46 Manoel Antonio de Bastos (2ª)	55 Francisco Philimon Bernard	128 Moyses Luiz de Carvalho		
47 Medeiros Bento dos Santos	56 Francisco Oliveira Mattos	129 Manoel Ferreira da Silva		
48 Pedro Luiz de Carvalho	57 Francisco Pereira da Costa	130 Martinho Bol. de Mendonça		
49 Plágonio de Barros Guimarães	58 Francisco Bueno de Jesus	131 Manoel Caetano de Almeida		
50 Raphael A. do Nascimento	59 Francisco Ferreira Adorno	132 Manoel Lemes dos Santos		
51 Ricardo Rodrigues de Moraes	60 Francisco Dias de Oliveira	133 Manoel Isabel dos Santos		
52 Raymundo Monteiro de Amaral	61 Francisco Alves de Almeida	134 Moyses Moreira da Silva		
53 Sebastião Rodrigues de Bessa	62 Caudino Lemes dos Santos	135 Pedro Alves Barbosa		
54 Sebastião da Rocha Rende	63 Herculanio Alves de Castro	136 Pedro Ribeiro Casella		
55 Saturnino Luiz de Carvalho	64 Hermenegildo C. de Magalhães	137 Pedro Gomes de Souza		
2ª SEÇÃO - MOSSAMEDES				
Eleitores públicos				
Eleitores				
1 Antonio Alves de Almeida	71 João Manoel Baptista	141 Raymundo Caetano O. Pereira		
2 Alfredo Philimon Bernard	72 João Felix de Paula	142 Raphael Casanova da Cunha		
3 Antonio Lemes da Cunha	73 José Alves de Castro	143 Raymundo José Gonçalves		
4 Arthur Trifalães Bueno	74 João Pereira Pinto	144 Saturnino Caetano de Almeida		
5 Antonio Felix Ribeiro Camello	75 João Rodrigues Baptista	145 Tibério Luiz da Rosa		
6 Antonio Ribeiro Camello	76 João Lemes da Cunha	146 Theonildo das Orações e Silva		
7 Antonio Mattos da Rocha	77 Joaquim Francisco Gabriel	147 Thomaz Alves de Castro		
8 Antonio Joaquim Canlin Canlin	78 José da Macedo e Silva Sobrinho	148 Vicente de Macedo e Silva		
9 Américo Francisco Pina	79 Joaquim Bueno de Jesus	149 Vicente de Paulo Dias		
	80 José Caetano da Cunha			
	81 José Ribeiro Camello			
	82 Joaquim Alves dos Santos			

After the Rosa e Silva Law, both procedures were transformed. It was only after finishing the process of voter registration that the committees were supposed to proceed to the division of municipalities into electoral districts and to designate the buildings in which the elections would be held. This led to two related novelties. The first was the adoption of a criterion for making this division. This meant taking into account the number of registered voters, with no polling station exceeding 250 voters or containing fewer than 150. The rule was softened for municipalities that had few voters, since the law recommended that there should be at least 2 districts in each municipality, regardless of the number of registered voters. The second novelty related to the adoption of a criterion for designating the buildings that would host the elections. Public buildings became the primary legal option, and only in their absence was the choice of private buildings considered lawful.



Detail of the text box presented by the cover of the *Republica* newspaper of 1.6.1921, Santa Catarina, on the date for choosing the buildings and the organization of the receiving boards.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

This preference for public buildings remained in place until the end of the republican regime. In 1916, however, designating the buildings became the sole prerogative of the ordinary judges, and the criterion of using the numbers of voters to decide the number of polling stations was abolished. It was established that in the capitals, there would be as many polling stations as there were judicial public servants; in the headquarters of each municipality, as many polling stations as there were Civil Registry notaries and officials; and in the headquarters of each district or judicial sub-division, just one polling station.



Detail of the headline of the cover of the newspaper *Gazeta de Noticias* of 2.25.1927, Rio de Janeiro, on the day before the election.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The electoral receiving boards and the poll workers

The legislation envisaged that one receiving board would operate in each polling station of the municipality to coordinate the electoral work, receiving the ballots and starting the process of vote counting as soon as the polls had closed. During the period of Law No. 35/1892, the appointment of the members of each electoral receiving board (the poll workers) took place in the same way as the voter registration committees of the time: by decision of the members of the municipal government and of those who had fewer votes than them, who would choose for the post the voters of the municipality. Each electoral receiving board had, therefore, five poll workers and two alternates.

There were significant changes in the criteria for organizing the receiving boards with the electoral reform brought about by the Rosa e Silva Law. The first innovation occurred with the transfer of this task to a board composed of the first alternate of the substitute of the ward judge, as non-voting chairman; of the assistant of the federal prosecutor, also non-voting; of the effective members of the voter registration committee; and of their respective alternates.

Another important measure that came into law at that time gave each group of 30 or more voters from the same polling station the opportunity to suggest names for poll workers of the respective polling station where they voted. In order to do this, it was enough for the voters to send an official letter signed by at least 30 of them to that board, with the respective signatures recognized by a notary public and the certificates that proved that they were voters of that polling station. When the board met to organize the receiving boards, it would review the official letters and choose, from among the voters of each polling station, the poll workers and alternates who were lacking, or the entire receiving board, if no official letter had been submitted.

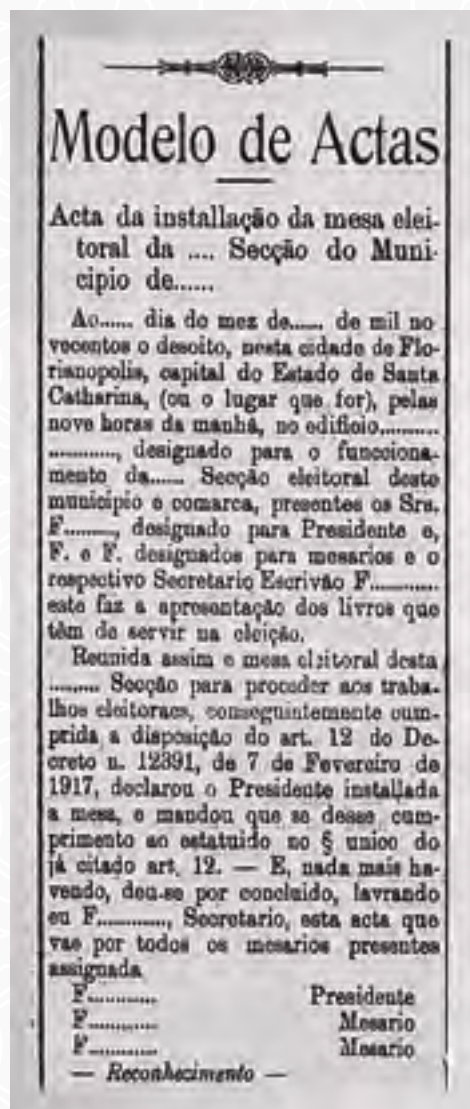


Photograph of a receiving board established in the National Library published by the newspaper Gazeta de Notícias of 1.31.1915, Rio de Janeiro, page 5. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The last significant point altered by the Rosa e Silva Law on the issue of the formation of the receiving boards related to the increase in the number of alternates for the poll workers: from two to five.

In 1916, the composition of the receiving boards was revolutionized by the massive entry of judges as poll workers. Law No. 3,208, Article 9, established:

[...] In the headquarters of the county—by the ordinary judge, as chairman, by the 1st alternate of the substitute of the federal judge and by the chairman of the council, Chamber or City Hall; in the headquarters of the judicial districts—by the municipal judge, voter registration judge or substitute, according to their denomination, as chairman, by the 1st alternate of the substitute of the federal judge, by the president of the Municipal Council; in the headquarters of the other municipalities that are not judicial districts—by the 1st alternate of the substitute of the federal judge, as chairman, by the president of the Municipal Council and by a voter presented in an official letter to the ordinary judge by the voters polling station.



Model of minutes of the polling stations published by *Gazeta do Commercio* newspaper of 2.20.1918, Santa Catarina, page 1.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

In the other polling stations of the headquarters of the municipalities and in the other polling stations of the judicial districts, by three voters suggested, in different official letters, to the ordinary judge, by the voters of the polling station, whose signatures must be recognized, up to 30 days before the holding of the election, with the chairmanship going to the voter who has been presented by the largest number of voters or to the oldest, if there is a tie.

Therefore, the possibility of voters in the polling station suggesting the receiving board members was maintained only in part. The judges and the members of the municipal government became the poll workers in the main towns and cities.

Voter cards

In the regulation of voter cards, Law No. 35/1892 gave a leading role to the chairman of the municipal committee, in charge of ordering the preparation of the special books from which the cards would be taken. It was decided that these documents would detail the state, the county, the municipality and the polling station that the voter belonged to, in addition to their name, age, civil status, parents, profession and voter registration number.

Once the cards had been signed and the card stubs had been initialed by the chairman of the municipal committee, the certificates were to be sent, *by the most secure means*,

to the chairmen of the voter registration committees. This did not necessarily have to be done via the Mail Service. The chairmen of the municipal committees were thus given the responsibility for delivering the voter cards to the voters or to their legal representatives, in the same place where the ward committee operated. Cards could not be handed over if the voter or their legal representative refused to sign a receipt, but the signature could be carried out by someone appointed by the voter if the latter did not know how to write. This was apparently to give some leeway for the delivery of voter cards to illiterate people.



Voter Card of João José Magliano No. 139489, voter registration number 997, issued around 1927 in the municipality of Bom Jardim (RJ). Collection of the Museu do Voto (Superior Electoral Court).



If the card was lost or a mistake was made, the voter could request another card, which would be granted with a declaration of a second copy. If the delivery of the cards by the chairmen of the ward committees was delayed, one was allowed to appeal to the municipal committee. If the problem persisted, an appeal could be made to the electoral board of the respective state.

Some changes instituted by the Rosa e Silva Law affected the voter cards. It was required that, from then on, the cards should contain the year the voter was registered and that the material to make them with should be provided by the appeals boards, no longer within the sphere of jurisdiction of the president of the municipal government. The chairmen of the appeals boards were in charge even of initialing the voter cards and sending them to the chairmen of the voter registration committees only via the Mail Service.

The voter registration committee itself was empowered to issue provisional voter cards if the appeals board did not do so by the stipulated deadline. The electoral receiving boards kept these provisional voter cards to send them to the auditing authority with the official election results. As regards the delivery of the cards to the voters itself, the new law slightly increased the bureaucracy for handing over the document claimed by legal representatives. From then on, the power of attorney had to be written and signed by the voter to whom it belonged, and the handwriting and signature had to be recognized by a local notary.

Finally, Law No. 3,139/1916 issued the last significant change in the voter cards. The new rule entrusted notaries with the responsibility of delivering these documents. They received a fee for each card delivered, paid for by the interested party. An unprecedented measure and one that was apparently in conflict with what was established by the provisions of the measure that succeeded it, in which the service of registration was considered *free*, and the processes, voter cards, identity cards and other papers used for registration were exempt from any charges and taxes, as was the postal service related thereto.

When he received the voter card, the voter needed to present it to the ordinary judge, who would sign it. Once again, therefore, there was a procedure whose carrying out did not depend only on the actions of the *colonel*. If he wished to influence the granting of the card, he would come up against various actors, such as the chairman of the voter registration committee, the official of the Mail Service and of the members of the judiciary.

How did voting take place?

During the whole of the First Republic, the electoral legislation failed to make provisions for ballot papers. Each political party manufactured its own ballots and took charge of delivering them to voters on the election day, normally distributed by party workers. Sometimes, the candidates themselves would approach voters to deliver the ballot papers to them.



Photograph of a colonel delivering the ballot paper to a voter published by *Careta* magazine of 1.23.1909, page 15. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The act of voting was quite different from how it is today. The legal provisions established a limited vote, allowing voters to vote more than once, but in a smaller number than the entirety of the seats to be filled. According to Law No. 35/1892, each voter would vote for two thirds of the number of deputies in the district.

Table 1 – Voting methods according to the electoral laws of 1892 and 1904

Electoral law of 1892	Electoral law of 1904
Limited vote (2 to 3 votes, depending on the size of the district).	Limited vote (3 to 6 votes, depending on the size of the district).
Cumulative vote not envisaged.	Cumulative vote (concentration of preferences on one single candidate).

In the smaller districts, with three deputies, the voter therefore had two votes. In larger districts, of between four and five deputies, the law set the number of votes at three. The Rosa e Silva Law (1904) introduced two innovations that were maintained until 1930. Having established districts with five deputies, the legislation ordered that each voter should vote for three names in the states who were represented by only four deputies; for four names in districts of five; for five names in that that had six and for six names in districts with seven deputies. The



Ballot box with opening at the top, for casting ballots, with a brass seal mechanism. Collection of the Museu do Voto (Superior Electoral Court). Photograph: Roberto Jayme

second innovation brought in by the Rosa e Silva Law was the cumulative vote, which allowed voters to concentrate the number of votes they were entitled to on only one candidate. This measure should be understood within the aim of increasing opportunities for minorities. In allowing voters to cast their preferences for just one candidate, the opposition parties would previously select just one candidate, to concentrate their votes on that person.

How were votes tallied?

The counting process of the elections during the First Republic took place in three stages. It started at the polling station itself, with the tallying of votes by the receiving board, and ended with the adding up of the total number of votes by a competent board.

The electoral law of 1892 established that, immediately after the end of voting in the polling station, the chairman of the receiving board (or whoever replaced them), assisted by the other poll workers, would open the ballot box and count the number of votes given to the candidates. Next, it was recommended that the result be transcribed in the *minutes of the polling station*, which should be signed by the receiving board members, by the auditors and by any voters who wished to do so. This was a document aimed at setting out the details of

General record of vote count published *Estado do Espírito Santo* newspaper on 3.24.1903, page 2. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Junta apuradora
A Junta apuradora das eleições realizadas em todo o Estado, no dia 18 de Fevereiro findo, para Vice-Presidente da República, um Senador e quatro deputados Federais, tendo encerrado hoje os trabalhos da apuração geral dos votos das mesmas eleições, faz publico que foram votados os seguintes cidadãos: — Para Vice-Presidente da República, Dr. Afonso Augusto Moreira Penna, 13,100 votos; Dr. Luis Siqueira da Silva Lima, 9 votos; Manoel Ferreira de Mello Coutinho, 3 votos; Lauro Sodré, 2 votos; Barão do Rio Branco e general Francisco Glycerio, 1 voto cada um; em branco 27 cédulas: — Para Senador Cleto Nunes Pereira, 12,400 votos; Coronel Augusto Nogueira da Gama, 734 votos; Dr. José de Mello Carvalho Moniz Freire, 12 votos; Domingos Vicente Gonçalves de Sousa, 7 votos; Lauro Sodré, 2 votos; Dr. Afonso Claudio de Freitas Rosa, Barão de Monjardim, Augusto Raphael de Carvalho e Ignácio Doutor, um voto cada um; em branco 23 cédulas: — Para Deputados Dr. José Moreira Gomes, 11,136 votos; Pharmaceutico Bernardo Brito de Araujo, 11,131 votos; Dr. José Francisco Monjardim, 9,007 votos; Dr. Galvão Dias de Barros, Leão, 8,334 votos; Dr. José Gomes Pinheiro Junior, 215 votos; Dr. José Monjardim Francisco, 106 votos; Dr. Aristides Arminio Guaraná, 88 votos; Dr. José Espindula Batalha Ribeiro, 26 votos; Dr. João dos Santos Neves, 20 votos; Dr. José Coelho dos Santos, 16 votos; Dr. Torquato Rosa Moreira, 16 votos; Dr. Edoardo Monteiro de Carvalho 11 votos; Dr. Paulo Julio de Mello, 8 votos; Antero Pinto de Almeida, 8 votos; Antonio Pinto Aleixo, Dr. Olympio Corrêa de Lyrio, Dr. José Horácio Costa, Bernardo Horta, José Nunes Barbosa Sobrinho e Dr. Antonio Gomes Aguiar, 3 votos cada um; Dr. Julio Paulo de Mello, Francisco José dos Santos Sales, Sebastião Soares Nogueira, Manoel Henrique de Oliveira, Belarmino Vieira Cambetta e Guilherme da Rocha Piementel, 2 votos cada um; Tancredo Alves de Lima, Desidério Martyr, Antonio Araújo Aguiar, Dr. Jeronymo de Souza Monteiro, Dr. Manoel Sávio Monjardim, Dr. Sávio Vicente de Faria, Dr. Graciano Neves, Dr. Justiniano Martins de Assunção Meirelles, Francellino Faria da Mota, José João Ferreira e Manoel Joaquim Pereira Feo, 1 voto cada um; em branco 3 cédulas. E para constar, eu José A. Villas Bôas, Secretario do Governo Municipal, lavrei o presente aos 23 do mez de Março de 1903. — O Presidente, Joaquim Corrêa de Lyrio, Domingos Pinto Netto, Dulcínio da Silva Coutinho, Alfredo Americo Pinto Peres, Euagênio José dos Poços e Joaquim Agostinho Espindula.



Template of general record of vote count published by *Diário da Manhã* newspaper of 2.9.1924, Espírito Santo, page 3. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

the election day and any relevant events, such as the start time, the names of voters who did not appear, the reasons for disagreement between receiving board members during the vote, etc. Foreseeing disputes within the receiving board, the law allowed any of the receiving board members to declare themselves as outvoted in the official record, together with the alleged reasons for this; and if the majority of the board did not agree to sign it, the remaining members and auditors should do it, along with any interested voters.

After this official record was amended by a notary or any other Judicial official or even by an *ad hoc* notary, two copies would be made of it: one for sending to the Secretariat of the Chamber of Deputies or to that of the Senate, for the purpose of recognizing the powers, and another one to the vote counting board, responsible for the general counting of the election.

The board was established in the session room of the municipal government regarded as the headquarters of the district, bringing together, as well as the president



Photograph of transportation of ballot papers published by *Correio da Manhã* newspaper of 3.12.1930, Rio de Janeiro, page 3. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



of the government itself, the five members who had received the most votes and the five immediately behind them in sessions that were open to any interested auditors and voters. Its responsibility was only to add up the votes from the official records of the polling stations and to draw up the *general record of the vote count*, mentioning the electoral results, any suspicions they had about irregularities in the electoral process and a summary of the work of counting, with potential representations, complaints or protests submitted both to the receiving boards and to the vote counting board itself and the reasons alleged. Several copies would then be made of the general record of the vote count: one sent to the state governor; another one to the Secretariat of the Chamber of Deputies or of the Senate; and one *to each of the winning candidates, to serve as their official certificate of election*.



Photograph of a session of the vote counting board in Rio de Janeiro published in *Careta* magazine of 3.6.1915, page 16. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Major changes to the counting process occurred with subsequent electoral reforms. The Rosa e Silva Law, of 1904, ordered that the overall counting of the election for federal senators, president and vice-president of the Republic, should move to the state capitals. The composition of the vote counting boards also changed, depending on their location. In the headquarters of the district, the board would be chaired by the first alternate of the substitute of the sectional judge, only with a casting vote, and also made up of the presidents of the municipal councils, the chambers or the city halls of the respective electoral constituency or of their acting legal substitutes. In the state capitals, the only position that changed was that of the chairmanship of the vote counting board, which was handed over directly to the substitute of the ward judge.

The sending of the copy of the general record of the vote count was now addressed to the ward judge (recipient), instead of to the governor. Moreover, the definition of the official certificate of election was revised, which came to refer to the copy of the general record of the vote count signed by the *majority* of the members of the vote counting board. On this point, the law incorporated a change implemented by an amendment to the Internal Regulation of the Chamber of Deputies (*Portuguese acronym: RICD*) in 1899, in order to deal with a serious reality: splits that led to the division of the vote counting board, creating parallel groups and, by extension, different overall results of the count. The recognition of the conflict even triggered the automatic definition of an electoral dispute in the case of an overall record signed by the minority of the board—once again, an important piece of reasoning imported directly from the RICD/1899 by the Rosa e Silva Law.

Another turning point in the counting process took place from 1916 onward. First of all, because the overall counting of all the federal elections (deputies, senators, president and vice-president of the Republic) migrated to the capital of each state. The second reason related to the radical change in the composition of the vote counting board: it became a space composed exclusively of judges, chaired by the federal judge and made up of his substitute and of the representative of the Federal Prosecution Service before the Superior Court of Justice. The third



novelty in the process of overall counting was the willingness of the board to allow the candidates or their respective legal representatives to monitor the task, which continued to take place in public sessions. On the list of striking innovations, there was also the entry of quite specific recommendations in cases where the board found duplicates of electoral papers at the level of the polling station, even envisaging an analysis by experts in order to distinguish the true documents. Finally, the copies of the general record of the vote count were now sent only to the Secretariats of the Chamber of Deputies and of the Senate, as well as being granted to the winning candidates for the purposes of electoral certification.

According to the Constitution of 1891, it was up to each of the chambers to certify and recognize the powers of their members. The parliamentary representatives themselves would give a final judgment on the certificates issued by the vote counting boards, as soon as they resolved any challenges and protests and, in general, any complaint submitted during the counting of the votes. This was the so-called *third count*, subsequent to the one carried out in the polling stations, which was the responsibility of the vote counting boards and which, in legal treatises, was known as the *process of verifying powers*.

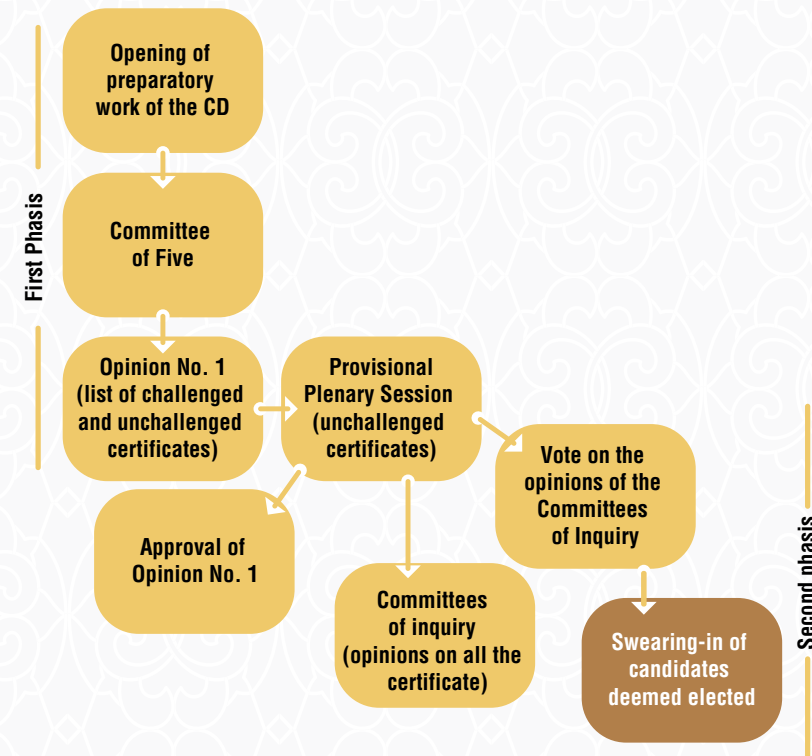
The third count was complex, being divided into two phases, as clarified below.

The electoral process of the federal elections

The certificates presented by the candidates were subject first to the scrutiny of the *Committee of Five*—called thus because it was made up of five members—appointed by the provisional president of the Chamber of Deputies (*Portuguese acronym: CC*), who would choose five names that would decide on the admissibility and the legality of the certificates submitted by the candidates. Based on the list of certificates submitted by the deputies themselves, the Committee of Five would organize a first list of certificates considered legitimate and that appeared to meet the legal conditions. The list, in order to be valid, had to be approved by the Plenary Session.

Since these were preparatory sessions, there was not yet a legally established Plenary Session. On this point, showing a certain Machiavellian spirit, the Chamber of Deputies' Regulation was very clear: only the candidates who appeared on the list submitted by the Committee of Five could take part in voting in the Plenary Session, in other words, it was the deputies previously recognized by the Committee of Five (*Portuguese acronym: CC*) who would approve their own certificates.

Phase of recognizing powers



These deputies not only sanctioned the validity of their certificates, but they also gained the right to take part in the second phase, in which debate was opened for the examination of the elections. Only these deputies had the right to vote, to discuss and to debate in the Plenary Session.



Cartoon from the cover of the magazine *O Malho* of 4.20.1912 on the composition of the Committee of Five in the Chamber of Deputies of that year. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The second phase began when the parliamentarians legally recognized by the Committee of Five were drawn by lot to make up the Committees of Inquiry, whose functions were to list all the certificates by state, analyze the challenges and the complaints and, ultimately, to draft the opinions on the certificates issued by the vote counting boards, as well as, possibly, to dissent from the choice made by the Committee of Five.



Cartoon from the cover of the magazine *Careta* of 5.25.1912 on the *degola* of the opposition in the National Congress. Artist: J. Carlos (José Carlos de Brito e Cunha – 1884/1950). Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The final opinion was voted on by the Plenary Session, where voting by name was sometimes required. The process finished with the swearing in of the officially recognized winning candidates.

During the period of the First Republic, it was a common occurrence for opposition candidates to allege the non-recognition, during the process of verifying powers in the Chamber of Deputies, of their candidates who had legally been awarded certificates by the vote counting boards. This phenomenon became known the *degola* of the opposition.

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Photograph of a session of the vote counting board in Rio de Janeiro published in *Careta* magazine of 3.6.1915, page 16.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The political career of Brazilian senators in the First Republic

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Under the imperial regime, the position of senator was one mechanism among many others for rewarding or co-opting political allies from the regions directly to the top of the political structure. According to Beatriz Cerqueira Leite,

The title of senator represented the culmination of a brilliant career [...]. The future senator needed to have overcome essential steps in the art of politics and to have practical training. The only way to do this was to occupy several positions such as Deputy, President of a Province, Minister, Diplomat, and Councilor of State. (Leite, 1978, page 44).

The Senate was closer to the Federal Government than to the provinces, and this link was under the scrutiny of the crown. Under the monarchy, the emperor appointed the senators from a triple list drawn up by the provinces. There were no regular elections because the title was for life: a senator was part of a privileged mechanism through which the emperor rewarded or co-opted regional political allies as a channel of access to the top of the political structure. As Machado de Assis observes:

It's also true that the lifetime position gave to that House a sense of perpetual duration, which seemed to be reflected in the faces and behavior of its members. They had the air of a family, which dispersed during the holiday season to go to the beach and other amusements, and later gathered together, for years and years. (Assis, 2004, page 29).

These characteristics of the Senate were consistent with a centralized political structure such as that of the imperial regime. According to José Murilo de Carvalho (1996), the Brazilian imperial elite had the shape of an inverted pyramid, in which the bulk of positions and salaries were concentrated at the top of the system. This configuration was the opposite of the structure adopted in the United States of America, which maintained a strong concentration at the local level. Thus, *the consequence of this centralized structure was the accumulation of public servants and administrative activities at the central government level, in contrast with their reduced presence in the provinces and their near absence at local level.* (Carvalho, 1996, p. 137).



Photograph of the first meeting of the new legislature at the Conde dos Arcos Palace. *Careta* magazine of 5.11.1918, page 13. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.





In such a framework, we can see that when the federative structure of power was established, this implied an essential change in the ways political power was exercised. The decentralized political structure imposed by the deputies of the constitutional assembly in 1891 set rules that raised the subnational political game to another level, in which the provinces, rebranded as states, would act as the decisive vote in national politics. One of the main factors that brought together the makers of the new regime was precisely the role performed by the politics of individual states.

[...] it was on the issue of political autonomy that all the provinces, without exception, united in support of the federalist project because only in this aspect could there be an equalization of benefits for all the federative entities. Political autonomy meant eliminating the control the central authority had over local elections and, most of all, guaranteeing the electability of the former provincial presidents who now became state governors. (Abrucio, 1998, page 33).

If senators' careers were governed by a solely national logic until 1889 (bearing in mind that being a senator was a prerogative of the imperial Moderating Power), from that date onward, the careers of these representatives would be subject to the criteria of the elites that dominated the federative states.

Therefore, in the First Republic, the senators' attributes were put to the test, as their mandates now had to be come from the polls, a crucial transformation. Furthermore, theirs would be the second highest electoral position inside the Federal Government, which would be decided at the state levels and not a mere result of central strategies. Thus, the Federal Senate of the period of the First Republic is a particularly good place for a study of the transition between the political regimes and its effects on the political elite, as it maintained a strong national connotation even though the choice of its representatives happened in the state sphere. In addition, the end of lifelong mandates meant that the above-mentioned effects of the new regime on the profile of the elite are not a legacy of the monarchy—which is not the case for the federal and state deputies. Such features mean that the senators elected during this period are a crucial subject for investigating how the new institutional environment, which was federal and elected, changed the profile of the political representatives chosen.

What was new about the career of Brazilian senators in the First Republic?



The inauguration of Senator Paulo de Frontin was a news item published by *Careta* magazine on 5.10.1930, page 31. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The most striking aspect is the career length of the Brazilian senators during the period of the First Republic. For the individuals who assumed office in the Federal Senate from 1900 to 1927, the average length of a career was 24 years from their first public position until their arrival at the Senate. Comparing this with more recent times, we find that for the senators elected between 1946 and 1962, the average career length was reduced to 19.7 years, while during the period of military rule (from 1966 until 1986), the duration of senators' careers was slightly longer, 21 years and 6 months on average—but still shorter than during the First Republic. These figures confirm the traditional view that ever since the beginning of the republican experience, the individuals who reach the Federal Senate have been quite experienced politicians.

However, only the length of their careers, measured this way, may lead to incorrect interpretations, since

[...] a great landowner can spend twenty years of his life in the Parliament, but for all that, he will not be a [career politician], while a man who wins just one election undoubtedly will undoubtedly be one if his period as a legislator is preceded and followed by any bureaucratic function or other activity on behalf of his party. (Meynaud 1961, page 530, adapted).

To avoid drawing this incorrect conclusion, there is another measure, not of length, but of the *intensity* of political careers. The indicator of this is the number of public positions held by a politician from his entry into politics until he takes office in the Federal Senate. Considering only the period from 1900 to 1927, Brazilian senators held an average of 6.6 positions until they took office in the Federal Senate. This average drops to 4.6 for senators elected between 1946 and 1962. There is a slight increase during the military regime (legislatures from 1966 to 1986) when the senators held on average 5.1 positions.

These findings reveal that the Brazilian senatorial elite in the First Republic had strongly structured political careers in terms both of length and intensity. Examining the issue superficially, one might conclude that if a politician's career lasted longer, the number of offices held would also increase. That would be a false

conclusion because if the same person remained in the same position, the length of his career would increase, but the number of positions would remain the same.

In this regard, it is worth stressing that the average life of a senator in his position—the number of years the Senate was in operation divided by the total number of senators and multiplied by the legal numbers of senators at any time—in the imperial regime was 14.74 years (Carvalho, 1996, page 116). In the Republican era, this figure decreased to 8.24 years. This shows that the end of the lifelong mandate profoundly transformed the duration of each person's position as a senator. Although this may look obvious, it is important to measure it as, otherwise, one might believe that the same individual could spend most of his life holding the same office.

Results such as those shown above present a general overview of the citizens who composed the Senate. However, as it is well known, the most remarkable aspect to be noted in an analysis of Brazilian politics in the First Republic is the strength of the politics in the states, which produced significant differences. These differences become clear when the same indicators of each federative entity are examined. Map 1 shows the average length of a senator's career, followed by Map 2, which shows the average number of occupied offices per state.

Map 1 – Career length per state



Source: author's own drafting based on the DHBB and on the archive of the Federal Senate



Map 1 shows that, based on the duration from the beginning of their public careers to their arrival in the Senate, senators from Minas Gerais had the longest average career durations, ranging from 26.5 to 28.5 years, followed by senators from the states of São Paulo and Bahia, whose averages were 24.6 and 26.5 years, respectively. In contrast, senators from Paraná and Piauí had career durations averaging less than 16.7 years.

These figures are relevant for two reasons. First, because even those senators whose public lives were shorter, still had long careers (the shortest average in Map 1 is around 15 years). Second, because the data suggests that the politicians from Minas Gerais, São Paulo, and Bahia were more likely to remain active in political positions, as the first two above-mentioned states had political parties strong enough to control the dynamic of the process of politics. Political competition was likely more intense in the other states, leaving room for less experienced politicians to emerge, which reduces the average length of their careers.

Map 2 reveals the intensity of those careers, measured by the number of public positions held before reaching the Federal Senate. As shown in the previous chart, it is clear that the high averages do not obscure the differences between the states.

Map 2 – Total number of public positions per state



Source: author's own drafting based on the DHBB and on the archive of the Federal Senate.

Bahia is the state where senators held the most positions before reaching the Senate, almost eight posts for all the senators of that state, double the average in Paraíba. In the states of Minas Gerais, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul, senators held, on average, seven positions before their inauguration in the Senate. These data show the variations between the states but unfortunately do not show the dispersion in relation to the average among senators from the same state.

The last piece of information which helps to characterize the political careers of Brazilian senators in the First Republic is their links to political parties. An examination of their biographies reveals information about political party affiliations for 300 of the 359 individuals who took office in the Senate between 1891 and 1934. Of the 300 senators whose biographies provide information on their links to political parties, just over half were affiliated with more than one party, while the rest were linked to up to five parties.



It is crucial not to analyze the political parties of the First Republic as if they were akin to those that emerged in many mass democracies from the 1950s onward. It is essential to consider that, given Brazil's vast territorial expanse, limited communication infrastructure, and the predominance of rural populations, the expansion of the electoral franchise (resulting from the removal of restrictive criteria) inadvertently bolstered the power of local oligarchies.

Given these circumstances, it was highly likely that a social division of labor would emerge within families. For instance, a local political leader might have one son pursuing a career in the Church, another managing the family's business interests, and the youngest—typically the third son—would attend law school, where he would begin his political career and later represent, in both state and federal legislative bodies, the interests of his family and the oligarchic networks to which they were connected. In this context, family and party were two sides of the same coin. Therefore, it is crucial to avoid an anachronistic interpretation of the political parties of the time.

Otherwise, and bearing in mind the major differences in economic structure between the states of the Federation, it is reasonable to imagine that many divisions would arise between the oligarchical groups. This could lead to the overlapping of different cleavages: electoral contests at the regional level could be associated with contests over immediate economic interests, but also with differences in the control of political resources (such as control of public authorities, state repression mechanisms, etc.), or even differences over the social division of labor within families, as mentioned above.

When looking at this structure, the data on links to party organizations among the senatorial elite are significant because they indicate that those who reached the Federal Senate formed a group experienced in strictly political activities. In turn, experience with party organizations was important, as political parties were the venues where conflicts arising from these cleavages were resolved—it made candidacies possible, and the newspapers controlled by party leaders printed the electoral ballots. In short, it mediated between the state capital and the margins of the political system.

Consequently, taking into account what was happening in the different levels of government, the study of senators' careers in the First Republic provides a better understanding of how some of the foundations of political representation were built. These foundations would prevail in Brazilian politics from the second half of the twentieth century onward.

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Political parties, competition and electoral frauds

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Cartoon published in *O Malho* of 6.19.1908, page 20.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Parties in the First Republic

The early years of the First Republic were characterized by a heterogeneous and conflict-ridden political landscape. In 1893, in the National Congress, the Federal Republican Party (PRF) was established by a group of politicians whose affinity in discourse was perceptible, allowing them to be classified as “historical republicans”—parliamentarians from different states who frequently referenced the time of propaganda, passionately defending the Republic, and who acted together.

The PRF was led by republicans from São Paulo, with Francisco Glicério as its chief, who also served as the majority leader in the Chamber of Deputies. The party had a brief existence, splitting in 1897 after a conflict between president of the Republic Prudente de Moraes and Glicério. Until the end of the First Republic, the competition for representative positions would take place exclusively among state parties.

These parties played a central role in organizing political contests at the state level. The political struggle for parliamentary seats was not limited to the municipal contests, nor could it be regarded as an individual practice or one confined to the actions of the colonels and local political leaders who would lead masses of voters to the polling stations on the election day.

Securing seats in the National Congress was not guaranteed, nor did it emerge only on the eve of elections, nor was it solely linked to clientelism and the personal influence of the candidates. It was a struggle that took shape and was carried out within the party organizations present in each state. With regard to the electoral process, two aspects should be highlighted. On one hand, there was the selection of the party slate. This was a crucial issue for party leaders, reducing the chances of splits and possible defections among the most influential politicians. The most troublesome scenario was one in which each faction ended up putting forward its own slate of official candidates.





Photographs of the convention of the Republican Party of Rio de Janeiro State in 1924 published in *O Malho*, on 8.23.1924, page 47.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The composition of the party slates was determined by various decision-making bodies, involving multiple political actors and following statutory rules. At the highest level, the party leader—usually the governor or a senator—was ultimately responsible for selecting the candidates who would run for office. However, it was also common for candidate nominations to be decided by the party executive or board, which was responsible for finalizing the list of candidates. Finally, in a more inclusive process, the party convention publicly ratified the names put forward by the party. It is worth noting that the selection process was not limited to the executive committee, the state-level party board at the state level, or instances of clear gubernatorial influence. Negotiations took into account both the party's internal bodies and the preferences of municipal leaders.



Slate of the Conservative Concentration in Minas Gerais for the 1930 election, *Correio Paulistano* newspaper of 2.28.1930, page 6. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Another aspect to be highlighted is the election campaign. Two topics emerge from it: the use of the press and the electoral journey. All reasonably organized political parties in early 20th-century Brazil had an official newspaper. Newspapers served as the party's voice. The party affiliation was easily identifiable through the acronym that appeared below the newspaper's title, as shown in the following images.



Diário da Manhã newspaper of 5.19.1908, Espirito Santo. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



A Federação newspaper of 10.1.1898, Amazonas. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



A Republica newspaper of 1.10.1907, Rio Grande do Norte. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Folha de Sergipe newspaper of 3. 21.1909, Sergipe State Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Republica newspaper of 14.2.1928, Santa Catarina.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



O Democrata newspaper of 9.5.1929, Mato Grosso.
State Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

In these images, you can see the party identification just below the newspaper headline.

The importance of newspapers at the time must be analyzed considering their multiple functions. Firstly, they served to organize the electoral process. These publications announced the dates and locations for electing the electoral boards which were by law selected before election day. The newspaper invited eligible citizens to appear at the party headquarters for registration. They also identified those responsible for voter registration, listing their full names and any published registration addresses. In the weeks leading up to the election, newspapers also provided the addresses of the polling places and the headquarters of the polling stations.

In the context of the electoral campaign, newspapers consolidated their role as privileged vehicles of party propaganda. As elections drew near, these newspapers gave voice to their party candidates. In particular, they conveyed three key pieces of information. The first was the announcement of the party's official slate—marking the official start of the electoral campaign—usually published shortly after the conclusion of the party convention that had endorsed the names of the official candidates. The slate typically appeared on the front page among the most relevant news of the time and was reprinted in several editions up until election day.

Another significant piece of information was the publication of the party's political manifesto. This became more complex and presented broader scope from the 1920s onward. Beyond publishing official documents, the party press was also characterized by attempts to delegitimize political opponents. Various strategies were employed to achieve this. Satire was one of them, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when photographs were still rare. More frequently, accusations appeared in editorials and articles featured on the front pages of newspapers. The accusations triggered responses and counter-responses, resulting in an authentic war of editorials.



Political editorial opinion piece in the newspaper *O Dia*, of 2.19.1927, Paraná.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil

At a time when the number of means of communication was limited, the electoral journey played a crucial role in the electoral struggle. The rhetoric of the public meeting—as the rallies were called at the time—underscores the importance of this act. From a practical perspective, the accounts of observers clearly reveal the pursuit of contact, in the pre-electoral phases, with influential figures. During the electoral journey, one candidate stated that they sought to speak with the most influential leaders, *instilling in them a love for the public cause, reinvigorating them amidst widespread disillusionment* (Archives of the Chamber of Deputies, May 25th, 1903, page. 34). In addition, traveling required significant physical and material effort, leading the candidate on a pilgrimage through municipalities that were very far apart from each other. Thus, it was not uncommon for candidates



to report having participated in rallies and conferences, presenting themselves in public squares, in buildings that could accommodate large crowds—such as theaters—even in party headquarters, or that banquets were organized for them to deliver speeches before distinguished citizens.



Meeting in Praça dos Martyres, Fortaleza (Ceará), in favor of the candidacy of the Colonel Franco Rebelo for President of the State in the magazine *Fon-Fon*, of 1.27.1912, page. 44.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

A key takeaway from these accounts is that the electoral journey was not a solitary political endeavor carried out solely through the personal strength of each candidate. Given the distances traveled and the need to reach voters, it was common for these electoral excursions to be organized rather than left to chance. A network of actors and stakeholders was directly involved in the pilgrimage across the various municipalities of the electoral district.

Beyond electoral fraud

Electoral fraud is often recalled to discredit the vote in the First Republic. There is no doubt that electoral competition was based on controlling voter registration, forging false records, or manipulating vote counting. However, the practice of fraud must be understood beyond the mere distortion of electoral reality and considered in terms of the competition for control of the electoral process. Inter-party conflicts over monopolizing voter registration, choosing receiving boards and organizing the poll itself—from choosing the headquarters of the polling stations to the practice of escorting voters to the polls—embodied the struggle for power among the political forces.

Fraud was exposed amid the intensification of this struggle. To some extent, allegations of fraudulent practices reflected not so much the violation of individual rights, but rather the elite's inability *to control their own electoral bureaucracy*. The lack of electoral challenges, therefore, stemmed from the monopoly exerted by a single political force over the electoral process at the local level and, by extension, in the electoral district. Given the often fierce nature of the contest, fraud claims proceeded through the various stages outlined in electoral legislation until they reached the National Congress, the last decision-making body. There, the last stage of examining the electoral records took place—occasionally preventing some candidates from taking office. This practice became known as *degola*. However, this moment should not be seen solely as a means of controlling electoral outcomes. Any instances of *degolas* in the process of recognizing official electoral mandates in the National Congress were the result of intense political disputes within the states. Thus, Congress intervened to *correct* the situation, at times politically eliminating certain political groups.



The issue of electoral fraud in a satirical cartoon in *Careta* magazine on 1.23.1909, page. 17.

Artist: J. Carlos (José Carlos de Brito e Cunha – 1884/1950).

Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil

Recommended further reading

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TELAROLLI, Rodolpho. *Eleições e fraudes eleitorais na República Velha*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1982.



Meeting in Praça dos Martyres, Fortaleza (Ceará), in favor of the candidacy of the Colonel Franco Rebelo for President of the State in *Fon-Fon* magazine of 1.27.1912, page. 44.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



How presidents were made in the First Republic

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Image taken from *Fon-Fon* magazine of 1.2.1926, depicting the members of the Constitutional Convention at the banquet at the Automóvel Clube do Brasil, on the occasion of the presidential succession of that year, when the candidacy of Washington Luís for the Presidency of the Republic was announced. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

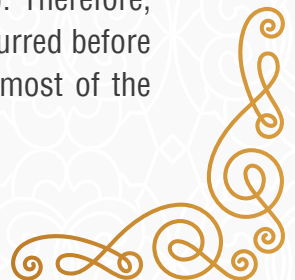
When considering the framework governing presidential elections in the so-called *Old Republic* (the period of the First Republic), it is impossible not to compare them with the most recent elections held in Brazil. On the one hand such comparisons can be valuable, as they shed light on the political constraints and competitive dynamics of the late nineteenth century. On the other hand, by taking recent values and experiences as our starting point, we risk underestimating past political processes and misinterpreting the logic that guided people at that time.

In other words, there is a serious risk of anachronism, which must be avoided. Despite these obstacles, we will persist with the comparison in order to facilitate a quicker and more effective understanding for the reader.

Regarding the recent choice of presidents of the Republic in Brazil, there are at least four fundamental differences when compared to the period of the First Republic. The first was the fact that re-election was not allowed. The second was the almost insignificant level of voter participation. The third was the model of federalism, which positioned the units of the federation as the primary political actors. Finally, we have the difference between the length of the mandates of the head of the Executive Branch and those of the deputies in the legislative chambers. Understanding the impact of these differences is essential for grasping the unique characteristics of the period.

The ban on re-election was an important factor in encouraging fierce intra-oligarchic political contests. Every four years, hegemonic political groups competed to nominate their name and for the support of most of the oligarchies for the chosen candidate. As a result, it was necessary to build or rebuild political alliances at each presidential succession, which made it imperative to renegotiate alliances or resolve any dissent during each four-year term.

Obviously, that competition took place within the confines of the hegemonic oligarchies themselves, but it was not limited to the political chiefs from the states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo; it took place among a broader range of politicians, either from other strong states (such as Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Pernambuco), or from states that were not as powerful but had some individual leaders with a strong national presence (such as Lauro Sodré from Pará, Joaquim Murtinho, from Mato Grosso and Lauro Miller, from Santa Catarina). Therefore, the real electoral competition between the presidential candidates occurred before the elections. If put forward, a name with consistent support from most of the oligarchies was guaranteed to win the election.





Cover of *O Malho* magazine of 10.14.1905.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

This prior contest usually began in the final months of the second year of government and it encompassed a series of negotiations, not always easy and rarely conflict-free. Thus, the hypothesis that a monopolistic alliance between Minas Gerais and São Paulo predominated during the period—known in Portuguese as *café com leite*—does not stand up to empirical analysis. By examining thousands of letters exchanged between the main players in the electoral processes of the Republic, one can notice the intense negotiations that took place in the games of the succession, the diversity of the players involved and the rejection of any attempt to create a monopoly on the part of any federative entity.

Afonso Pena: “There’s no doubt about it. My program was generally well received. My fellow diners at the banquet did not hide their signs of approval.”

Nilo Peçanha: “Perfectly. While Your Excellence was speaking, I squinted and watched, just as I did at the banquet for Mr. Pinheiro Machado. But... we can’t do without popular support and sympathy, without which we’ll be up the creek without a paddle.”

Man in the street (to one side): “My support... My sympathy... Well, gentlemen, everyone wants that... Everyone is cheering me on, and after all, I’m not the one with the most money... My sympathy... Come on... My support... We’ll see, as the blind man says.”

The prominent participation of the Army as a political actor throughout the period should be highlighted, as well as the role of parliament in choosing presidential candidates and appointing cabinet ministers.



Cartoon from *O Malho* magazine of 12.7.1912, page 49, depicting the conversations between the bosses of Minas Gerais to influence the choice of the future president of the Republic. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Of course, these contests took place within a very small elite. The institution of direct suffrage, after the inauguration of the republican regime, would not immediately make it universal. As was the case in other countries in the Americas and in most European countries, a significant portion of the population was not allowed to vote—illiterates, women and those under the age of 21. Furthermore, the optional nature of the vote, coupled with the high levels of violence in electoral processes, further inhibited the population’s participation.



The indicators show that, for the presidential elections, the highest turnout occurred in the contest between Getulio Vargas and Júlio Prestes at the end of the First Republic, still involving only 5.7% of the population. This was the most competitive election (Prestes was elected with 57.7% of the vote). The lowest rate was in the 1906 elections, when only 1.4% of Brazilians turned out to elect Afonso Pena, who obtained 97.9% of the votes.

Presidential elections in Brazil (1894 -1930)

Election date	Elected president	Turnout as a proportion of the Brazilian population (%)	Votes for the elected candidate as a proportion of turnout (%)
3.1.1894	Prudente José de Moraes Barros	2.21	84.29
3.1.1898	Manuel Ferraz de Campos Salles	2.7	90.93
3.1.1902	Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves	3.44	91.71
3.1.1906	Afonso Augusto Moreira Pena	1.44	97.22
3.1.1910	Hermes Rodrigues da Fonseca	3.19	57.07
3.1.1914	Venceslau Brás Pereira Gomes	2.40	91.59
3.1.1918	Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves	1.48	99.06
6.13.1919	Epitácio Lindolfo da Silva Pessoa	1.5	71
3.1.1922	Arthur da Silva Bernardes	2.92	56.03
3.1.1926	Washington Luís Pereira de Sousa	2.27	97.99
3.1.1930	Júlio Prestes de Albuquerque	5.65	57.74

Source: adapted by Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, in *O problema nacional do Brasil*, No. 4. Editora Saga, 1960.

Although the indicators, when analyzed coldly, attest to little or no citizen participation, one must observe that persuading the registered voters to overcome their apathy and go to the polls was the main difficulty for the political leaders. The electoral game involved a large group of non-voters but who followed, on the streets and in the press, the disputes taking place over the country's destiny. Election periods were occasions of significant social mobilization, especially in the most populous urban centers.

As the electoral laws of the period allowed for independent candidacies without the consent of the parties, an analysis of the election results reveals a much larger number of people with this type of candidacy receiving votes, showing not only a dispersion of interests but also a contest between several contenders. In 1894, the year of the first direct election under the republican system, more than 60 candidates received votes. In 1902, more than 80 names were chosen. That is not to mention the vice-presidential race, an election that was held separately.

When following the electoral processes in the press of the period, whether written or illustrated, one notices a constant allusion to the electoral processes, which occurred for different purposes. The first was to promote the candidacy of a leader who had control over the newspaper; the second was to encourage people's participation acting in a pedagogical way, with the aim of contributing to greater awareness around the importance of voting, the fight against fraud and corruption. The election meetings, which resembled the rallies of the period, helped the population even when absent from the process to find out about the contests or participate in them, even if they didn't have the right to vote. Therefore, the mobilizing nature of electoral processes cannot be contested, even if the number of voters was small.



On this date, *Fon-Fon* magazine devotes a series of articles to the political life of Rui Barbosa on the occasion of his death. *Fon-Fon* magazine of 10.3.1923, page. 43. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



O Malho magazine of 1.24.1903, page 8.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

A third specific feature of the period concerns the political actors and their different repertoires of action. It is known the liberal oligarchic period was marked by the fragility of national political parties and the predominance of state associations. In a way, the institution of federalism, even if not in the most radical way, as proposed by the Castilhos Amendment, strengthened regional identities, transforming Parliament into a stage for states in dispute. Regional parties, although not monopolistic, hegemonized competition between most actors. However much the electoral laws tried to make room for opposition and/or minorities, the closed-list vote made the process difficult.

In this context, regional oligarchies, which dated back to the occupation of the national territory, found themselves strengthened by federalism—since it was enough for them to gain control over internal electoral processes to perpetuate themselves in power, controlling the composition of their respective parliamentary benches. As the composition of the Lower House of Parliament was proportional to the number of voters, with no other brake to guarantee a more proportional outcome other than the indicator of 1 deputy for every 70,000 inhabitants, the result was great inequality in the representation achieved by each state.

The 6 largest states together had more than 60% of the deputies. Minas alone had the largest bench, with 37 members, followed by São Paulo and Bahia with 22 deputies each. Meanwhile the least populated states did not exceed the limit of 4 deputies, as was the case with Amazonas, Espírito Santo, Paraná, Goiás, among others.

This lack of even-handedness in political representation was also a feature of the positions in the Executive Branch (ministries and other second-tier bodies), as well as in the Legislative Branch itself (congressional committees). This made the federalism of the time extremely unequal, so that the most well-established oligarchies controlled the political direction of the country through their caucuses.

The fourth characteristic of the republican presidential regime concerns the difference between the mandates of the National Congress and those of the Presidency



of the Republic. The first had a mandate of three years, the second four. This meant that each president necessarily had to govern with two different benches at the same time and in some successions, the presidential elections coincided with those of the Parliament, generating some level of instability in the processes—which needs to be taken into account when analyzing succession games.

This prerogative of the Constitutional Charter of 1891 acted as a significant counterweight to the power of the Presidency of the Republic—although elected almost unanimously at the polls, it had to negotiate with the benches in Parliament to build majorities, which did not always happen smoothly. The choice of the Speaker of the House was always a dysfunctional period because, as the oligarchies of the states were autonomous and due to intra-oligarchic disputes, often divided, this negotiation was not always easy for the Presidency.

The idea that Campos Salles managed, in 1900, to ensure the election of parliamentary representations that were subservient to the governors, who, in turn, served the *status quo* uncritically, does not stand up to empirical analysis. The regulatory changes proposed by Salles, known as *governors' politics*, did not last beyond the period of his mandate and did not guarantee the stability of the regime.

Given these specific features which, compared to Brazil's current Federative Republic, seems to greatly reduce the democratic character of the first republican experience, a final reflection is necessary. The 41 years of the regime were relatively stable, especially if we compare it to its Latin American neighbors or even some European countries. Such stability was guaranteed by political arrangements, formal and informal, which avoided the monopolization of alliances, to the extent that, in each electoral process, partnerships would have to be renegotiated or recreated. It is, therefore, clear that the stability of the system was guaranteed precisely by the instability of a varied set of institutional arrangements, among which those analyzed this document.

This set of characteristics resulted in a more competitive model than what was envisaged. It involved a greater number of citizens than those provided for in

the electoral codes and also allowed the participation of a greater number of state actors. Finally, it coexisted with a stronger Legislative Branch.

Recommended further reading

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The uncertain dawn of the Republic: the provisional government and the indirect election of Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca (1891)

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The first presidential election in Brazil was held 15 months after November 15th, 1889. Between the last emperor and the first president of the Republic, the country went through troubled times under a provisional government led by Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca and a ministry formed by a coalition that brought together notable representatives of the main trends of Brazilian republicanism. These included Quintino Bocaiúva and Aristides Lobo, who were signatories of the 1870 manifesto; and Campos Salles, who represented republicanism in the state of São Paulo and the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP); Demétrio Ribeiro was one of the positivist thinkers from the state of Rio Grande do Sul; while Benjamin Constant was the name of the republican officialdom in the Army, and Eduardo Wandenkolk, from the Navy. Finally, it included Rui Barbosa, who was seen as symbolizing those who had signed up to republicanism at the last minute. Rui Barbosa also represented liberalism in a milieu full of positivists. This mixed group had the enormous challenge of leading the re-founding of the Brazilian State under new principles and consolidating the newly inaugurated regime.

In the midst of the project to establish republican institutions, the presidential election was of decisive importance, but in order to hold it, it was necessary to rebuild the entire political structure that had been dismantled after the military coup of 1889. In December of that year, the provisional government appointed a commission to draft the Republican Constitution, showing that the new regime sought to establish a legal basis for itself.





As eleições.

Correrão serenamente, nas diferentes secções, as eleições realizadas hoje n'esta cidade para deputados e senadores ao primeiro congresso nacional.

A balbúrdia introduzida pelas juntas alistadoras privou infelizmente a grande numero de eleitores antigos de exercer o direito do voto.

Via-se de secção em secção eleitoral grande numero d'elles procurando saber onde tinha de votar, porque o quartiereiro que os seus titulos trazia, não era o mesmo em que as juntas os haviam contemplado.

Por occasião de ser publicado o alistamento, como era natural, esses eleitores procuraram conhecer apenas si tinham ou não sido incluídos n'elle, sem ligar importancia ao numero do quartiereiro em que o seu nome era descripto.

Este pouco caso originava-se do facto de estar mencionado o quartiereiro no titulo antigo.

Aconteceu que uma quantidade enorme d'esses eleitores dos quaes muitos não se mudaram de casa desde que se alistaram ha annos atrás, foi transferida no alistamento para differente quartiereiro.

Hoje, quando queriam esses eleitores votar na secção correspondente ao quartiereiro do seu titulo, diziam-se livres que não estavam n'essa secção, mandando-se-os para outra.

N'essa outra também não estavam e lá iam os eleitores para mais outras, onde estavam contemplados, mas já haviam sido classados e tinham que esperar a hora das reclamações, ou onde já não chegavam a tempo para poder votar nem mesmo como reclamantes.

D'estarte muitos cidadãos viram-se embaraçados no exercicio do direito do voto e grande numero d'elles ficou d'isso privado, por esse manejo que recusamos qualificar, cometido pela juntas.

Será bom que para o anno seja corrigido o abuso praticado no processo de alistamento realizado em abril ultimo.

On September 15th, 1890, elections were announced for the National Constituent Assembly. The rules for this poll were the provisions of the Alvim Regulation, a decree that defined central aspects of electoral citizenship and gave the members of the Constituent Assembly the responsibility of electing the first president of the Republic.

Under the guise of ensuring the continuity of the republican project, preventing regressive monarchists from threatening the regime through the vote, the Alvim Regulation established indirect elections for president. But this was not the only exceptional measure the decree put in place for that legislative election. A previous provision that made police chiefs, Army commanders and other military officials who led forces on land or at sea ineligible as candidates was suspended only during this election to the Constituent Assembly. It led to a large influx of candidates in military uniform. Many of them ended up being elected, 55 to be precise, mainly due to the government's efforts to control the results of the election.

The regulatory arrangement to neutralize any opposition force went further. The Alvim Regulation transferred the responsibility for holding and supervising elections to the members of the municipal administrations, whose appointment was a prerogative of the interventors of each state. These, in turn, were chosen by the provisional government—it should also be noted that most of these interventors were appointed based on their affinity with

A report on election day in the state of Maranhão published by the *A Pacotilha* newspaper on 9.15.1890, page 4. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

members of the Executive Branch, many of them were military personnel with no previous experience in public administration, and some were even Deodoro's relatives. In the end, the central government created a structure that made it practically impossible for opponents of the new regime to win.

On September 15th, 1890, around 2% of the population went to the polls to elect 63 senators and 205 deputies. The number of voters was not very significant, but compared to the average number of voters in the last decade of the imperial era, there was a significant increase, mainly because a republican decree abolished the requirement for a census to register. Even so, the rules excluded illiterate people and women, and only Brazilians over the age of 21 who had civil and political rights, as well as foreigners who met the same qualifications and had been residing in Brazil since November 15th, 1889, could register.

The seats in the Constituent Assembly were practically all occupied by allies of the government and supporters of republicanism. With all the ministers of the provisional government elected except Benjamin Constant, who had not stood as a candidate, this was certainly the most triumphant moment of Deodoro's administration since, from the very first months, internal crises and continuous clashes between ministers revealed instability as a distinctive feature of that government.

Revista Illustrada magazine of 1890, year 15, No. 601, page. 5. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.





It is worth recalling that the republican movement, though it had existed for more than two decades and had been very important in the public debate, never achieved significant positive electoral results during the imperial period. It should also be stressed that, under the banner of republicanism, there were heterogeneous ideological tendencies and competing interest groups. Factions with different social cleavages (e.g., São Paulo landowners, young cadets from the Escola Militar da Praia Vermelha, journalists from the Rio de Janeiro press) diverged on a wide variety of issues regarding the extent of the central government's power, the autonomy of the states, the possibility of a positivist dictatorship, the adoption of universal suffrage—in short, a myriad of possibilities and tendencies were at stake.

The provisional government was set up in a precarious structure, which combined the administrative inexperience of its members, the difficulty in creating consensus, and the absence of political routines under an institutional vacuum. These circumstances set the erratic tone of the first year of republican politics. There was a high degree of uncertainty, but many republicans initially hoped to see this instability overcome by electing as the first President of the Republic Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca, the natural candidate. He, however, proved unable to fulfill this expectation.

In January 1890, Demétrio Ribeiro, then minister of Agriculture, resigned because he disagreed with the new financial policy (which would later lead to the disastrous *Encilhamento*), announced by the minister of Finance, Rui Barbosa.

This first ministerial crisis, effusively covered by the press, was followed by others for the most varied reasons. A week after Demétrio Ribeiro, the minister



Cidade do Rio newspaper of 12.17.1890, page 1.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

of the Interior, Aristides Lobo, also left office because Deodoro had not accepted some of his appointments to the civil service. Shortly afterward, it was Quintino Bocaiúva, minister of Foreign Affairs, who submitted his resignation letter, opposing the deportation of the famous practitioner of *capoeira* (an Afro-Brazilian sport that mixes martial arts, dance and music, developed by descendants of African slaves and repressed by the police until the middle of the 20th century), Jucá Reis, because the then-minister had personal ties to the criminal's family.

Marshal Deodoro's disputes with Benjamin Constant, the minister of Public Instruction, Post and Telegraphs, were frequent. They almost came to blows. At a ministerial meeting, the two had to be restrained by other authorities present. Deodoro even proposed a duel to settle his differences with Constant but was finally dissuaded. When Deodoro tried to grant the rights to build and operate the Port of Torres to a friend but his ministers unanimously rejected the project, the weakness of the government's institutional relations became even more evident. These and other cases exposed the government's incompetence, especially its leader, in dealing with disagreements within its central core, but none of these crises had an impact comparable to the attempted silencing of the newspaper *A Tribuna*.

In the final days of November 1890, soldiers raided the newspaper's headquarters, destroyed its printing equipment, and beat up its employees. The attack on *A Tribuna* newspaper, carried out by uniformed officers, was an authoritarian excess by military men who saw disrespect for the regime and the institution in publications with a monarchist tendency that criticized the government



In his painting of 1891, *Constitutional Commitment*, the painter Aurélio Figueiredo shows Deodoro da Fonseca making his inauguration speech, swearing to uphold the Constitution, oaths that would be broken a few months later. Most of the politicians appear indifferent to the ceremony.

Image: Museu da República/Instituto Brasileiro de Museus (IBRAM)/Ministério da Cidadania No. 13/2019.

The biggest surprise was the election of the vice-president. The candidate on Deodoro's ticket, Navy minister Eduardo Wandenkolk, suffered a landslide defeat, winning only 57 votes, while Floriano Peixoto, the vice-president of the Republic on Prudente de Moraes's ticket, was elected by the votes of 153 parliamentarians. Although the election of Deodoro signaled a somewhat cautious choice to maintain order, Floriano's election was an unmistakable sign of the strength of the opposition, which wanted to create mechanisms to moderate the president's dictatorial impulses.

Na eleição que se procedeu para presidente e vice-presidente da republica brasileira, obtiveram votos para		
<i>Presidente</i>		
Marechal Manoel Deodoro da Fonseca	(eleito)	129
Dr. Prudente José de Moraes e Barros		97
Marechal Floriano Peixoto		3
Dr. Saldanha Marinho		2
Dr. José Hygino		1
Em branco duas cédulas.		
<i>Vice-presidente</i>		
Marechal Floriano Peixoto (eleito) ..		153
Almirante Eduardo Wandenkolk ..		57
Dr. Prudente de Moraes		12

By telegram, newspapers all over Brazil received the election results. In the photo, a detail from the 1891 edition of *Revista Illustrada* magazine, year 16, no. 615, page 3. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



He was born in Anadia, a small town in the then province of Alagoas, on August 5th, 1827. He was the son of Lieutenant Colonel Manoel Mendes da Fonseca and Dona Rosa Maria Paulina da Fonseca.

Collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República.

Deodoro da Fonseca

He played a central role in the political crisis between the military and the government at the end of the Empire. He was part of the group of leaders (among them Benjamin Constant, Quintino Bocaiúva, Rui Barbosa, Francisco Glicério, a representative of the São Paulo Republicans, and some officers, even from the Navy) who organized for the establishment of the Republic in the country. He presided over the provisional government and was elected Brazil's first president by Congress. He dissolved Parliament on November 3rd, 1891, but was unable to form a new government and was replaced by the Vice-President Floriano Peixoto. Sick and disabled, Deodoro da Fonseca died on August 23th, 1892, in Rio de Janeiro.

Floriano Vieira Peixoto

He was brought up by his uncle, Colonel José Vieira de Araújo Peixoto, a plantation owner and influential provincial politician, who was comfortably off. Floriano had a military career, taking part in the Paraguayan War. He did not participate directly in the movement that led to the creation of the Republic. However, on the morning of November 15th, as the troops led by General Deodoro da Fonseca and Lieutenant-Colonel Benjamin Constant surrounded the leading members of the government, he refused to lead the imperial resistance. He replaced Deodoro as president of the Republic from 1891 until 1894, when Prudente de Moraes succeeded him. He died on June 29th, 1895.



He was born at the Riacho Grande mill in Ipioca, a district of Maceió, capital of the province of Alagoas, on April 30th, 1839. He was the son of Manuel Vieira de Araújo Peixoto and Ana Joaquina de Albuquerque Peixoto.

Collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República.



The institutionalization of the Republic had made objective progress in those February days, but the atmosphere of uncertainty continued to prevail. The coalitions failed, and the founders of the Republic were unable to provide stability to the regime in those first 15 months of provisional government. The symbolic handing over of the new Constitution to the country was supposed to take shape in the presidential inauguration ceremony. The event, however, was completely dull and lacked the typical republican ceremonial grandeur. *Few people; more on the podium than in the hall, and in the hall more chairs than people*, wrote the Brazilian author Machado de Assis in a chronicle published years later, adding that Floriano's entry into the São Cristóvão Palace (the presidential Palace) was greeted by *warm and numerous* applause, unlike the reception for Deodoro, which was more subdued.

The parliamentarians' distrust of the chief executive and vice versa only increased in the following months. After an unsuccessful coup attempt, with Congress dissolved and a state of emergency decreed, Deodoro resigned his position in November 1891. Floriano, the vice-president, took over, continuing a situation of political instability and disrespect for constitutional provisions.

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The roll call begins: presidential succession and direct voting in 1894

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The first direct presidential election was a decisive moment in the process of establishing the republican regime in Brazil. Affected by several revolts and by regional political conflicts, the forces that aligned themselves for the poll would reflect the fragmentation of the political groupings of a regime so far characterized by a state of constant institutional crisis. In the midst of the splits in the political forces across different states, the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP) would present itself united in the search for civilian control of the Presidency. This union established the politicians from São Paulo as the leading players in deciding the future of the election. However, at a time of extreme political uncertainty, moves to secure the candidacy of someone from São Paulo for the Presidency would take place under the threat of military intervention, represented by the charismatic figure of Marshal Floriano Peixoto.

The first moves surrounding the 1894 election took place within a framework of persistent institutional crisis. Born out of a peaceful change of regime, the first years of the Republic would be marked by coups, by threats of the establishment of dictatorships, and by regional armed conflicts which would lead to a long civil war in the south of the country and the Navy Revolt in the federal capital. During this

period, the promulgation of the republican Constitution in 1891 would have little effect in a political context of weak institutions.

The federalist principle enshrined in the Constitution would find state leaders involved in conflicts, as well as the national Executive with difficulty in dealing with these disagreements. Finding himself increasingly isolated by his opponents, Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca, elected president of the Republic by the Constituent Congress, decides to close the National Congress and declares a state of emergency in November 1891. This attempt to centralize power in the hands of one of the main symbols of the nascent regime would not last long. In alliance with part of the Army, the Navy and other republican political leaders, the Vice-President, Marshal Floriano Peixoto, launched a successful counter-coup, culminating with the overthrow of the first president.

The victory of the forces allied with Floriano Peixoto would not resolve the institutional crisis. Following the counter-coup, Floriano Peixoto ensured the removal of all the state governments, except for the governor of Pará, Lauro Sodré, the only one who had positioned himself against Deodoro da Fonseca.





Charge sobre a indefinição em torno da realização das eleições presidenciais após a posse de Floriano. *Revista Ilustrada* de 1892, nº 641, p. 4. Acervo da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brasil.

The political atmosphere grew more tense and conflictual. Forces that supported Floriano Peixoto started to demand more influence over public affairs, including the leaders of the Navy. Former supporters of Deodoro da Fonseca organized themselves in bitter opposition. A disagreement arose around the interpretation of the Federal Constitution regarding the holding of a presidential election. Rumors of a new coup circulated in the federal capital.

Floriano Peixoto's reaction to this time of uncertainty would give him the nickname of the *Iron Marshal*. Driven by legalistic rhetoric, Floriano Peixoto decided to remain in the position of vice-president and refused to call new elections. Implacable with his opponents, he jailed and exiled several opposition leaders on allegations of conspiracy, and with the approval of the National Congress. Although these measures sought to weaken his adversaries, on the other hand, his supporters actually began to split. Moreover, Floriano Peixoto was not successful in settling all the regional armed conflicts.

The outbreak of the Federalist Revolution in 1893 increased the tensions around Floriano Peixoto.

The marshal's insistence on intervening in the politics of the state of Rio Grande do Sul in favor of the political faction led by Júlio de Castilhos—whose centralizing and positivist ideas were close to those of Floriano Peixoto's supporters—had led to political radicalization. In February 1893, the federalists in the state of Rio Grande do Sul—made up of former liberal monarchist leaders—began their incursions across the south of the country against Castilhos's forces.



Cartoon about the lack of decision about the holding of the presidential elections after the swearing-in of Floriano. *Revista Ilustrada* magazine of 1892, No. 641, page 4. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The consequences of the civil war in southern Brazil, the clashes in the federal Congress, and the manifesto of the 13 generals—a text in which 13 leaders of the Armed Forces criticized the actions of Floriano Peixoto and asked for the holding of a new election—were advance warnings of the next crisis: the Navy Revolt. In September 1893, Admiral Custódio José de Melo, who had supported Floriano Peixoto's counter-coup, began the Navy Revolt, keeping control of the fleet in Guanabara Bay. The *Iron Marshal* had to fight on two fronts.



However, the civil war and the rising of the Navy would strengthen the president. Put together to defend the Presidency and the Republic, the patriotic battalions were the strongest expression of the *Jacobin* movement, consisting of radical, nationalistic republicans who prized military virtues. Their hero was Floriano Peixoto. The extreme nationalism—satirized by the Brazilian writer Lima

Barreto in his work *Triste Fim de Policarpo Quaresma* (published in English as *The Sad end of Policarpo Quaresma*)—of Jacobin, pro-Floriano Peixoto oratory would lead to a kind of popular mobilization in the federal capital that had not been seen when the Republic was first proclaimed.



Scene of the Navy Revolt, in *Revista Ilustrada* magazine of 1893, No. 666, page 4.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Front page of the *Correio Paulistano* newspaper of 8.2.1893, reporting the creation of the Federal Republican Party and publishing the party's program. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

This same movement was increasingly distrustful of the state oligarchies, some of which had been defeated by the interventions of Floriano Peixoto following the counter-coup that made him president. Even so, the Jacobins and a large number of the civilian republican leaders, came together under the banner of the Federal Republican Party (PRF – 1893)—defined as *a cathedral open to all creeds*—in support of Floriano Peixoto. The battle lines of the presidential succession were now drawn: on one side, Jacobins hoping that their senior leader would remain in power to defend the Republic; on the other side, the state oligarchies, with the PRP at their head, fearing the action of the military, but who sought the support of the Presidency to establish their local dominance.

The PRP had won its leading role by uniting to defend Floriano Peixoto at the start of his presidency. Holding central positions in the government from that moment onward, the politicians from São Paulo made use of their growing economic influence by allying with the central authority but without becoming identified with it. The air was full of doubts about the *Iron Marshal's* intentions. Leading the PRF, the *paulista* federal deputy from São Paulo, Francisco Glicério presented himself as someone who was sympathetic to Floriano Peixoto, but who found himself obliged to note the anxieties of his state's oligarchy, fearful that the man who held the Presidency would take the Brazilian Republic down the path of rule by a totalitarian strongman—common in neighboring Latin American countries at that time.

This ambiguous relationship between the two leading forces in national politics would become visible at the start of the conversations about the succession. Floriano Peixoto had repeatedly postponed the legislative and presidential elections due to the threats of bombardment of the capital by the Navy insurgents, and the civil war in southern Brazil. The politicians from São Paulo accepted this. Once the date of the presidential election had been set for the start of 1894, the PRF scheduled a party meeting for September 25th, 1893, to launch the candidacy of the leading republican from São Paulo, the speaker of the Senate, Prudente de Moraes. The situation of the country, plagued by conflicts between the state oligarchies, led the Marshal to fear that his supporters would be persecuted after the swearing in of the new president. Historians disagree as to whether, in fact, Floriano Peixoto went so far as to consider



the possibility of a coup in order to remain at the head of the government. There are accounts that say that the Marshal gave up the idea because of the opposition of some of his supporters, and due to the decline in his own state of health. Some argue that Floriano Peixoto had considered nominating his own successor. According to this version, the Marshal suggested the name of Rangel Pestana, a leading São Paulo republican, and that of the governor of the state of Pará, his fellow soldier Lauro Sodré. The politicians from São Paulo allegedly rejected the nominations, insisting on the name of Prudente de Moraes. Even so, the *São Paulo's politicians* took care to nominate—or to accept—a representative of the Jacobin tendency for vice-president on the slate, this being the president of the state of Bahia, Manuel Vitorino Pereira.



Image: collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República.

The nomination of this politician apparently displeased the political group of his fellow from Bahia, Rui Barbosa, who was part of the opposition to Floriano Peixoto. There then emerged the name of Afonso Pena, a politician from the state of Minas Gerais with plenty of experience and a national profile. However, the then president of Minas Gerais seems to have rejected, as early as 1893, any suggestion that he be put forward—which did not prevent him from winning substantial numbers of votes in Bahia, coming away with approximately 24 thousand votes of the 38 thousand cast in the whole election in that state.

Prudente José de Moraes Barros

He was born on a farm near Itu (state of São Paulo) on October 4th, 1841. He obtained a Bachelor's Degree in law from the Law Faculty of São Paulo. He was a local

councilor in the São Paulo municipality of Piracicaba (1865-1868), and deputy to the Provincial Assembly in 1867. He broke with the Liberal Party to join the Radical Party. He became one of the leaders of the Republican Party, defending the republican cause. He was elected deputy for the Republican Party in 1884. After the proclamation of the Republic on November 15th, 1889, Prudente de Moraes was appointed governor of the state of São Paulo. He was appointed speaker of the Constituent Assembly from 1890-1891. He was elected president of Brazil in 1894 for the Federal Republican Party. After the end of his term, he remained active in politics until his death, which occurred on December 3rd, 1902.

The first direct election for president of the Republic would have one official candidate, like so many others that followed during the course of the First Republic. Prudente José de Moraes Barros was a name identified with the new regime. Having been one of the leading republican propagandists in his state, he held legislative positions for the Republican Party during the monarchy. In the republican period, he became speaker of the Constituent Assembly in 1890, after a brief term as governor of the state of São Paulo. In his campaign platform, he supported certain ideas that were dear to republicans from São Paulo, such as the defense of the autonomy of the federated states, as well as reflecting his contemporaries' concern about the institutional disorder that had followed the proclamation of the Republic, when he argued that the Constitution should be obeyed.

On March 1st, 1894, the first direct elections for president of the Republic were held. After the vote counting period, the name of Prudente de Moraes emerged victorious, winning more than 290 thousand votes, against approximately 38 thousand for the runner-up, Afonso Pena, despite the fact that the latter had rejected his own candidacy and supported the winner. In an era when candidates did not have to be officially registered, the counts produced a long list of names that had received votes—205 *candidates* were voted for as president—including 105 votes for Floriano Peixoto. Similarly, the PRF candidate for vice-president, Manuel Vitorino Pereira, received 266 thousand votes; followed by a list of two hundred or so names. Given this diverse picture, it would not be possible to say that there was one main opposition candidate.



Headline on inauguration day with illustrations of Prudente de Morais and Floriano Peixoto. *Revista Ilustrada* magazine of 1894, year 19, No. 667, page.4. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Held on November 15th, 1894, the inauguration of Prudente de Morais encapsulated the uncertain times through which the nascent Republic was passing. Nobody knew how the radical supporters of Floriano Peixoto would react to the arrival of the new government. Adding to the uncertainty, Floriano Peixoto himself did not take part in the inauguration ceremony, saying that he had health problems. The popular reception and the presence of national leaders at the swearing-in ceremony, as well as the participation of the Army and the students of the Military College suggested that the new president of the Republic had a wide base of support. Nothing could have been more misleading. Five months later, the Escola Militar da Praia Vermelha would organize the first of two revolts that would seriously challenge the presidency of Prudente de Morais. The twisting and turning path of presidential successions in Brazil had begun.

The fervor of the Jacobins would still persist even after the death of Floriano Peixoto, in 1895. Important national political leaders, such as elements of the Army, did not hide their mistrust of the president. In his first few months as president, Prudente de Morais would have to deal with a parliamentary base dominated by a single party divided into hostile groups, and the need to pacify the revolt in southern Brazil. The first civilian presidency was emerging under the threat, even if veiled, of a military intervention.

The economic crisis, the conflictive political situation in the states and the fiery speeches of the Jacobins in the federal capital kept the Presidency under the tutelage of the PRF, and by extension, dependent on the political skill of its top leadership, Francisco Glicério. Savaged by the criticisms of Jacobin elements of the PRF itself, but supported by the PRP, Prudente de Morais's room for maneuver was limited by the ambiguity of his support base and by the influence of Francisco Glicério over the Congress. A situation that would worsen with his removal from the government, in November 1896, due to his state of health. Manuel Vitorino, his pro-Floriano vice-president, would shatter the fragile balance of forces supported by the single party. The Jacobin voices from the patriotic battalions were taking over the streets and their conspiratorial movements were becoming more and more open.

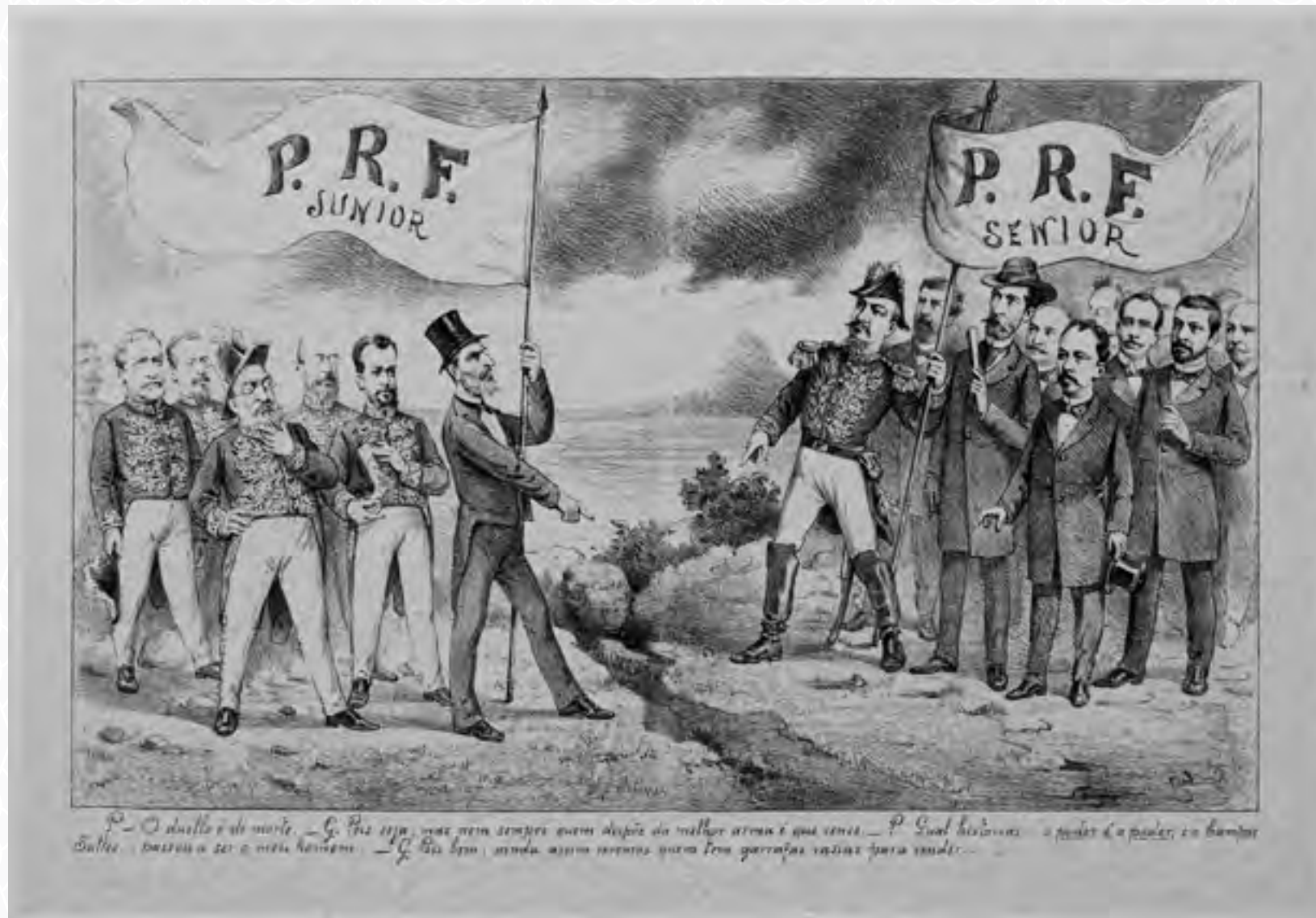


Canudos, scene celebrating the soldiers' courage. Published in *Revista Ilustrada* magazine of 1897, No. 729, page. 1. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



In his return to the presidency in March 1897, without any prior warning to Manuel Vitorino Pereira, Prudente de Moraes would find a political situation that was rapidly deteriorating. The outbreak of the Canudos war served as fuel for the Jacobins. The latter saw the armed movement in the interior of the state of Bahia as

an attempt to restore the monarchy—the social tragedy caused by the conflict and its religious dimension would only become understood after the publication of the epic work of literature by the journalist and writer Euclides da Cunha, *Os Sertões* (published in English as *Rebellion in the Backlands*). The defeats handed out to



Cartoon announcing the split in the Federal Republican Party. *Revista Illustrada* magazine of 1897, No. 731, page 4. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



the first Army expeditions by Antonio Conselheiro's forces were described by the Jacobin newspapers as a sign of the president's weakness. The revolt of the Military College of Rio de Janeiro—which broke out in May 1897—would also use the events in the interior of Bahia as its pretext. The energetic reaction of Prudente de Morais in putting down the Jacobin revolt created an opportunity to make explicit and thus dissipate the ambiguities of the PRF. Following the end of the revolt, the federal deputy from Bahia, José Joaquim Seabra, known J. J. Seabra, submitted a motion of support for the actions of the president of the Republic, in a clear provocation to the Jacobins. There was no way of maintaining the unity of the PRF.

In a show of strength, Francisco Glicério was defeated in the election for speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, a few days after Seabra's motion. The PRF would disappear. The president went on to have the support of a sizeable part of the parliamentary representations from the states of São Paulo, Bahia, Pernambuco and Minas Gerais. But the final defeat of the pro-Floriano Jacobin forces would take place after the attack of November 5th, 1897. That day was to see a welcoming ceremony for the military forces who had won the war of Canudos. Despite the end of the conflict, the Jacobin forces were still in a heightened state of fervor, and there was therefore a similarly high level of threat to the president's life. The attempt to assassinate the president during the ceremony left its target unharmed but took the life of the minister of War, Marshal Carlos Machado de Bittencourt. The popular commotion in the following days was accompanied by the arrest of Jacobin leaders, who were suspected of taking part in the attack.

Three years after his inauguration, Prudente de Morais was establishing relative political stability. With a support base in the National Congress, the process of nominating the candidate to succeed him began.

The newspaper *A Noticia* in its edition of November 6th, 1897, devoted the whole front page to the assassination attempt. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



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From the campaign to the Presidency: the presidency of Campos Salles (1898)

Ana Luiza Backes (Chamber of Deputies)



The election of Campos Salles represented the milestone when the new republican regime began to organize itself. After an extremely conflict-ridden period following the proclamation of the Republic, his candidacy united most of the former *campaigners* (as republican militants were called during the Empire). During the campaign and in the election, Campos Salles isolated his opponent, Lauro Sodré, from the state of Pará, who was identified with the radical republicans, known as *Jacobins* or *Florianistas* (nationalistic and in favor of State intervention).

After the election, Campos Salles brought about an agreement between the country's main political forces, quelling the conflicts that were threatening to paralyze the work of Congress. Thus, he managed to approve international lines of financing (funding loans) and a program of monetary and budgetary restrictions that was demanded in return by international financial centers.

The agreement, enshrined in the so-called *Reform of the Internal Regulation*, established the bases of the colonel system and the dominance by political oligarchies that was to be a feature of the whole period of the First Republic.

Background: The republican campaign movement

Both candidates in the elections of 1898 were from the republican *campaign* movement. The *campaigners* were in favor of the Republic, the creation of an impersonal State bureaucracy—based on competence—federalism, and the separation of Church and State. A substantial proportion of these people had supported the abolition of slavery in 1888, even though some of the big São Paulo landowners held an ambiguous position, as they wanted the end of slavery only when they had solved the labor problem in the coffee sector.

On taking power, the republicans sought to create their own mythology—a new era was beginning in Brazil, guided by science and reason, in opposition to the Empire, a time of backwardness, lethargy and privilege. New urban policies on hygiene and sanitation changed the cities, demolishing entire neighborhoods and constructing buildings related to the scientific project (hospitals, mental asylums, etc.).

The change to the Republic, however, did not take place without conflicts.





Campos Salles as minister of Justice portrayed by *Revista Illustrada* magazine of 1889, No. 569, page. 3. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Manuel Ferraz de Campos Salles

He was a São Paulo landowner and attorney. A longstanding republican, he won the position of general deputy for the movement back in the time of the Empire, one of the only campaigners elected in the period. He was one of the main leaders of the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP), founded in 1873, a powerful political machine that operated during the First Republic. He held the position of minister of Justice in the provisional government of Deodoro da Fonseca, remaining in post until 1891. He was a senator for the state of São Paulo between 1890 and 1891, again between 1894 and 1895, and later from 1910 to 1914. From 1896 to 1897, he was the governor of São Paulo.

Lauro Nina Sodré e Silva

Born in the state of Pará, he took a degree in military engineering at the Escola Militar da Praia Vermelha, in Rio de Janeiro, where he embraced the cause of republicanism and the positivist doctrine of the French philosopher and sociologist Augusto Comte. He was the first governor of the state of Pará; He was also Pará's representative in the Constitutional Congress of the Republic and was elected senator four times, three times for Pará and once for the Federal District.



Lauro Sodré, portrayed in *Revista Illustrada* magazine of 1897, No. 734, cover. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil

The conflicts of the first decade of the Republic

After the overthrow of the monarchy, there followed an extremely troubled decade, which included armed conflicts. Floriano Peixoto resisted the rebellion known as the *Navy Revolt*, in which monarchists supported by foreign powers tried to bring down the government. Along with most longstanding republicans, he supported the president of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Julio de Castilhos, in another armed conflict, the *Federalist Revolution*, in that state. These conflicts left their mark, including the *Florianista* movement (named after supporters of Marshal Floriano Peixoto) which was fiercely nationalistic.

Once the enemies of the Republic had been defeated, other problems became evident. The new constitutional order, as it began to function, had no answers to the frequent confrontations between presidents and Congress. How to achieve a parliamentary majority in this new system? Under the Empire, the Moderating Power had allowed the emperor to dissolve the houses of Congress legally, appointing a prime minister who would conduct the electoral process in the states. A parliamentary majority had been guaranteed, although through a reversed process, from top to bottom.

In this new order, how to guarantee the election of deputies who would support the elected president? The first way tried was through intervention in the states, by bringing down their governments—the mechanisms that had been legal in the Empire were used again by force. Deodoro and Floriano overthrew the governments of most of the states, successively. This path led to many confrontations, sometimes bloody ones. Prudente de Moraes, when he took office, put pressure on the National Congress to establish legitimate forms of intervention in the states, without success. The conflicts continued, however, until the inauguration of Campos Salles and the reform of the internal regulation that he conducted.

The new groups that had achieved power sought to unite and founded, in 1893, a new party to defend the republican order: the Federal Republican Party (PRF). It represented the union of the various groups that had supported Floriano



Peixoto and the Republic, defeating and crushing the imperial elites. The party ended up attracting a large number of ex-monarchists, and this helped to elect the president of the Republic, Prudente de Moraes from São Paulo, and the overwhelming majority of the two legislative chambers.

This coming together of longstanding republicans, however, concealed divergences that emerged clearly during the government of Prudente de Moraes. The opposition between *Florianistas* and *Prudentistas* would divide the Federal Republican Party, leading to a split in 1897. These disagreements have been interpreted as a face-off between civilians and military men. According to this view, the first civilian president of the Republic was supposedly trying to dismantle the structure of military power, aiming to *demilitarize* the country. This interpretation loses sight of the fact that there were other cleavages that divided both civilians and members of the military, and these were expressed in the forming of factions that fought each other: the cleavages included nationalism, the role of the State, privatizations, and coffee's central position in the economy.



The PRF split in 1897. Two blocks emerged: the supporters of the *status quo*, who backed Prudente de Moraes; and a *Jacobin* or Florianista wing, with nationalist and interventionist positions, strongly influenced by positivism.

The political temperature was rising, ahead of a very tight presidential campaign: the *concentrados* launched the positivist Lauro Sodré for president,

The trigger for the split in the PRF was the submission, in the National Congress, of a motion of solidarity with the president of the Republic for the repression of the students of the Escola Militar da Praia Vermelha. Cover of *Revista Illustrada* magazine of September 1896, year 21, No. 711. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

on October 7th, 1897. He had been a republican from the outset, having been the only state governor to oppose the coup launched by Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca on November 3rd, 1891, when Congress was shut down. He was the only one reappointed to the position when Floriano Peixoto's counter coup took place, with the fall of Deodoro and the overthrow of all the governors appointed by him. He was, therefore, a legitimate representative of the *Florianista* group.



The candidate Lauro Sodré and his vice, portrayed by *Revista Illustrada* magazine of 1897, year 22, No. 734. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Campos Salles, due to his background as a historical republican, was invited to run for office in order to defuse the polarization between historical figures and government supporters, as he himself reported in his book:

It is obvious, in the presence of such worthy witnesses, that the crisis resulting from powerful and very longstanding causes could not be overcome simply by dealing with these causes on a case-by-case basis. At the heart of everything, dominating events with its marked influence, separating the elements and generating discord, was the problem of the moment—the presidential election. This time, as always, this was the great axis upon which the politics of the Republic turned. [...]

The opposition supporters, as I have already noted, boasted of being the puritans, the representatives of Brazilian republicanism, pointing to their most eminent colleagues as the legitimate repositories of the true republican traditions. The supporters of the government, however, would not cede this primacy to their adversaries and displayed the list of veterans of the Republic who had found a home amongst them. It was under these circumstances that my name began to emerge from the gloom, regarded as a historical republican, in the service of the republican ideal right from the start of the fight against the decadent regime. (pages 83-4).



Article published on the front page of *Diário da Tarde* newspaper of 10.28.1908, Paraná, commenting on Campos Salles's book. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The then governor of the state of São Paulo launched his candidacy on October 31st, 1897.

The struggle for power between oligarchic groups reached its zenith at this time. On the one side was a large part of the São Paulo Republican Party, which had the support of the legalistic wing of the Army and of groups in the states; on the other side were the ranks of São Paulo politicians who were supporters of Francisco Glicério, and historic republicans, with Quintino Bocaiúva, allied to military groups, fervent Florianistas and positivists from the state of Rio Grande do Sul. At festivals on Independence Day, [...] a multitude calculated at 4,000 people gave enthusiastic cheers for the memory of the late lamented Marshal Floriano and Colonel Moreira César, and for Dr. Júlio de Castilhos, this at a time when Prudente de Moraes and his cabinet were present in the square. (Carone, 1970, page 1,980).

On November 5th, the attempted assassination of Prudente de Moraes, which resulted in the death of his minister of War, showed how bitter the conflicts had become—and this event changed the picture dramatically. After the attack, President Prudente once again received popular support. Thirty thousand people followed the coffin of the assassinated marshal, a crowd which also vandalized the premises of the *Jacobin* newspapers. Prudente exploited the incident to seek control of the National Congress over his succession, excluding his adversaries.



Cidadao do Rio newspaper of 11.5.1897, on the front page.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The presidential race portrayed in Revista Illustrada magazine of 1897, year 22, No. 735.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The elections

The elections took place on March 1st, 1898. The poll was conducted under a state of emergency, which had been proclaimed after the assassination attempt against Prudente de Moras. Campos Salles was elected with a big majority. One should note the extremely low participation of the population, with less than 3% of people voting (data from 1894 indicated a total population of 15 million inhabitants). It is worth recalling also that women and illiterate people had no right to vote, which in itself excluded most of the population.

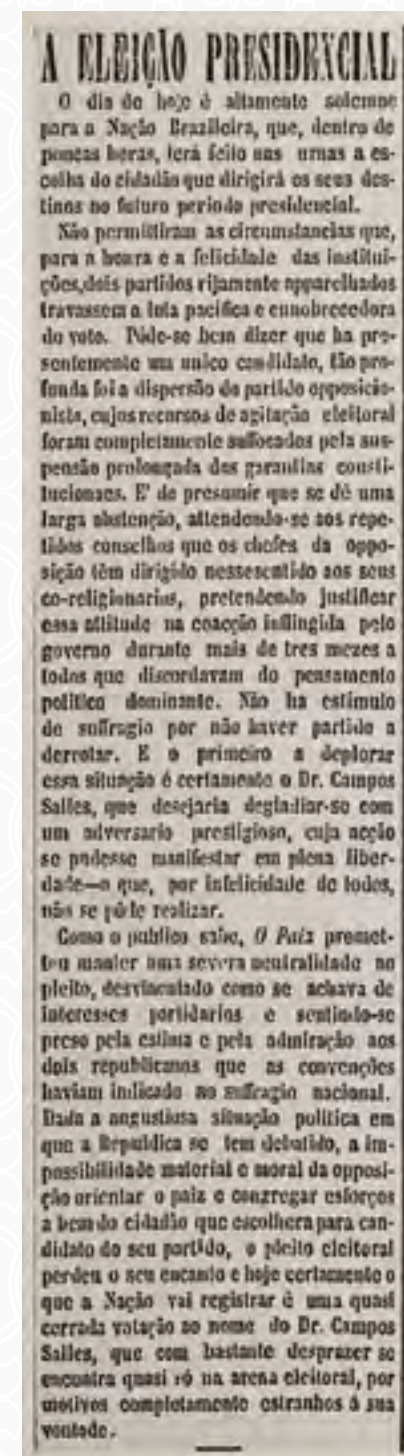
Election result

Candidates	Votes	%
Campos Salles	420,286	90.9
Lauro Sodré	38,929	8.4
Others	3,146	0.7
Total		100

Source: Bolívar Lamounier and Octavio Amorim Neto.
In: Dieter Nohlen, Elections in the Americas a Data Handbook.
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Campos Salles took office on November 15th, 1898, and governed until November 15th, 1902. Before his inauguration, in April 1898, the president-elect left for Europe, on a trip aimed to renegotiating Brazil's foreign debt and obtaining new lines of financing.

O Paiz newspaper of 3.1.1898, on the front page.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.





The departure of Campos Salles for Europe, portrayed in *Revista Illustrada* magazine of 1898, year 23, No. 713. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Financial agreements known as funding loans were signed; to put these into practice, the president of the Republic would need a legislative majority. It was necessary not only to win support for his economic policy, but also to recover international credibility, showing that the republican regime was working under a *modern* institutional model (parliament, elections) and that the president was able to guarantee the agreements that had been signed.

Although weakened, the *Florianista* wing remained active in Congress and was preparing for the legislative elections of 1899 (at that time, parliamentary elections did not coincide with presidential elections). If the elections were to be held under the current rules, it was forecast that there would be serious difficulties in deciding who the winning candidates were.

The process of *recognizing the elected candidates* in the Chamber of Deputies always took place after the election, when all the candidates who claimed to have been elected in their districts presented their credentials as victors, along with minutes

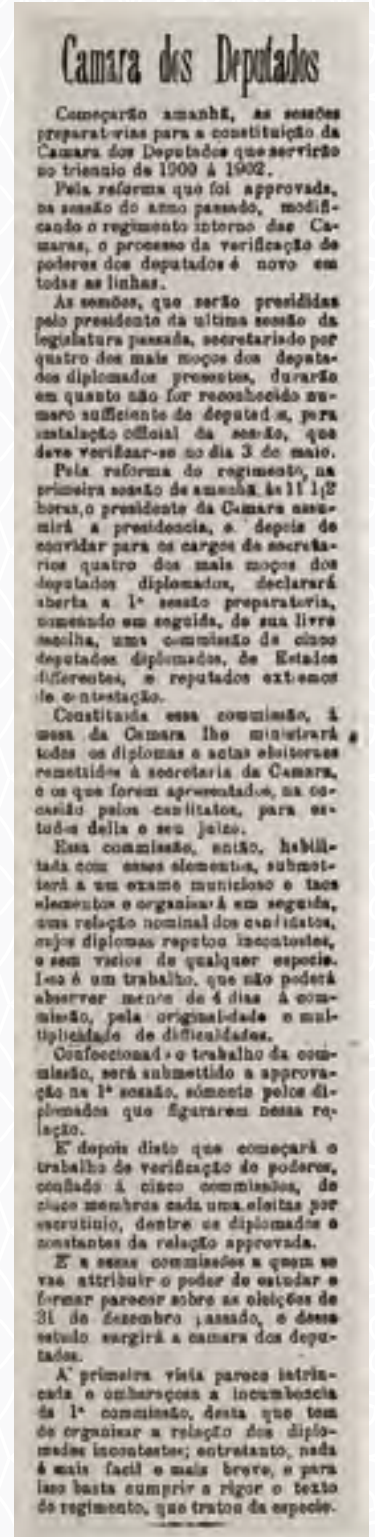
and certificates verifying the election and the votes they had received. When there was a particularly fierce contest, there were sometimes two parallel elections, two receiving boards that gathered and counted the votes. This was what was expected to happen in 1899, with dozens of districts presenting more than one winning candidate who demanded recognition.

The pact that redefined political representation: the reform of the internal regulation

The reform of the Internal Regulation of the Chamber of Deputies emerged in this context as a short-term solution, enabling the election of a group of representatives who supported the economic policy outlined by Campos Salles. Changes were made that would apply at the crucial moment of establishing who had been elected in each district for federal deputy.

The task of recognizing deputies' victory certificates was carried out by the Chamber of Deputies itself, as was common in most countries at that time (Brazil's Electoral Justice System would only be created in 1932). The aspiring deputies would come to Rio de Janeiro carrying the documents that proved that they had been elected. From among these, a chairman was chosen to guide the work. It was up to him to appoint the Recognition Committee, which would conduct the first and decisive screening of the victory certificates, deciding first of all which certificates were valid and which were not. The Chamber, with the make-up based on this initial list, would then be sworn in and begin to hold

News report published by the daily newspaper *Cidade do Rio* of 4.17.1900, describing the changes in the internal regulation of the Congress. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.





preparatory sessions, officially approving the winning candidates in each state, making judgments on challenges and disputes. Obviously, the authority of the chairman to decide on the make-up of the body that carried out the screening was a fundamental power.

The reform of 1899 involved two points: a) a change in the criterion for choosing the chairman of the preparatory sessions—the position of provisional chairman would henceforth go to the oldest deputy, unless the ranks of

deputies included the chairman or any of the vice-chairmen who had served in the last legislative session; b) an alteration in the criteria for recognizing victory certificates—only those candidates whose certificates had been issued by the majority of the vote counting board in the states would now be recognized.

It is important to understand that, before the reform of the Chamber's Internal Regulation, the states' representatives did not always obey the instructions of their respective state governors. It was only after the reform that each governor began to



O Malho magazine of 6.24.1905, page. 2.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



control the representatives from his state. Before, it had been possible to recognize representatives of minorities in the states, provided that they had the necessary national connections. Once the reform was passed, only official candidates were recognized.

The change made was not, however, simply a move towards decentralization. If, on the one hand, the agreement handed the control of elections in the states over to the governors, on the other hand, it meant that the same chairman as in the previous legislature maintained control of the Chamber's work. This mechanism ensured the final control of the process for that national majority that controlled Congress, aligned with the Executive. Therefore, decentralization was partial.

In the long term, the changes ushered in a new way of making the representative system work, characterized by the dominance of oligarchies in the political system and by the exclusion of the majority of the population.

From modernization to oligarchy and exclusion

The resulting system was successful in institutionalizing conflicts between the elites, building accepted mechanisms for electing governments and allowing convergence between presidents and congresses.

The representative system was, however, made meaningless, freezing control of the states in the hands of oligarchies, allowing explicit manipulation of the vote on their part. The control of the representative process meant that the governor's group rarely lost an election in the state. This was reflected in the presidential polls—data on elections contested in the years 1910, 1914 and 1930 show that the winning candidate obtained, in the states where he was supported by the governor, an average percentage of 88%, 96% and 85% respectively of the votes; the loser, in turn, managed to obtain, in those states where the governor supported him, an average of 71%, 62% and 85%, respectively in each year.

Politics in the period of the First Republic was also exclusionary: it is enough to say that, in the election of 1930, the one that had largest popular participation of

the period, only 5% of citizens voted. The majority remained outside the process, excluded both by legal mechanisms (especially illiterate people and women, who were not allowed to vote) and by unlawful ones (the systematic use of fraud by the machines to decide the winning candidates). The republican campaign movement ended up being associated with the consolidation of an oligarchic and exclusionary system, a long way from any dreams of modernity.

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Campos Salles' departure for Europe, portrayed in *Revista Illustrada* 1898, year 23, no. 713.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The consolidation of Governors' politics (1902)

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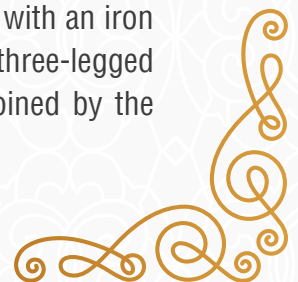
Joaquim Murinho will be remembered, in the years that followed, for his actions as minister and his intervention in the economy. News report from *Careta* magazine of 4.10.1909, page 25. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The election of March 1st, 1902 was the fourth presidential contest in Brazil's history. It was the third one carried out by direct voting in the 20 units of the Federation and the Federal District.

The president of the Republic for the four-year term 1898-1902, Manuel Ferraz de Campos Salles (1841-1913), had conducted an orthodox economic policy of *sanitation*, through his minister of Finance, Joaquim Duarte Murinho (1848-1911), who, despite being a doctor, was a liberal economist of the *monetarist school*, according to which the public finances would be independent of the growth in national production. After taking out a large loan from British bankers (*funding loan*), Murinho carried out a series of unpopular measures to pay it back, such as the reduction of paper money in circulation, cuts in Federal Government expenditure, suspension of public works, tax increases, salary freezes and a lack of support for industrial loans.

However, it was not only in the economic area that Campos Salles tried to ensure the hegemony of his power base among the coffee growers. In the political sphere, he sought, via the National Congress, to end the power struggle between the Federal Government and the member states. The Constitution established that, at the beginning of parliamentary terms, a committee would confirm the legality of the claims of newly elected members; it was the infamous Committee for the Verification of Powers. Since the president dominated this process, Campos Salles established a pact with the state executive heads. If the governors promised to support the presidential power, the committee would only credential and swear in parliamentarians aligned with them in their states—this was known as *degola*. The governors signed up to the proposal *en masse*, giving rise to what became known as *governors' politics*, which in practice destroyed opposition forces' chances of meaningful action.

This *cascade of conservative power* meant that, at election time, the state oligarchies sought to consolidate their power through a network of promises, based on the municipalities. The people who controlled these municipalities with an iron fist were the so-called *colonels*, usually big landowners. Based on the three-legged stool of *colonelism, the hoe and the vote*—a famous expression coined by the





Brazilian legal expert and social scientist Victor Nunes Leal—the state governments became the electoral link between their strongmen and the central government. In order to be able to count on the votes of the colonels' electoral redoubts in their states, the governors paid little attention to violence and coercion at election time, in exchange for a bilateral commitment of votes for funds and positions.

The presidential election of 1902 was the first contest held under this political arrangement. However, the races for president and vice-president of the Republic were conducted separately. In the middle of his mandate, Campos Salles had broken with his vice-president, Francisco de Assis Rosa e Silva (1857-1929), from Pernambuco, due to issues of misappropriation of public funds in that state. The case involved the embezzlement of 194:242\$712* *contos de reis* from the coffers of the Pernambuco Tax Office. The minister of Finance, Joaquim



Photograph showing a group of senators and Rosa e Silva, who are saying farewell to the Senate at the end of the Campos Salles government, in 1902. *Revista da Semana* magazine of 11.23.1902, page 5. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

*NT: corresponding to 194 million reis, the Brazilian currency at the time.

Murtinho, ordered the federal prosecutor in Pernambuco to pursue an investigation, but the prosecutor refused to obey the order and was dismissed.

Unhappy with minister Murtinho's interference in his state affair, vice-president of the Republic, Rosa e Silva broke with Campos Salles in the middle of 1900. In order to displease his boss, he launched the name of the ex-foreign minister, Quintino Antônio Ferreira de Sousa Bocaiúva (1836- 1912), for the presidential succession, accompanied by the senator and ex-governor of the state of Pará, Justo Pereira Leite Chermont (1857-1926), for vice-president, with the support of the republican parties in Pará, Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro.

The journalist Quintino Bocaiúva was a *historic republican* (an activist for the cause during the Empire and a participant in the movement that overthrew the monarchy in 1889). He had been foreign minister during the provisional government and his involvement in the so-called *Palmas Issue* was regarded as disastrous. This question was a hangover from the territorial disputes during the era of the Treaty of Madrid of 1750. The problem was that the Argentine Republic was demanding control of the western region of what is now the Brazilian state of Santa Catarina, and the south-west of the state of Paraná, seeking to move its frontiers to the Chapecó and Chopim rivers.

Without consulting the National Congress, in 1890, the then Minister Quintino signed the Treaty of Montevideo, which would have divided the contested territory half and half between the two countries. Brazilian congressmen took the view that this territorial concession damaged national sovereignty, and refused to ratify it. In order to resolve the dispute, a summons was issued to the then ambassador in Berlin, José Maria da Silva Paranhos (1845-1912), the Baron of Rio Branco, who chose to have the matter arbitrated by the US president, Grover Cleveland (1837-1908). In his award, Cleveland redrew the frontiers between Brazil and Argentina along the lines of the Peperi-Guaçu and Santo Antônio rivers. Nevertheless, Quintino was still elected senator and president of the state of Rio de Janeiro for the 1900-1903 period, at which time he said that this position, at the head of Rio de Janeiro, was nothing more than that of the *receiver of a bankruptcy estate*.



The attorney Justo Chermont had been a provincial deputy for Pará during the time of the Empire. With the establishment of the Republic in 1889, he was elected president of his home state, but he left office in order to take over as Minister of Foreign Affairs under Deodoro da Fonseca, in 1891. He was then elected senator several times, only interrupting the sequence to run for vice-president on the opposition slate in 1902.

Meanwhile, the fact that, as president, Campos Salles had administered a tight budget subject to many obligations had an influence on his personal choice of a successor. The minister of Finance, Joaquim Murinho, had been politically damaged by Vice-President of the Republic Rosa e Silva because of the misappropriation of funds in Pernambuco, as mentioned above. In addition, the vice-president carried out a negative campaign in some newspapers, accusing Joaquim Murinho of being responsible for the economic crisis that the country was going through. Thus, the search for a presidential successor who would also prioritize the area of economic

management led Campos Salles to choose Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves (1848-1919), the *hardline* governor of the state of São Paulo. The chosen vice-presidential candidate was the president of the state of Minas Gerais, Francisco Silviano de Almeida Brandão (1848-1902).

In fact, in this period, the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP) and the Minas Gerais Republican Party (PRM) had tacitly agreed to take turns occupying the Presidency of the Republic, which became known as the *política do café com leite* (policy of coffee with milk).

Rodrigues Alves

Born in Guaratinguetá, the attorney Francisco Paula Rodrigues Alves governed São Paulo twice:

Image: collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República.

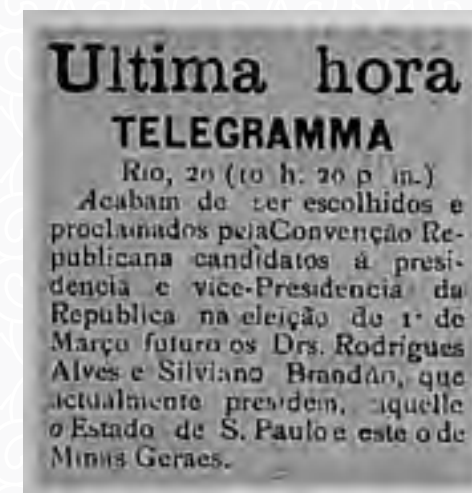


during the Empire, as president of the province, between 1887 and 1888; and as state president, between 1900 and 1902 (he would later hold this position again between 1912 and 1916). A former counselor of the Empire, he served as a deputy in the Constitutional Congress, as finance minister to both Floriano Peixoto and Prudente de Moraes, and as senator. In his first term as governor of São Paulo, he inaugurated the Santana de Parnaíba hydroelectric plant, and had to deal with epidemics of yellow fever, coming into contact with the *Finlay Doctrine*, which suggested that the disease was transmitted by mosquito bites. This discovery would later be fundamental in the urban renewal of the federal capital, during his term as president.

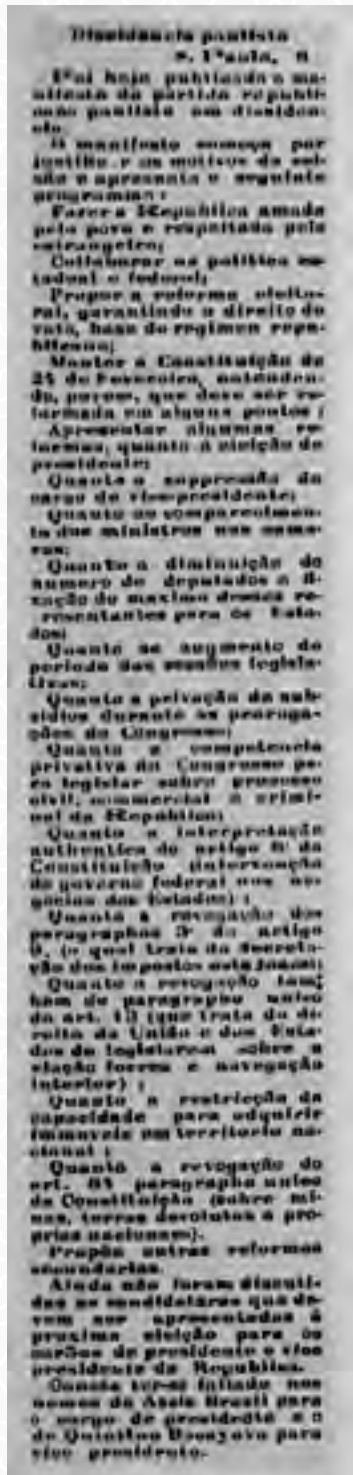
The then president of Minas Gerais, Silviano Brandão, was elected national vice-president together with Rodrigues Alves, but he died before taking office, and was replaced by Afonso Augusto Moreira Pena (1847-1909), also from Minas, elected on February 18th of the following year.

The nomination of Rodrigues Alves by Campos Salles began in November 1900, when his foreign minister, Olinto Máximo de Magalhães (1867-1948), went to the capital of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, to seek, successfully, the adherence of the PRM and of Silviano Brandão as vice-president. Campos Salles was reluctant to have to nominate another vice-president from the northeast region of Brazil, given the conflict with his vice-president from Pernambuco, and he overlooked the president of the state of Bahia, Severino dos Santos Vieira (1849-1917), in favor of a running mate from Minas. Moreover, Campos Salles preferred Silviano over Afonso Pena, since the latter had also been a counselor of the Empire, like Rodrigues Alves. The president did not want a slate that could be labeled as *monarchist* by the press or the opposition.

In August 1901, a session of the Federal Senate was held to debate the succession to President



Telegram reporting the choice of the slate for the presidential election. *O Dia* newspaper of 9.21.1901, Santa Catarina, page 3. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Campos Salles, with legislators from practically all the units of the Federation in attendance. It was left to the senator from Pará, Vicente Machado da Silva Lima (1860-1907), to propose holding a national convention that would bring together two delegates from all the regional republican parties in Brazil. Perhaps, by his action, Vicente Machado was recalling his times in the Federal Republican Party (PRF), which had been wound up in 1897. The PRF was the first major attempt to create a national political party, receiving support from important figures of the period such as Francisco Glicério de Cerqueira Leite (1846-1916), Aristides de Silveira Lobo (1838-1896), Joaquim Saldanha Marinho (1816-1895), Quintino Bocaiúva (1836-1912), Prudente José de Moraes Barros (1841-1902), Manuel Vitorino Pereira (1853-1902), and Júlio César Ferreira de Mesquita (1862-1927).

It is worth stressing that both Prudente de Moraes and Ferreira de Mesquita opposed the candidacies of Rodrigues Alves for the Presidency of the Republic and that of Bernardino José de Campos Júnior (1841-1915) for president of the state of São Paulo. This movement became known as the *second São Paulo's dissident movement* (the first occurred in 1891, with the dissolution of the National Congress by President Deodoro da Fonseca). On September 8th, 1901, the cover of the *O Estado de São Paulo* newspaper, owned by Mesquita, carried the declaration entitled *To the republicans of São Paulo*, which argued that President

Manifesto of the São Paulo Dissident Movement published in the *Diário da Tarde* newspaper of 11.6.1901, Paraná, page 2. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Campos Salles was behaving in an authoritarian way by imposing his candidates. As well as the above-mentioned Prudente de Moraes and Ferreira de Mesquita, this group also included other members of the PRP Central Committee, such as Cerqueira César (1835-1911), Antônio Carlos Ferraz de Sales, Cincinato César da Silva Braga (1864-1953), Antônio Manuel Bueno de Andrada (1857-1941), Adolpho Afonso da Silva Gordo (1858-1929), Alfredo Guedes (1868-1904), among others. The effort was in vain, because Rodrigues Alves and Bernardino José de Campos Júnior won their respective electoral contests for the 1902-1906 period. Nevertheless, the dissident movement would have consequences for the elections of the São Paulo representatives in the Chamber of Deputies in 1902, with some of its members being expelled by the PRP or not being elected. Later, however, the majority would once again become part of the party's ranks and would continue in politics.

At the beginning of the following year, even with these measures, Rodrigues Alves was still avoiding the nomination, because of a fear that his past as a counselor of the Empire still tarnished his reputation and meant he was seen as a monarchist. However, President Campos Salles was not to be put off, and he asked his fellow leading member of the PRP, Senator Bernardino de Campos, to help him with the task. At the start of 1901, Rodrigues Alves accepted the burden once and for all, passing the governorship of São Paulo onto his vice, Domingos Correia de Moraes (1851-1917).

From then on, the electoral machines of the *status quo* and the opposition went into action in the units of the federation. As well as the states of Pernambuco, Pará and Rio de Janeiro, already mentioned, Rosa e Silva negotiated the signing up of the states of Maranhão and Amazonas to the opposition slate. Campos Salles was not to be outdone and soon managed to draw almost the whole of the rest of the country into supporting the government ticket. The thorn in the president's side was the state of Rio Grande do Sul, but Campos Salles held personal talks with the senator of the Rio Grande do Sul Republican Party (PRR), José Gomes Pinheiro Machado (1851-1915), nicknamed the *Condestável da República* by the press, and



persuaded him to give up his attempts to become president of the Republic and accept the role of leading Rodrigues Alves's campaign in the Senate.

The slogan *Outside the establishment, there is no salvation*, ended up weighing heavily in the election of March 1st, 1902, and Quintino Bocaiúva could not rise above his time. In truth, the electoral machine merely made official the status quo's choice of who should occupy the presidential chair in the Catete Palace, the headquarters of the Federal Government. For president, Rodrigues Alves won 93.3% of the votes cast; Quintino, 7%; Ubaldino do Amaral Fontoura (1842-1902),

0.83%; Júlio Prates de Castilhos (1860-1903), 0.21%. For vice-president, Silviano won 87.83% of the votes cast; Chermont, 9.33%; Cândido Barata Ribeiro (1843-1910), 0.28% and Júlio de Castilhos, 0.14% (he stood for both positions). The total number of valid votes was approximately 660 thousand.

The swearing-in took place on November 15th of that same year. The minister of Justice, José Joaquim Seabra, known as J. J. Seabra (1855-1842), invited Francisco Franco Pereira Passos (1836-1913) to become mayor of the Federal District. Pereira Passos, however, demanded unlimited powers to take on the role, a request that was accepted. He took office on December 29th, when the Federal Chamber of Deputies approved Law No. 947 which expanded the powers of the president of the Republic. Thus, the groundwork was laid for the urban renewal of the capital, the hallmark of Rodrigues Alves's administration as president of the Republic.

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Cover of the *Correio Paulistano* newspaper of 3.2.1902, page 1, reporting, in the right-hand column, the result of the presidential election in the state of São Paulo, held on the previous day Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The war behind the scenes (1906)

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Cover of *Revista da Semana* magazine of 1907, No. 275, page 3, regarding the birth of the idea of Afonso Pena's candidacy. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

President Rodrigues Alves was planning to nominate his successor. Little did he know that this would create great discontent among the main oligarchies of the Federation, namely the states of Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro. Amidst the lack of decision about the official candidate, there were soundings, tension, negotiations and various exchanges of missives. At times, there were fears of new revolts, at other times, attempts to find a consensus around a single slate. A true war of nerves, and all of it behind the scenes!

Rodrigues Alves had been chosen as the official candidate based on the efforts of his predecessor, Campos Salles, at a time when the candidacy of the former counselor was well underway. Although both politicians were from São Paulo and linked to the economic elites of their home state, their political natures were different. Campos Salles had been a historic republican, while Rodrigues Alves had been a counselor under the Empire. Although the ex-monarchist was not the old republican's preferred choice, Campos Salles managed to win all the laurels of the nomination and achieved the victory of the candidate he had chosen as his successor.

The first two years of Rodrigues Alves's presidential term were barely over when speculation about who his likely successor would be began. This was a common practice in the First Republic, given the uncertainties surrounding the impossibility of the president of the Republic running for re-election. It was up to whoever was holding the office to have the right to intervene in the process, nominating a person capable of succeeding him. Therefore, the former counselor from São Paulo (Alves) believed that he could ensure the acceptance, by the various oligarchical players, of a candidate by mere imposition of the Presidency, which was reflected in his choice of Bernardino de Campos, an important politician from São Paulo, in agreement with Jorge Tibiriçá, the governor of São Paulo.

The definition of the official candidacy still in 1905 would, in Rodrigues Alves' view, ensure the fulfillment of the desires of his closest allies within the ranks of the Paulista Republican Party (PRP). By contrast, for the political groups of other states, it represented the perpetuation of the São Paulo's elite at the head of the





Cover of *O Malho* magazine of 7.29.1905, No. 150, page 1, announcing Pinheiro Machado's defense of the candidacy of Campos Salles. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

federal government. This aroused feelings that ranged from acceptance, through a reluctance to question the politician anointed by the Catete (the palace that was the headquarters of the Presidency of the Republic), to indignation, which made itself felt in the launching of other possible candidates, including the then vice-president of the Republic, Afonso Pena from Minas Gerais.

However, before the succession process became dramatic and complex, it was triggered as early as 1904, by the visit that Rodrigues Alves made to Minas Gerais for an inauguration. This was regarded as implying that the Catete Palace would definitely support the candidacy of the vice-president from Minas, which was absolutely not the wish of the state of São Paulo political elite. It was not by chance that, months after the visit, Rodrigues Alves, in written correspondence with Afonso Pena in March 1905, justified his choice of the name of Bernardino de Campos and asked his vice-president to support him, in order to avoid disagreements and animosity at the republican convention that was to approve Bernardino de Campos's name.

The concern brings us to an important figure in this process: Pinheiro Machado. A senator from Rio Grande do Sul, linked to the Rio Grande do Sul Republican Party (PRR), the main party in the state, Machado had been in the Senate for 15 years and had even served as interim president. He controlled the oligarchies of small states, in addition to his home state, which gave him the right to participate in decisions regarding the presidential succession and, due to his influence, to instill some fear in those whose interests might be opposed. Perhaps for this reason, in the same letter addressed to his vice-president, Rodrigues Alves accused Pinheiro Machado of disrupting the process, as the strategic senator from Rio Grande do Sul had launched the candidacy of his friend, the politician from São Paulo Campos Salles, a former president and persona non grata to much of the São Paulo political elite due to the unpopularity of his presidential term (1898-1902).

Surprisingly, Afonso Pena's reply to Rodrigues Alves, written a few weeks later, struck the same chords as Pinheiro Machado. They did not necessarily support the same candidate, but they were both sounding an alert about what lay behind the



Cover of *O Malho* magazine of 7.29.1905, No. 150, page 1, announcing Pinheiro Machado's defense of the candidacy of Campos Salles. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

disagreement expressed by both Pena and Machado. Both positions represented a double veto: on the perpetuation of politicians from São Paulo in the Presidency of the Republic, and on the desire of the Catete Palace to control the succession process.

From then on, there was a true war behind the scenes. Afonso Pena and Pinheiro Machado actually only agreed on what they did not want, as they were proposing different candidates. While the former was seeking to promote himself, the latter sought to make the game more complicated, dividing the PRP by launching the candidacy of Campos Salles.

However, both of them were expressing the veto laid down by a substantial part of the state oligarchies, who were moving from acceptance of the choice offered by the Catete Palace to launching alternative candidates, challenging the current president.

A paradigmatic case was the then governor of the state of Minas Gerais, Francisco Sales, who warned Afonso Pena to fall in with President Rodrigues Alves against Pinheiro Machado, when the latter insistently raised the name of Campos Salles to challenge the Catete's Palace anointed candidate, because the governor of Minas believed that within the constitutional order, they could not win against the president of the Republic. In elections during the First Republic, it was more difficult for the governing *status quo* to win, unlike during the period of the Empire.

Nevertheless, this double outrage at Rodrigues Alves's attitude in trying to perpetuate the São Paulo elite at the head of the federal government, and at Alves's attempt to dominate the presidential succession process, spoke louder than any fears. Senior oligarchs in their own states participated actively with opinions and exchanges of letters, such as Bias Fortes and Feliciano Pena (Minas Gerais), Francisco Glicério (São Paulo), Lauro Muller (Santa Catarina), Leopoldo de Bulhões (Goiás) Moniz Freire (Espírito Santo), Nilo Peçanha (Rio de Janeiro), Pinheiro Machado (Rio Grande do Sul), Rosa e Silva (Pernambuco), Rui Barbosa (Bahia), among many others.

Nervousness took over due to the uncertainties surrounding the official candidacy, even though the Presidency of the Republic had already taken a position.



Image from the collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República.

The convention would be the stage for settling these disputes, based on the decision made by the great oligarchs, but it was necessary to arrive at the event with the name already decided. Otherwise, the fear was that, if Bernardino de Campos won by imposition of the president of the Republic, there could be revolts and even the end of the young republican regime: Bias Fortes spoke of anarchy; Pinheiro Machado, of revolution. The ghosts of the Republic's first chaotic decade were still alive in the imagination of the political elites and were reinforced by military rebellions in the federal capital in 1904.

Afonso Pena

Afonso Augusto Moreira Pena was born in Santa Bárbara do Mato Dentro, now the municipality of Santa Bárbara (Minas Gerais), on November 30th, 1847, the son of Domingos José Teixeira da Pena and Ana Moreira

Teixeira Pena. He took a degree in Law in São Paulo (1870). In 1874, he won election for the Liberal Party to the Provincial Assembly (1874-1878) and later to the Chamber of Deputies (1878-1884). Under the Empire, he was minister of War, of Agriculture, Trade and Public Works, and of the Interior and Justice. In the First Republic, he was president of Minas Gerais (1892-1894), president of the Banco da República (1895-1898), a state senator for Minas Gerais (1899-1902), and vice-president of the Republic (1902-1906). He died on June 14th, 1909, during his presidential term.

Despite these fears, the elite of Minas Gerais remained divided. Politicians from south-eastern Minas known as the *zona da mata* (a narrow band of land that continues into the eastern part of northeastern Brazil originally covered by the vegetation of the

Atlantic Forest) looked with more favor on the candidacy of Afonso Pena, while those of the central region preferred the man chosen by President Rodrigues Alves. This seemingly bleak situation contradicts the traditional view that, on the threshold of the 20th century, there was a cohesive and united Minas Gerais Republican Party (PRM). Likewise, it did not prevent Senator Bias Fortes, one of the main representatives from Minas Gerais in parliament, from realizing what strength his state had in Congress, contrasting with its fragile economic condition, due to the coffee crisis that marked the start of the century. For him, as for Afonso Pena, it was urgent that Minas Gerais should take the lead on the national scene.

Such fragility would have been enough for the faction that deferred to Catete Palace to win the dispute within the PRM, were it not for an important event: Campos Salles had officially renounced his candidacy, despite the efforts of Pinheiro



Revista da Semana magazine of 1905, No. 284, page 4. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

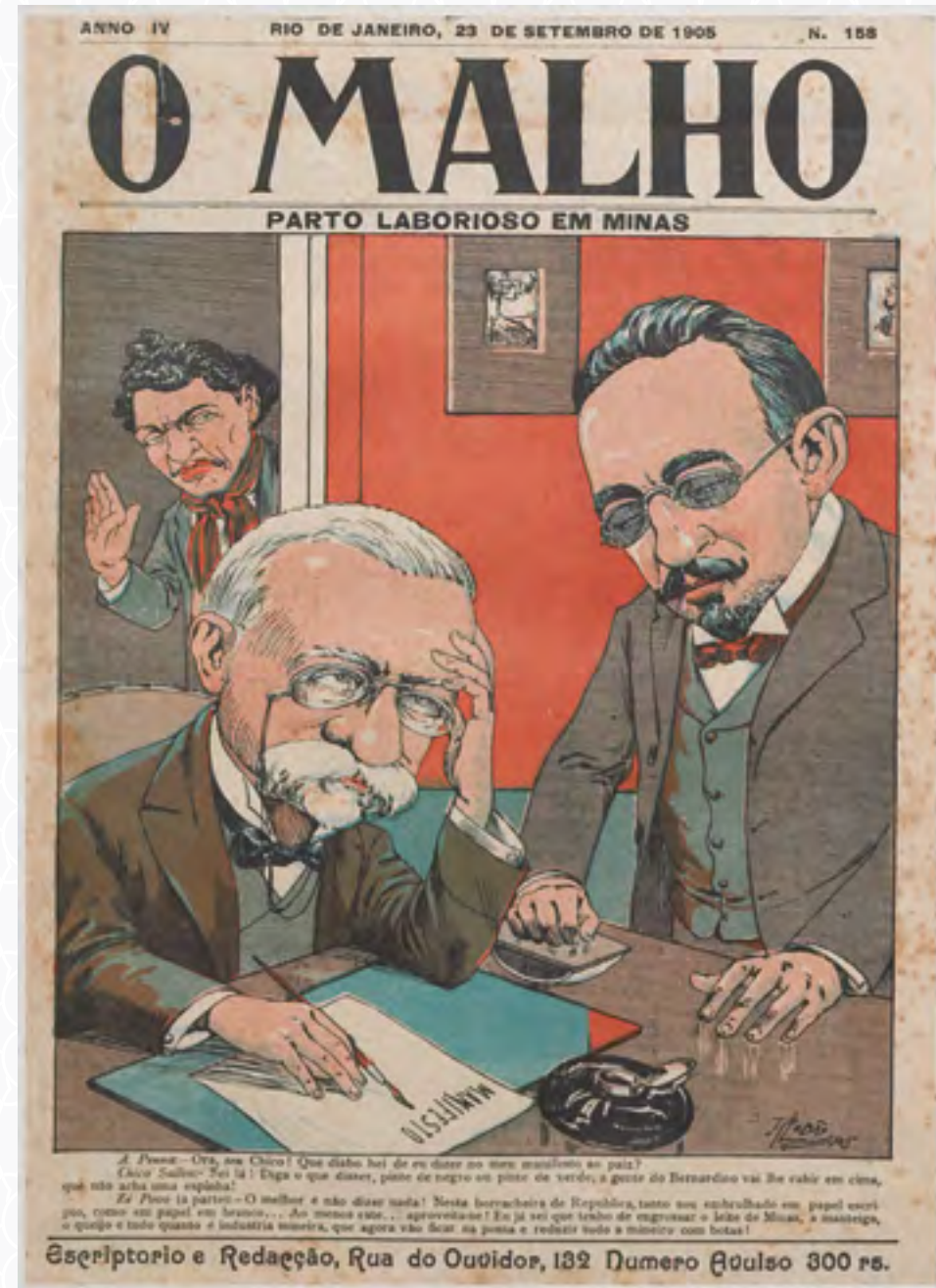


Machado to persuade him otherwise. However much the oligarch from Rio Grande do Sul disliked the idea of a *Republic of Counselors*, in other words, governed by ex-monarchists, he could find no alternative if he wanted to oppose the president's will: he approached Afonso Pena. In the end, the senator from Rio Grande do Sul tipped the balance of the divided state which, if united, could itself tip the balance of the Brazilian Federation, as stated by Bias Fortes. In Pinheiro Machado's wake came the Army, bitter about the president of the Republic's harsh repression of 1904; the oligarchy from Bahia, which had drawn back from launching the name of Rui Barbosa, mostly because of a lack of support; and Campos Salles himself, symbolically going against his fellow members of the PRP, who supported the name of Bernardino de Campos.

The delicate negotiations involving the three main representatives—Afonso Pena, Rui Barbosa and Pinheiro Machado—led to the formation of the Coalition or the Bloc, as this alliance between its three large states (Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul and Bahia) became known. They were sufficiently quick to outwit the ones from São Paulo, ensuring there could be no effective response from São Paulo. To make matters worse, a series of mistakes followed, starting with the failed attempt by then-Senator Francisco Glicério to “resurrect” Campos Salles’ candidacy, a move that neither attracted Pinheiro Machado, once a staunch defender, nor gained supporters within the PRP. This failure was reinforced by a frosty reception from the state of São Paulo in the bloc of the official candidate, something which occurred with the support of Glicério himself, among a few other supporters of Campos Salles in his party.

In the end, the politicians from São Paulo were isolated and could only choose between direct support, veiled support, or radical opposition to the Bloc. They chose the second option as the lesser evil.

With the alliance formed, the name of Nilo Peçanha, an oligarch from Rio de Janeiro, was approved to be the vice-presidential candidate on the ticket, incorporating the political elite of that state. Next came the official procedures of a tedious convention, which sought to show Brazilian society some cohesion, barely



O Malho magazine of 1905, No. 158, page 1. Afonso Pena, Nilo Peçanha and the dilemmas of politics. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



disguising the bitter dispute that deprived the political elite of São Paulo from the power of making its own choice.

Consequently, the elections took place smoothly in March 1906, with the names of Pena and Peçanha receiving 97.92% and 92.96% of the votes, respectively. Other names appeared on the ballots, such as that of the senator from the state of Pará, Lauro Sodré, but they had not even entered the race. The result was not challenged, nor was there a serious political rupture.

In conclusion, some features of the election of 1906 must be mentioned. The first is with regard to the weight of the economic question in the electoral

process. According to the traditional view, Rodrigues Alves' candidate would keep the state away from the coffee interests, awaiting a policy to bolster the product; while Afonso Pena would be the natural defender of the voices that were calling for such a apolicy. Unlike the interpretation of many scholars, the candidacy of Bernardino de Campos did not mean that the federal government was ignoring the problems in the coffee sector, as was made clear in an interview that he gave to the journalist Alcindo Guanabara, in 1905. For his part, Afonso Pena did not make any commitment on the coffee issue to win the sector's support, let alone to the São Paulo growers, who only came to support him after the withdrawal of the candidacy of Campos Salles. Therefore, the economy was not as much the central issue of the election as has always been suggested. It was not programmatic.

This takes us on to the second point: the very nature of the composition of the Bloc. It did not provide any answers suggesting that it was an alliance brought together by economic issues. As shown, the formation of this coalition of forces represented a double veto: on the São Paulo's politicians attempts to remain in charge of the Catete Palace; and the attempt by the president of the Republic himself to control the succession process, excluding the interests of the oligarchies of the various states. Thus, it is possible to state that there was a negative unity around a veto on the stance of the president.

Another interesting point has to do with the status of 1905 as a watershed year. From then on, presidential successions became more negotiated, hovering around the thin line between consensus and dissidence at the heart of the main state oligarchies. Proof of this is that the *Coalition*, which brought together the states of Minas Gerais, Bahia, Rio Grande do Sul and Rio de Janeiro, only operated for that election and did not prevent other attempts by the Catete Palace to monopolize the process. Rui Barbosa, in this regard, stated emphatically that it did not represent democratic progress, since there was merely an exchanging of one official mechanism for another.



O Malho magazine of 1905, No. 158, page 28. Political ring around the rosy: the bloc excludes the people from São Paulo. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



This was demonstrated in the next few years, when Afonso Pena acted in the same way as Rodrigues Alves, trying to nominate the Minas Gerais federal deputy, David Campista, as his successor. Soon, the presidential successions of the First Republic would take place via transient stability agreements which, to a certain extent, did not prevent the crisis of the 1920s and the subsequent collapse of this political model in 1930.

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The pen against the sword: intellectualism and militarism at odds in the *civilist* campaign of 1910

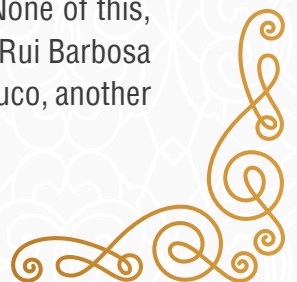
Jaqueline Porto Zulini
Fundação Getulio Vargas/Centro de Pesquisa e
Documentação de História Contemporânea do
Brasil – Rio (FGV/CPDOC-RJ)

Daniel Galuch Junior
Electoral Regional Court (TRE/PR)



The president of the Republic, Afonso Pena's interest in making his successor was clear. After the failure of the negotiations around the name of David Campista, the then minister of Finance, who did not even win the seal of approval of his home state (Minas Gerais), the Catete Palace (in other words, the federal government) considered nominating a politician with greater national prominence, such as ex-presidents Campos Salles or Rodrigues Alves. Even the Baron of Rio Branco, who had also been a member of the Chamber of Deputies, was considered. In the end, however, Marshal Hermes da Fonseca, the minister of War, secured the nomination, sponsored by Pinheiro Machado, the leader of the Rio Grande do Sul Republican Party and recognized as one of the most influential and nationally prominent figures of the time. The elites in the states of Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul came over to the military man's side, especially after the death of Afonso Pena, an event which placed the then vice-president, Nilo Peçanha in charge of the country. Even though he declared himself neutral in the presidential transition process, Nilo Peçanha was known to be sympathetic to Hermes da Fonseca. Minas Gerais also imposed its own candidate for vice-president of the Republic: Wenceslau Brás, the state governor.

At that time, senator Rui Barbosa's popularity was high. This was helped by his recent participation in the Second Hague Conference (in 1907) and his appointment as president of the Academia Brasileira de Letras (ABL), the Brazilian Academy of Language and Literature, (in 1908). These actions contributed to the strengthening of Rui Barbosa's image in the country, based on his unquestionable intellectual capacity, expressed in the characteristic rhetoric of the speeches he made. His position as deputy speaker of the Federal Senate gave him extensive press coverage when the work of Congress was reported by Brazil's main newspapers. Now at the peak of his political career, Rui Barbosa hoped that his candidacy would be supported by the important allies he had cultivated over the years, such as Pinheiro Machado and Afonso Pena himself, who had been his classmate at university. As he had withdrawn from the presidential race in 1905 in favor of Pena, Barbosa was counting on the exchange of favors at that time. None of this, however, was enough to win him the official nomination. The fact that Rui Barbosa was overlooked is attributed to Rosa e Silva, from the state of Pernambuco, another national leader who made no effort to hide his personal dislikes.





Cover of *O Malho* magazine of 4.3.1909, No. 342, satirizing the unpopular candidacy of David Campista. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil

A few days after the launch of Hermes da Fonseca's candidacy, Rui Barbosa went on the attack, publishing a document that became known as the Bronze Letter. In it, he pointed out the marshal's political unpreparedness for the position. He went further, condemning the possibility of a return to power by the military, arguing strongly that the Presidency of the Republic should remain in civilian hands. This was a position that chimed with that of the era's dissident forces, in other words, the dominant factions in the states of São Paulo and Bahia, as well as the opposition in the various states. Faced with the difficulty of finding a challenger for Hermes, they invested in Rui's challenging profile. It should be stressed: this was for lack of an alternative. The respective refusals of Rodrigues Alves, the Baron of Rio Branco and Rosa e Silva—all invited to run but unwilling to compete against Hermes—showed the politicians from São Paulo that the only remaining option was to endorse Barbosa's candidacy as a protest vote. In these circumstances, Albuquerque Lins, the governor of São Paulo, agreed to join the slate as candidate for vice-president. Thus began the first truly competitive presidential race in the republican era, one that would be characterized by the clash between the proponents of so-called *militarism* and, on the other side, the *civilists*.

Hermes da Fonseca

Hermes Rodrigues da Fonseca was born in São Gabriel (Rio Grande do Sul) on May 12th, 1855. He took a bachelor's degree in Science and Literature in 1871, before joining the Army in the same year. He held several positions, eventually being promoted to marshal in 1906. He was appointed minister of War under the mandate of Afonso Pena as president of the Republic and a judge of the Military Supreme Court. After holding office as president of the Republic (1910-1914), he was elected senator in 1914, but gave up his



Image: collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República.



Photos published in *Careta* magazine of 2.26.1910, page 19, showing the people following Rui Barbosa in Ouro Preto.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

seat after the death of Pinheiro Machado. In that year, he traveled to Europe, living in the Swiss Confederation until 1920. He died on September 9th, 1923.

Despite his advanced age, the sixty-year-old Rui Barbosa did not restrict his electioneering activities to the traditional banquets that served as the stage for political negotiations in the Federal District (at the time, the city of Rio de Janeiro), heading out to campaign across the interior of the states of Minas Gerais, São Paulo and his home state, Bahia. During this marathon, the *civilist* candidate did not restrict himself to dealing only with the most privileged circles, but sought to make speeches to the whole population. Sometimes, shops closed and streets were decked out with decorations to mark his appearance. The newspapers and magazines of the time covered what the candidate Rui Barbosa himself described as his *electoral excursion*, which became the eponymous title of his book.

The *civilist* candidate's platform for government was based on a political confrontation with two evils of the time: federal intervention in the states, and the state oligarchies that were entrenched in power.



Detail of the front-page headline of the newspaper *Correio Paulistano* of 12.16.1909, reporting the warm reception given to the journey made by the civilian candidate. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Rui Barbosa proposed a constitutional revision as a remedy for federal intervention, which was envisaged in Article 6 of the Federal Constitution of 1891 and which had become a common source of abuses of presidential power against the autonomy of the states. The candidate sought to establish more restrictive

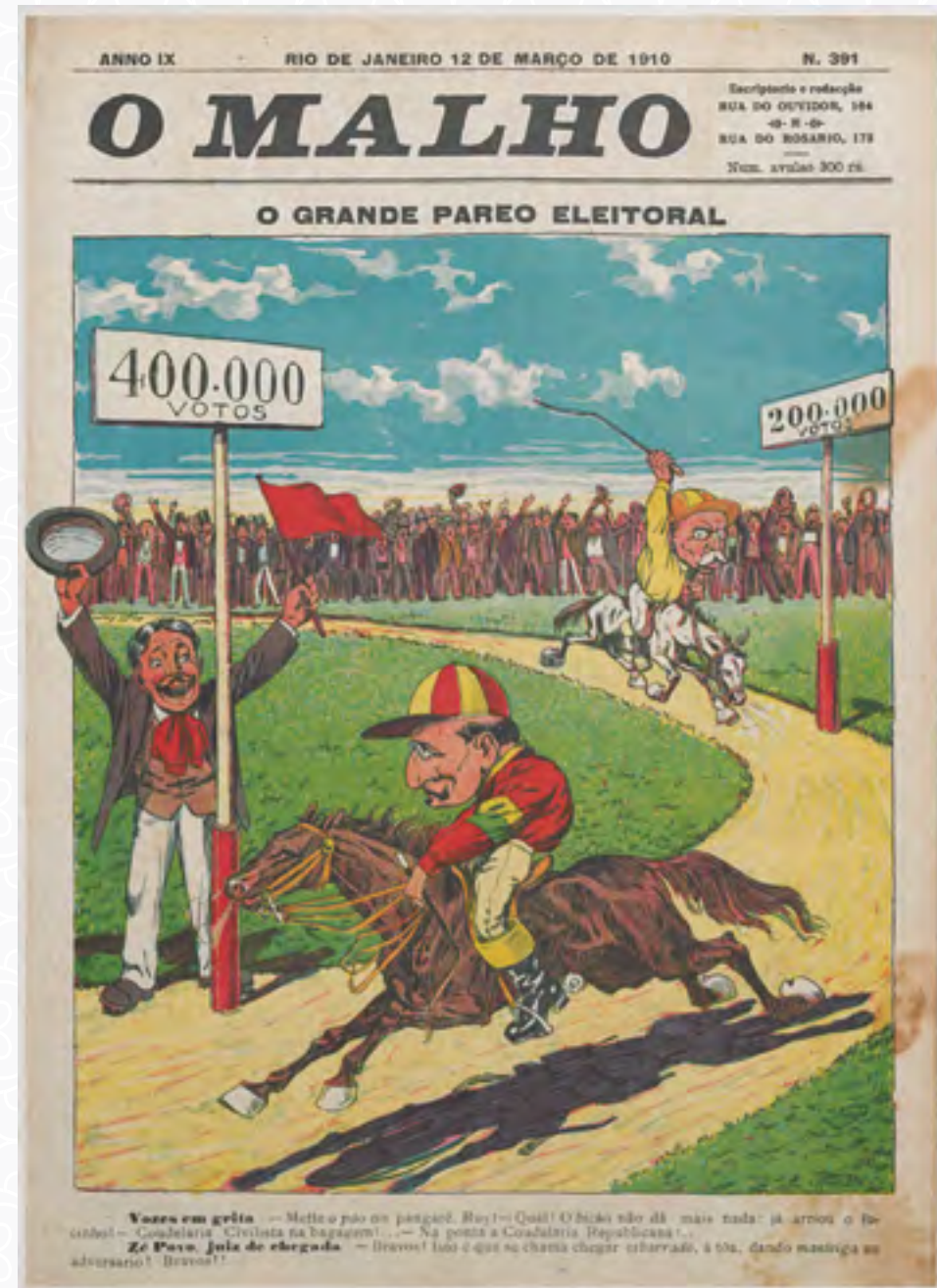


parameters for the possibility of federal intervention, but he also took advantage of his revisionist discourse to embrace changes in a series of other related topics, from the appointment of magistrates to the budgetary process.

As for combating the oligarchies in the states, the presidential candidate Rui Barbosa argued for wide-ranging electoral reform that would increase the chances of opposition forces being elected. In setting out this platform, Barbosa did not miss the opportunity to launch direct attacks on the federal government, the Army and all his political rivals.

Marshal Hermes da Fonseca, however, avoided being drawn into these disputes, confident that the support he enjoyed among the elites of most of the states would guarantee him victory without too much effort.

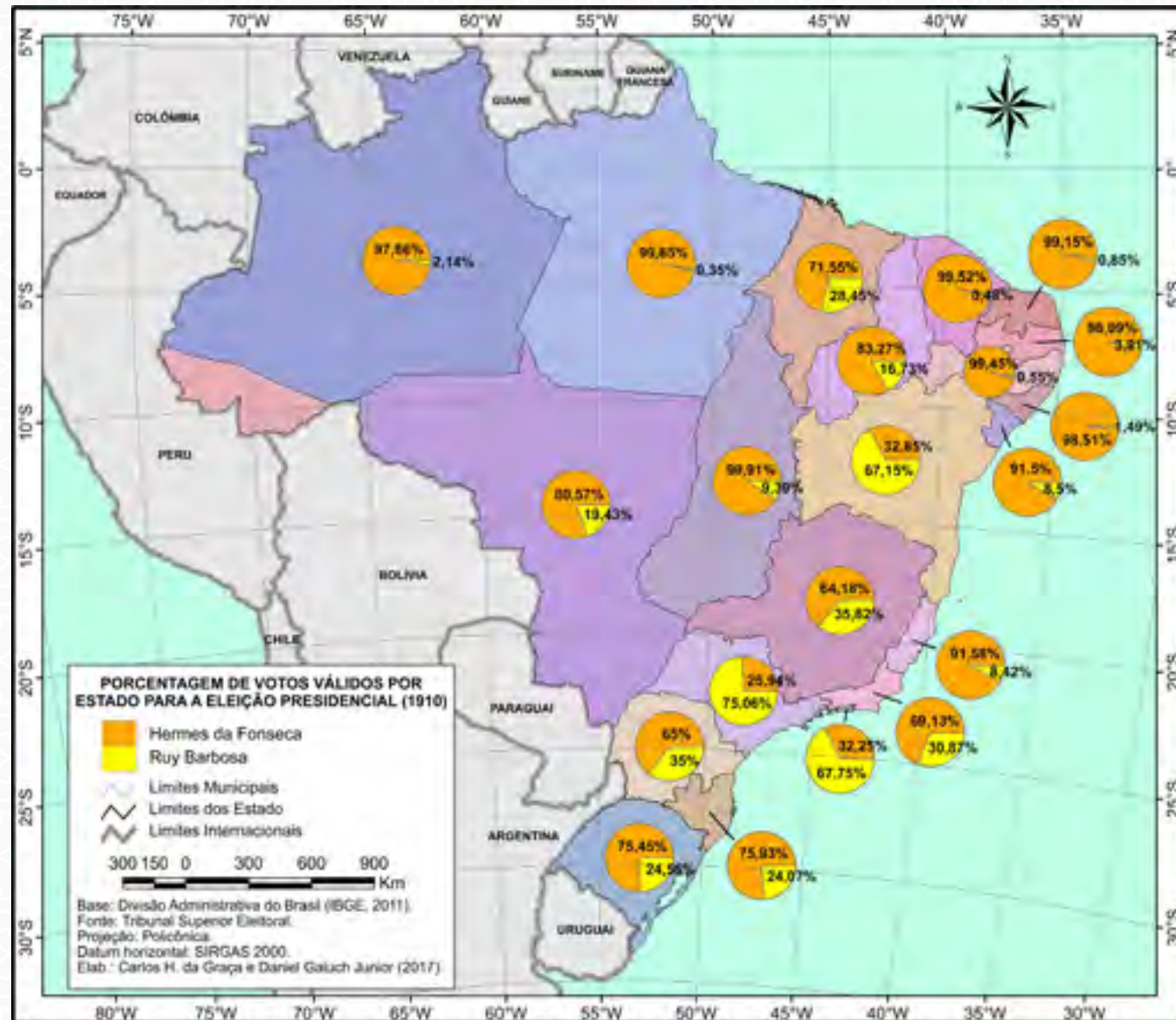
And this was, in fact, what happened. A few days after the election of March 1st, 1910, the press reported Hermes's victory, by about 400 thousand votes against 200 thousand for Rui Barbosa: the smallest vote difference known since the Republic's first presidential elections. In order to have an idea of how closely fought the 1910 election was, just remember that the marshal got 57.9% of the votes, 40% less than the vote achieved by his predecessor in 1906 (when Afonso Pena took 97.9% of the votes).



Cover of *O Malho* magazine of 3.12.1910, No. 391, alluding to the *great electoral contest*.
Collection of the Fundação da Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil



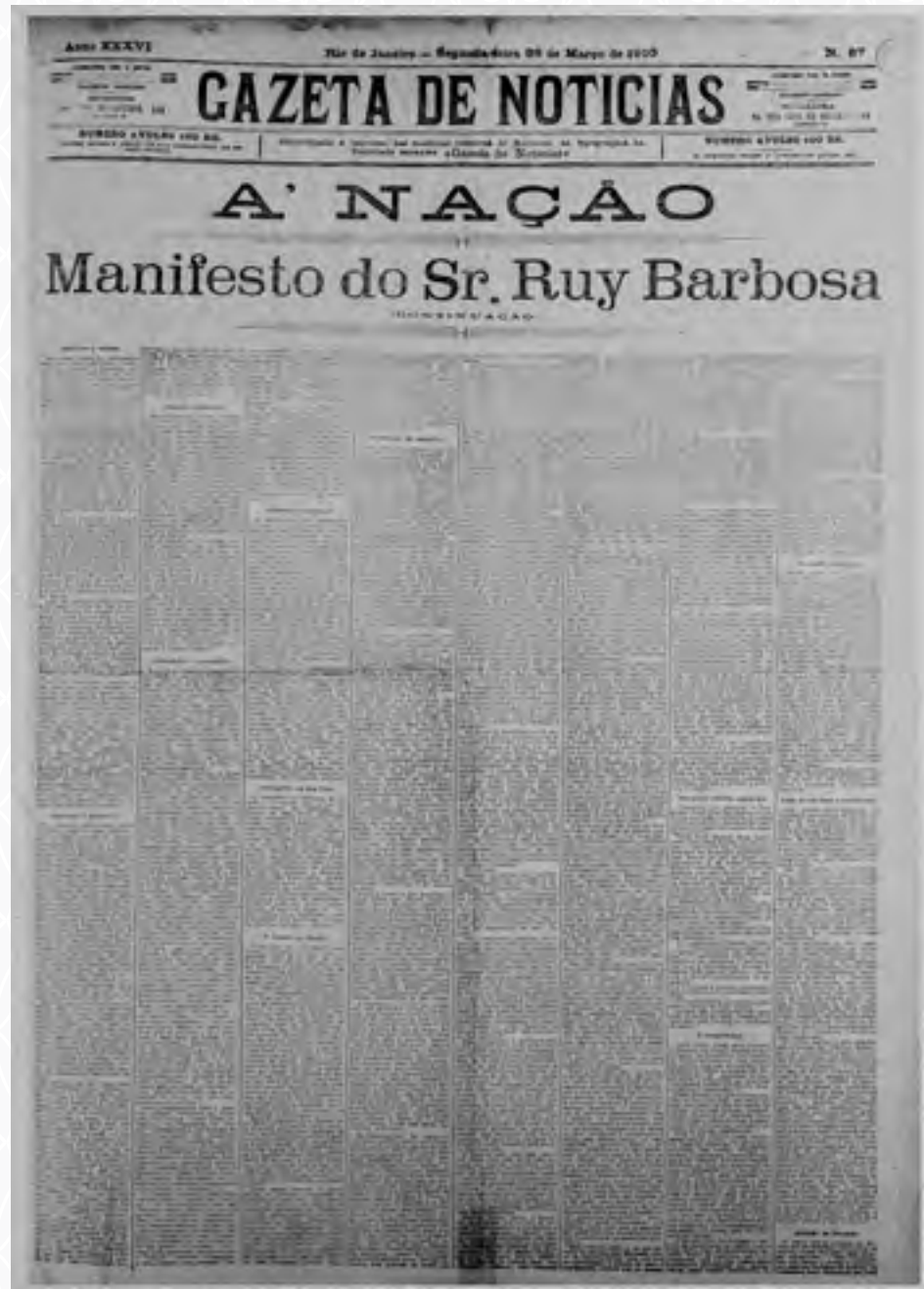
The following maps illustrate the margins of victory and defeat, state by state, showing that Rui Barbosa won only in Bahia and in São Paulo.



Credits: Carlos H. da Graça and Daniel Galuch Jr.



Credits: Carlos H. da Graça and Daniel Galuch Jr.

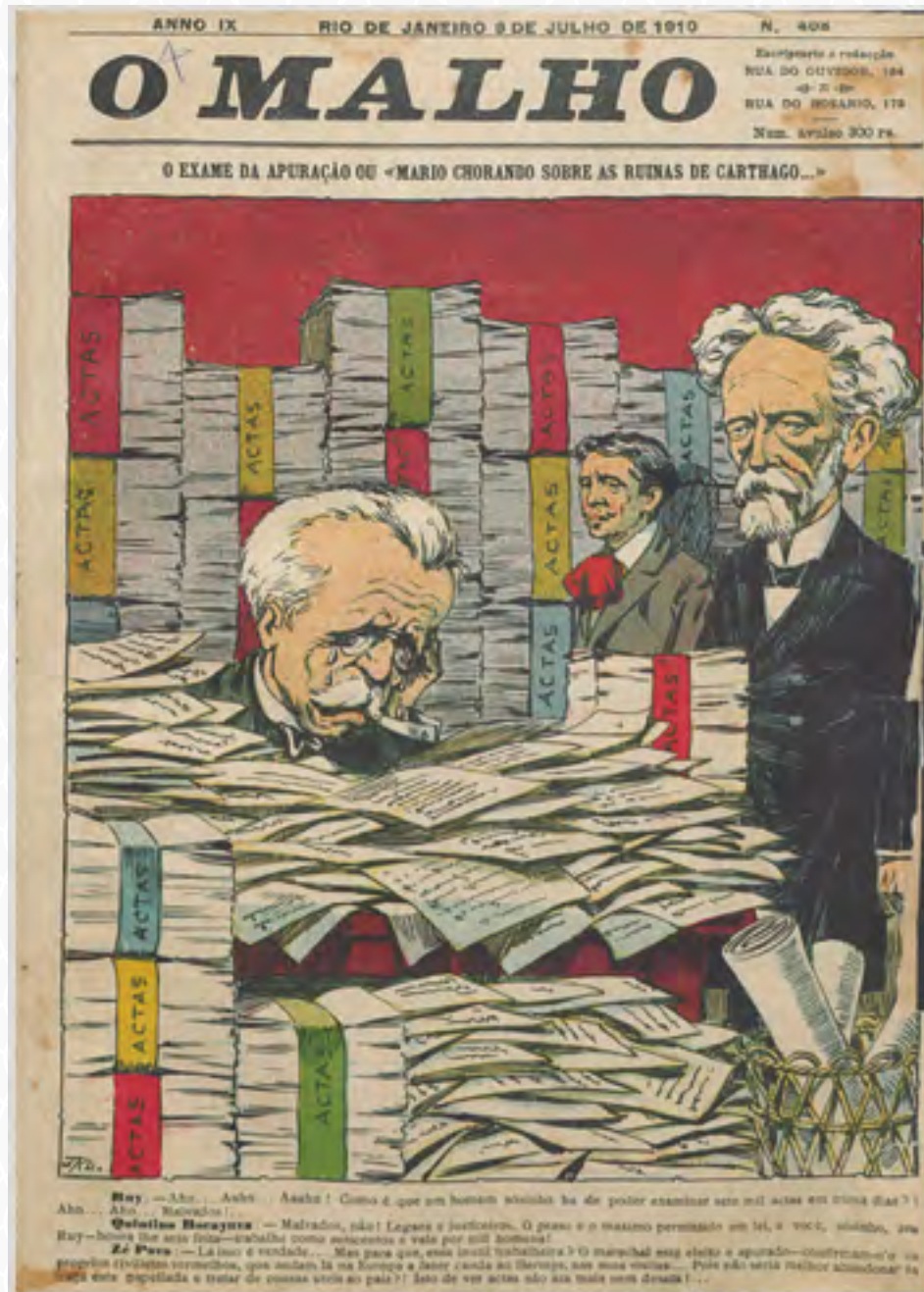


The *Gazeta de Notícias* newspaper of 3.28.1910 highlighting the content of Rui Barbosa's manifesto for the nation. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Unhappy with the result, the candidate Rui Barbosa tried to react. First of all, he drafted a manifesto to the nation, especially accusing President Nilo Peçanha of turning a blind eye to the *military repression exerted by his forces over the state of Rio, the state of Minas and the state of Bahia* (Barbosa, 1910, page 299). All of them were at the time under decrees of states of emergency: a measure envisaged by the Federal Constitution that suspended any legal guarantees in the territory with the aim of allowing the government to deal with exceptional situations and, therefore, regarded by many politicians and intellectuals as a way of legitimizing arbitrary acts and abuses by the central authority. This was an interpretation backed by the civilist candidate, who sought to associate his defeat at the ballot box with the restrictions on free voting in place in those areas: in his view, an example of an extra-legal favor given by the federal government to Hermes da Fonseca.

Next, Rui Barbosa laid down the first formal challenge to the electoral results of a presidential race in the history of the Republic. This mechanism was envisaged in the law, but had never been used until then. The *civilist* candidate spent days on end studying the ballot papers from the election, trying to prove that he deserved to win. According to his calculations, Marshal Hermes da Fonseca had won in the majority of states, but had secured only 126,392 votes.

In contrast, Rui Barbosa argued that he had won in Bahia, in São Paulo, in Minas Gerais, in Rio de Janeiro and in the federal capital, with a total of exactly 200,359 votes. He would not be able, however, to reverse the situation. His dream of governing Brazil was coming to an end.



Issue of *O Malho* magazine of 7.9.1910 satirizes Rui's efforts to have the votes recounted.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

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Photograph published in *Careta* magazine of 2.26.1910, page 19, showing the people following Rui in the city of Ouro Preto.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The sphinx of Itajubá: political challenges in the presidency of Wenceslau Brás (1914)

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Fon-Fon magazine of 2.12.1910, page 11. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The news of the time reports that the election of Hermes da Fonseca in 1910 took place amid great political turmoil—much like his presidential term, which lasted until 1914. The difficulty of maintaining public order would be the defining characteristic of this administration, in which Wenceslau Brás served as vice-president and, by virtue of this role, as president of the Federal Senate.

The slate composed of these two leaders elected to govern the nation was perceived as a supposed dissidence among the previously hegemonic oligarchic groups. It merely illustrates, nonetheless, one of many realignments within the so-called *café com leite* politics, which, until 1930, ensured the alternation of power between members of the Minas Gerais Republican Party (PRM) and the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP). The campaign also marked the return of the military to the political stage, embodied in the figure of the president-elect himself, who would shift the political and geographic power axis toward the far south.

Hermes da Fonseca sought to reform traditions through the implementation of the so-called anti-oligarchic militarism, which aimed at sweeping the ruling oligarchies off the map. To some extent, this did happen, but mainly through the *Salvationist movement* (1910-1914), which primarily targeted family groups in the Northeast. Although the dismantling of oligarchies was initially a federal government project, it was popular participation that ultimately drove—or at least attempted to bring about—the end of the classical oligarchic republic.





This text published in *O Malho* magazine of 11.19.1910 presented the manifesto of the Hermes da Fonseca – Wenceslau Brás slate. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Although this was a turbulent period, the tenure of Wenceslau Brás as vice-president was portrayed by the press in Rio de Janeiro as the most unremarkable in the history of the Republic. He was a frequent target of satirical cartoons that emphasized his provincial spirit and the circumspect nature of the *Solitary Man of Itajubá*, as he was known. His manners and temperament remained a longstanding matter of discussion among those eager for the dynamism and cosmopolitanism promised by the advent of the Republic, especially in Rio de Janeiro, the cultural capital of Brazil in the *belle époque*.



Photograph published in *Fon-Fon* magazine of 12.20.1913 showing the candidates for president and vice-president of the Republic. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



O Malho magazine of 2.26.1916, year 15, No. 702, cover. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The 1914 presidential election that led Wenceslau Brás to the Presidency of the Republic was the result of prior arrangements and negotiations that were far from peaceful—an inherent feature of the representative system of the First Republic. They had also been the key feature of his predecessor's turbulent administration. Selecting the vice-president as the candidate for that election was the solution found for a highly contested succession process, which initially began with the veto of General Pinheiro Machado's candidacy. A political leader from Rio Grande do Sul and the chief strategist of Hermes da Fonseca's government, Pinheiro Machado had formed a ticket with fellow senator Bueno Brandão, a political leader from Minas Gerais, backed by the Conservative Republican Party. However, Minas Gerais' refusal to support Pinheiro Machado, along with São Paulo's opposition, was followed by Pernambuco, Bahia, Pará, Alagoas and Paraná. His candidacy caused divisions among the still-dominant state oligarchies. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, although Nilo Peçanha officially endorsed him, the state's president, Oliveira Botelho, opposed the Pinheiro/Bueno ticket. Feeling rejected, Pinheiro Machado proposed Rui Barbosa as an alternative, who promptly declined the offer. Lacking the necessary political support, the Pinheiro/Bueno ticket was definitively withdrawn by mid-1913. The alternative was to put forward the candidacy of former president Campos Salles. Although backed by Rio Grande do Sul, his nomination was opposed by several other states (Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro) and created divisions within Minas Gerais. Meanwhile, the opposition regrouped around Rui Barbosa. With the increasing risk of another highly contested election, Wenceslau Brás emerged as a compromise solution. The final approval came with the addition of Urbano dos Santos, a member of the Conservative Republican Party as vice-presidential candidate.

Thus, on March 1st, 1914, Wenceslau Brás was elected president of Brazil for the 1914-1918 term, a period that proved to be even more turbulent than the previous one. Firstly, due to the continuation of the armed conflicts in the disputed border region between the southern states of Paraná and Santa Catarina. The *Contestado War*, which had erupted in 1912, was driven by a popular uprising led by former inhabitants of the area, many of whom were squatters on returned lands that had been granted to the Brazil Railway Company for the construction of a railroad linking



the states of Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo. The movement took on a messianic characteristic under the leadership of João Maria, a healer who used herbal remedies, and successfully clashed with the first Army detachment sent to suppress the revolt. The conflict was only quelled in 1916, when Wenceslau Brás signed the agreement that brought an end to the longest-running state border dispute in Brazil.



Image: collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República.

Wenceslau Brás Pereira Gomes

Wenceslau Brás Pereira Gomes (1868- 1966), a native of Minas Gerais, graduated from the Law Faculty of São Paulo, where he also earned a degree in Legal and Social Sciences in 1890. He served as public prosecutor in the district of Monte Santo and, later, judge in Jacuhy. In 1892, he was elected state deputy and re-elected in 1894. After holding various state positions in Minas Gerais, he was elected federal deputy in 1903 and again in 1906. From 1908 to 1910, he headed the government of Minas Gerais; in 1910, he was elected vice-president on the slate of Marshal Hermes da Fonseca. In 1914, he was elected president of Brazil. After his term in office ended in 1918, he remained active in politics until 1947. Wenceslau Brás passed away in Itajubá, Minas Gerais, on May 15th, 1966.

It was also during the presidency of Wenceslau Brás that Brazil declared war on Germany, albeit only three years after war had begun in Europe, and without Brazil ever engaging in combat. The argument was that the nation's forces should be preserved for a possible German attack on Brazilian soil. However, the real reason was the country's complete lack of military preparedness and its limited and outdated arsenal.



Front page of the *Correio da Manhã* newspaper of 6.2.1917, announcing the president's approval of the law that declared war on the countries of the Triple Alliance. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Fundou-se hontem a Liga Pró Saneamento do Brasil

Conforme estava anunciado, realizou-se, hontem à tarde, na Sociedade Nacional de Agricultura, a sessão de instalação da Liga Pró Saneamento, uma nova associação, que como o seu nome indica, virá prestar grandes serviços à nossa sociedade.

Aberta a sessão, o sr. Belisário Penna, submetteu à aprovação da assembleia a escolha do nome que deveria presidir a, sendo escolhido então o de dr. Carlos Chagas.

Tendo porém o dr. Carlos Chagas se ausentado momentos antes, presidiu a sessão o dr. Julião Moreira, vice-presidente aclamado.

Foram lidos então varios telegrammas de exultação.

Em seguida usou da palavra o dr. Belisário Penna, que fez um longo estudo da vida do dr. Oswaldo Cruz, conquistada pela apresentação das idéas que presidiram a fundação da Liga: são idéas de propaganda a favor do saneamento do Brasil, propaganda oral, scripta e gratuita. Originou-se da publicação de um livro onde se compendiam os artigos feitos pelo orador quando foi do alarme, vibrado pelo dr. Miguel Pereira, da seguinte phrase do "Brasil, humilde hospital". Os editores não queriam imprimir o livro. Dois macacos, porém, cientes das preocupações pelo estado sanitário do país — conta o orador — se offereceram a estudar imprimir o livro, tirando parte dos lucros para a fundação de uma liga nas condições da que se installava. Era este o germe de tudo. As ultimas phrases do orador foram de invocação à memoria de Oswaldo Cruz, invocação conmovente de disciplina, que sente a obra do mestre imperecedora e disposto a tudo sacrificar, como os seus discipulos, pelo desenvolvimento da saúde do grande país, pela realização do sonho de um Brasil livre dos males que depauperam e aniquilam tantos de seus filhos, do sonho que foi o grande sonho d'elle durante toda a sua vida de glórias. Deixou-se e foi muito applaudido, tendo depois a palavra o sr. Paulo Cavalcanti, que secretariava a mesa, ao lado do sr. Julião Moreira. O sr. Paulo Cavalcanti fez um discurso entusiastico, prezando o desenvolvimento da raça e comparando a luta pelo saneamento do Brasil à campanha da abolição de 18, por isso que a, defendeu com fervor a abolição dos papulos e dos ditos, mostrando-se confiante na acção da nobre e do auxilio dos grandes e dos humildes, e dizendo que precisamos ser uma raça sã e linda, que só se alcança o que é bello e que é preciso se promover a redempção da mulher pela hygiene. O orador ao terminar fez muita applausão.

Não havendo mais ordens, o sr. Julião Moreira, suspendeu a sessão, devendo ser convocada uma nova assembleia para a aprovação de estatutos.

The post-war period led to the rise of nationalist movements in Brazil, as in other parts of the world. This movement manifested in Brazil through two key initiatives: compulsory military service and a nationwide campaign aimed at improving rural sanitation. The underlying idea was that nation-building depended fundamentally on public health, particularly through addressing the health needs of the neglected populations in Brazil's remote hinterlands.

The Pro-Sanitation League mobilized key sectors of Brazil's intellectual and political elites in an effort to extend sanitation initiatives to the country's interior as a means of modernization and development. Some of its members actively participated in a scientific expedition that explored some of the country's most remote regions, which culminated in the publication of the seminal work *Scientific Journey through Northern Bahia, Southwestern Pernambuco, Southern Pará, and Goiás from North to South*, organized by the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz and published in 1912. The medical mission's report provided valuable insights into climate, fauna and flora, but primarily focused on the diseases afflicting the inhabitants of Brazil's hinterlands, who had been largely neglected by national integration projects. Interestingly, although the report advocated for concrete measures to promote national integration—such as the establishment of a Ministry of Public Health, to foster a sense of belonging and national identity among these marginalized populations—its publication in the Rio de Janeiro press coincided with the outbreak of the Spanish flu epidemic that ravaged the federal capital at the end of

1918. Notably, members of the medical mission were themselves affected by the same influenza strain. This epidemic also struck the only Brazilian naval division deployed to Europe during World War I.

The Spanish flu was perhaps the most remarkable legacy from Wenceslau Brás to his successor, when he concluded his mandate on November 15th, 1918.

The four-year term of this reserved and introverted president was not distinguished by any strong features, and, as a result, he became the subject of frequent satirical references in the press, including cartoons, caricatures and chronicles, which emphasized the insular and reclusive nature of the *sphinx of Itajubá*.

These portrayals reflect the prevailing spirit of that time which placed, on one side, the enlightened elite composed of intellectuals, journalists and writers, who almost obsessively championed national progress and cosmopolitanism; and, on the other hand, the archaic conservatism embodied by the president's taciturn demeanor and narrow perspectives—qualities emblematic of Minas Gerais—and the similar traits of his associates, all of which became the target of satire:

No citizen ever saw him with a cigarette in his mouth; V. (an allusion to Wenceslau Brás) did not play games at celebratory inaugurations, his glass of champagne was always full; at joyful outdoor events on football match days, or during the grand-prix, V. never broke the serious frown between his eyebrows. He was what is called, in Minas Gerais, a sour-face [...]. V. was not a head of State: he was a severe ascetic who fasted, said the rosary before bed, went to mass and fulfilled duties. [...] He lacked it all: decisiveness, broad vision, factual knowledge, self-confidence and even that joie de vivre which is a gift of the gods [...] V. lived in the Catete Palace as a hermit, nostalgic for his modest existence, his fishing—I don't know!—always hesitating, always consulting his old Minas backwoodsmen, suspicious that they were leading him astray, fearing contact with superior and more sparkling spirits. (Revista Contemporânea magazine, Rio de Janeiro, November 21, 1918).

News item published by the *O Imparcial* newspaper of 2.12.1918, page 3, announcing the creation of the Pro-Sanitation League. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Despite the difficulties of the period, Wenceslau Brás finished his mandate having dealt with them in a shy and timid manner. For many journalists and writers of the age, his presidency was not distinguished by any notable traits. His failures, intellectual mediocrity and lack of literary culture were highlighted in the chronicles of the time, so that, although he could not be remembered for the competence of his administration, his reclusive nature was immortalized in the cartoons and caricatures of the main Rio de Janeiro newspapers of the period.



O Malho magazine of 8.9.1913, Rio de Janeiro, year 12, No. 569, page 25.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



A Careta magazine of 11.16.1918, page 11. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



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A moribund president: the election of Rodrigues Alves in 1918

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Amidst fiercely contested elections for the Presidency of the Republic from 1892 to 1930, one of them broke the pattern and was considered the most consensual and peaceful of the whole period. In 1918, the candidate Rodrigues Alves was an elderly, experienced politician who had already been president. In his attempt to secure re-election, he could rely on a favorable context, marked by the absence of other names to occupy the Catete Palace—the headquarters of the federal government—, but his greatest adversary came from outside the political scene and prevented his mandate from occurring.

Over the course of the 41 years of the period that has become known as the First Republic (1889-1930), some presidential elections were strongly contested from the time when the candidates were being chosen. As each electoral period drew nearer, the state oligarchies began discussions to decide who would run for the position of president of the Republic. The negotiations did not always go the way of the leaders of all the units of the federation, which resulted in fierce disputes. However, for the election of 1918, the situation was very different. To understand better what occurred, it is important to recall some of what had happened in the previous administration.

From 1914, the country was governed by Wenceslau Brás (1914-1918), from the state of Minas Gerais. The choice of this politician for the Presidency was not straightforward; various state oligarchies proposed their own leaders to succeed Marshal Hermes da Fonseca (1910-1914). Even though he had been Hermes da Fonseca's vice-president, there was no consensus around the choice of Wenceslau. Even so, the state of Rio Grande do Sul, especially the figure of Pinheiro Machado and the state of São Paulo, under the leadership of Rodrigues Alves, were the great sponsors of the candidate from Minas. Despite this, when it came to ministerial appointments, Brás did not include politicians from Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo. He sought to assemble a government independent of the interference of other states, but without completely cutting ties with these partners.

In his government, Brás also had to deal with Spanish flu, which he himself contracted, with the outbreak of the First World War and the resulting economic problems. Difficulties with the flow of international capital, such as loans, and the fall in the coffee price in the market led his government to implement a policy of supporting the value of the *rubiactae* by capitalizing debt instruments not backed by the gold standard.





Cover of *O Malho* magazine of 7.14.1917 alluding to the First World War.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

In the middle of 1916, in other words halfway through Wenceslau Brás's term, the oligarchies were already organizing themselves to choose the future presidential candidate. For the leaders of São Paulo, this was a new opportunity to send another one of their own to the Presidency—after all, they had not occupied the Catete Palace since 1906. The last president from São Paulo had been Rodrigues Alves (1902-1906), and the fact that they had not been close to the head of the Executive Branch at times during this period had disadvantaged the São Paulo leadership when it came to decisions on national economic policy, especially those related to the production and marketing of coffee, at the time the state's and the country's main product.



Cartoon from *O Malho* magazine of 6.30.1917 showing the discussion between leading politicians from São Paulo and President Wenceslau Brás about the coffee crisis. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

In political terms, this was a good moment for the people from São Paulo. One of the main deal-makers in Brazil's elections, Senator Pinheiro Machado, from Rio Grande do Sul, had left the scene in 1915, when he was assassinated by a madman in the lobby of a hotel in Rio de Janeiro. This meant that the state of Rio Grande do Sul lost its prominence on the political scene, at least with regard to the projection of one of its representatives for the Catete Palace. Minas Gerais, in turn, could not nominate a successor to Wenceslau Brás. This would have been viewed negatively by the leaders of the other states, since Minas Gerais had held the Vice-Presidency during the mandate of Hermes da Fonseca and had remained at the top of the Executive Branch in the following term, with Brás himself.

Despite the difficulties for Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais in nominating candidates, the São Paulo oligarchy feared being once again excluded from the presidential contest. Perhaps this was why the conversations about the choice of the future presidential candidate were already starting towards the end of Brás's first two years in power. Even though they were allies, the representatives of São Paulo feared what the people from Minas would do. And for that reason, they hurriedly launched the name of Rodrigues Alves as the candidate.

At the time, Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves was one of the main leaders of the state of São Paulo. He began his political career back in the days of the Empire, when he served as general deputy and president of the province of São Paulo. Once Brazil became a Republic, he was a deputy, a minister, president of his home state, president of the Republic, and a senator. In 1916, Rodrigues Alves even left the São Paulo government to take up a seat in the Federal Senate.



Photograph of Rodrigues Alves published in *O Malho* magazine of 11.16.1918.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Rodrigues Alves

Born in Guaratinguetá, in the hinterland of the state of São Paulo, the attorney Rodrigues Alves first became president of the Republic in 1902. He had led São Paulo twice: under the Empire, as president of the province, between 1887 and 1888, and as president of the state, from 1900 to 1902 (he later held that position again from 1912 to 1916). Formerly a counselor under the Empire, he was a deputy to the Constitutional Congress, minister of Finance under Floriano Peixoto and Prudente de Moraes mandates as presidents of the Republic, and also a senator. In his first term as governor of São Paulo, he inaugurated the hydroelectric plant of Santana do Parnaíba and dealt with epidemics of yellow fever. In doing so, he came into contact with the Finlay Doctrine, regarding the transmission of the illness by mosquito bites, a finding that would be of fundamental importance later in the urban renovation of the federal capital, during his term as president.



Photograph of Delfim Moreira published in *O Malho* magazine of 6.30.1917.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Even though he was a beloved figure on the political scene, proposing the name of Rodrigues Alves as the candidate would depend on agreements, especially with politicians from Minas Gerais. Thus, the make-up of the slate was *stitched together* by the president of São Paulo, Altino Arantes, and by the former deputy from Minas Gerais and minister of Finance in the Wenceslau Brás mandate as president of the Republic, Sabino Barroso. Both agreed on the names of Rodrigues Alves for the Presidency and of the then governor of Minas Gerais, Delfim Moreira, as vice-presidential candidate. The inability of other large states to launch their own names for the contest, combined with the closeness of Minas Gerais and São Paulo, meant that Alves's candidacy was accepted quickly and without reservations, a rare event during the years of the First Republic.



O Paiz newspaper of 10.23.1917 with the news of the candidacy of the Rodrigues Alves/Delfim Moreira slate.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Cover of *O Malho* magazine of 4.7.1917 satirizing the possible candidacy of the elderly Rodrigues Alves for the Presidency.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The choice of Rodrigues Alves was also helped by the reduced range of options available, at the time, for the Presidency of the Republic. The most senior level of the first generation of politicians in the Republic had suffered big losses owing to advancing age, which contributed to the swift choice of the candidate for the 1918 poll. The restricted alternatives in the political marketplace also meant that a choice was made for two individuals who suffered from fragile health.

In his program for government, launched in Rio de Janeiro on October 23rd, 1917, Rodrigues Alves stressed the country's economic situation, which was affected by restrictions on trade due to the First World War. The candidate was concerned about the issuing of government bonds not backed by the gold standard and the issuing of paper money during the government of Wenceslau Brás. For that reason, Rodrigues Alves highlighted, in the speech that launched his plan for government, the economic difficulties that Brazil would face in the next few years.

Rodrigues Alves's candidacy was soon accepted, without any resistance from the oligarchies, or criticisms from the press or from society, which contributed to a smooth period between its launch and the election. This was due, in part, to the fact that there were no other competing candidacies, along with the general social concern with the progress of the First World War, an issue highlighted on the front pages of newspapers and magazines of the time. Another important factor was how easily Rodrigues Alves was accepted by the electorate, since he was an active ex-president who, during his first term, had undertaken a wide range of projects to bring sanitation and urban renewal to the capital of the Republic, as well an intense and even controversial campaign against yellow fever. Given these factors, the election took place without any disturbances, and Alves's victory was unchallenged.

Rodrigues Alves was elected with 386,467 votes. The runner-up, Nilo Peçanha, an influential leader from the state of Rio de Janeiro and minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, won only 1,258. Rui Barbosa, a charismatic figure from Bahia who was always at the front of the electorate's minds in presidential elections, came third with 1,014 votes. The figures show that Rodrigues Alves was elected with 99.1% of all the votes cast for president at the ballot boxes! This overwhelming victory clearly



showed the consensus established around the candidacy of Rodrigues Alves. The election of the candidate for vice-president, which in those days took place separately from the presidential poll, was equally successful. Delfim Moreira received 382,491 votes; and the runner-up, General Emídio de Dantas Barreto, won only 376.

The overwhelming victory of Rodrigues Alves and Delfim Moreira in the presidential election held on March 1st, 1918, was regarded by the National Congress, when it issued its opinion on the result of the poll, not as an election—contested between various candidates and with the fight for votes even leading to violence in some situations—, but as an *acclamation!* This description was due to the fact that they had been the only candidates who had received a majority number of votes. The other people who had received votes were not even candidates—which was allowed by the electoral law at the time. It is also important to stress that Rodrigues Alves was the only president of the Republic elected twice in four decades of the First Republic. Despite this, he did not fulfill his second mandate.



Photographs published in *Caretta* magazine of 11.16.1918 showing the situation in Rio de Janeiro. In the photograph on the right, Dr. Carlos Chagas Filho, the sanitation specialist, appears. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

In 1918 a pandemic caused by the influenza virus spread all over the world. The illness, which became known as Spanish flu, due to the large number of deaths it caused in Spain, killed, according to experts' calculations, between 20 and 40 million people globally. In Brazil, a substantial proportion of the population also contracted the disease, including Wenceslau Brás and the president-elect. Unable to take office on November 15th, 1918, in Rio de Janeiro, Rodrigues Alves was confined to bed in his native town, Guaratinguetá. The post of head of the Executive Branch was assumed on an interim basis by his vice-president, Delfim Moreira. Because of this situation, magazines of the time caricatured Rodrigues Alves as a sick man sleeping deeply in his bed while the country was left without its president.



Cartoon published in *O Malho* magazine of 11.30.1918 making fun of the different concerns of the presidents affected by Spanish flu. Wenceslau Brás dreams of a restful existence in his own city, and Rodrigues Alves dreams of being sworn in. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The start of the new government did not inspire confidence either in the population or the press. There were doubts in the air, even about the health of the vice-president, as well as suspicions of a possible resignation. After something of a recovery, Rodrigues Alves went to Rio de Janeiro to take office but had a relapse and died on January 16th, 1919.



It was ironic that the man who in his first presidential term had undertaken urban renewal in Rio de Janeiro aimed at better health and the eradication of diseases, succumbed years later to one such illness. Therefore, even though he had no opponents in the presidential race, Rodrigues Alves's greatest adversary was *Spanish flu*, which, as well as preventing the inauguration of the only president of the Republic to be re-elected during the First Republic, also made it impossible for his vice-president to take over in his place. This was because the Federal Constitution of 1891 established, in its Article 42, that, whenever the position of president or vice-president became vacant less than two years after the start of the presidential mandate, a new election should be called to fill the position.

Curiously, death was also in the air when Rodrigues Alves was first elected president in 1902. That time, however, the person who died before being sworn in was his vice-president, Silviano Brandão, from the state of Minas Gerais. On the first occasion, death took the vice-president from Minas Gerais; on the second occasion, it was the president from São Paulo.



Funeral procession on its way to the church after arriving in the town of Guaratinguetá, in the state of São Paulo. *Careta* magazine of 1.25.1919, year 12, No. 533, page 15. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The death of Rodrigues Alves, although it was not a surprise, given his advanced years and the illness he contracted, caused concern among the population and put an end to doubts about the future government of the Republic. Until Alves' death, it was uncertain whether there would be a resignation or if the elected president would take office. All these possibilities were being constantly considered by the press. Although he was younger than Rodrigues Alves, the health of Delfim Moreira was also questioned. With the president's death, the country's destiny was definitively sealed and altered compared with previous experience. This was because the name chosen for the new election did not come from any of the large states (São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul), but from a small unit of the federation in the northeast of the country, Paraíba. The man chosen was the healthy political leader from Paraíba, Epitácio Pessoa, who proceeded to be elected. And, until his swearing in on July 28th, 1919, Delfim Moreira governed the country.

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The election of Epitácio Pessoa and the electoral scene in the re-establishment of the oligarchic pact (1919)

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Careta magazine of 4.16.1921, cover. Artist: J. Carlos (José Carlos de Brito e Cunha – 1884/1950).
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Within the framework of the political relations of the First Republic (1889-1930), presidential successions played a prominent role and, as a process that involved intermediation, served to re-establish the oligarchic pact and the outlines of Brazilian politics so far. More specifically, the power games during the presidential succession processes in the First Republic were responsible for shaping the electoral contests. That is, the disputes and political agreements determined the tone, rhythm, and direction of the elections, and what transpired were merely confirmations of prior arrangements, with the ultimate goal being the preservation of a political elite and a cohesive group in charge of managing the interests of the Brazilian state, although this cohesion was not without fissures and breakups.

In this set of agreements and adjustments of the so-called “politics of the governors,” the 1919 election marked the beginning of a phase of hegemonic alignments between São Paulo and Minas Gerais, with the aim of consolidating the involvement of power-brokers from those two states in choosing the candidates for president of the Republic. Several factors were decisive in this outcome. On the one hand, with the disappearance of Pinheiro Machado, the greatest political





leader of Rio Grande do Sul, that state needed to rebuild itself internally before returning to the political scene. On the other hand, the ageing of the first generation of republican politicians, together with the presence of other much younger figures, limited the available options.

It should be stressed, however, that while the political agreements for the presidential succession of Wenceslau Brás (1914-1918), which led to the candidacy of the Paraíba native Epitácio Pessoa (1919-1922), had the support of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, on the other hand, they also resulted in misunderstandings, adjustments, and power struggles. In this sense, the contests revolved around a small group of politicians, whose bases had been established in the first decade of the Republic, so that maintaining the shape of power meant preserving the political spaces of these leaders: Francisco Sales, Rodrigues Alves, José Joaquim Seabra, Nilo Peçanha, Antônio Azeredo, Wenceslau Brás, Rui Barbosa and Pinheiro Machado. The election itself, therefore, would be the culmination of these agreements and maintain the order established between the large states of the federation.

Even so, the formula for an agreement in governors' politics had to be *sewn together* with the interests of the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco, São Paulo and Minas Gerais, and accepted by the general group of states of the federation, represented by the state republican parties. The political groups from these states had plenty of national political capital, and it was from them—above all, São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro—that the basis of the Brazilian economy during the whole period of the First Republic (1889-1930) came: coffee.

The political context before the presidential succession of 1919

The presidency of Wenceslau Brás (1914-1918) was shaped by a situation of broad political agreements, since the electoral base that had established the candidacy and election of the then-president—the Conservative Republican Party (PRC)—did not hide its desire to take the lead and define the direction of the government, just like the São Paulo politicians, who aimed to increase their

participation in the government to occupy more spaces. And even though the president had been elected by a combination of political forces linked to both the PRC and the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP) (known in Portuguese as *perrecistas and coalition parties*, respectively), the strategy adopted by Wenceslau Brás was to fill his government with counterbalancing forces. To that end, he appointed members from both groups to his government and sought to please them. However, although this strategy aimed to ensure some independence for the government in relation to the political groups led by Pinheiro Machado and the São Paulo politicians, it did not achieve much success, as the appointments to the ministries disregarded the recommendations from both groups.

The arrangements and negotiations made by Wenceslau Brás would not have been completed without the same strategy being observed in the committees of the Federal Chamber. This stance provoked a situation of relative independence for the government in relation to the most prominent political forces of the period, but at the same time, it left open sources of discontent within the base groups of the governors' political system. For its part, the group led by Pinheiro Machado (the *perrecistas in Portuguese*) sought to maintain the strengthening of Rio Grande do Sul's position in national politics, by positioning itself as the base of the previous government of Hermes da Fonseca (1910-1914). Meanwhile, the PRC was trying to position itself in a way that would counterbalance the interests of the people from São Paulo, especially those politicians linked to the coffee industry. But, on the other hand, the strengthening of the relations between Minas Gerais and São Paulo tended to grow, both due to the economic foundation and the increasing coordination of the PRP with other allied state republican parties.

What can be observed is that the situation regarding the bloc agreements was not fully settled. However, despite the fact that the interests of the perrecista groups and their allies, who were part of the government, had been negotiated, the fragility of the consensus was still apparent. Pinheiro Machado was becoming increasingly isolated, and the context of World War I (1914-1918) made Brazilian politics more focused on economic issues.



Cover of *O Malho* magazine of 6.30.1917 announcing the coffee crisis.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Dialogue depicted on the cover of *O Malho* magazine:

ALTINO ARANTES: “Dr. Wenceslau! We must save the boat!”

CANDIDO MOTTA: “Yes! We must save the coffee!”

CARDOSO DE ALMEIDA: “And we don’t have the money for that!”

PEREIRA LIMA: “There is not enough money in the country!”

MIGUEL CALMON: “There is nothing!”

WENCESLAU: “So things are really bad?”

ZÉ POVO: “Really bad! It’s not just the coffee that’s going down the drain...
Save the boat, but don’t forget to save me too!”

World War I significantly affected external demand and the flow of capital in the country, as well as forcing the government to find a solution for the increasing stockpile of coffee, the main product of Brazil’s trade balance. The proposed solution brought together the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais for a second coffee program of driving up the coffee price through the issuance of unbacked currency (1917 to 1920), that is, the issuance of paper money without the gold standard. Thus, under pressure from coffee producers, São Paulo and the Federal Government teamed up in this effort to stabilize coffee prices. By the end of the war, São Paulo controlled half of the world’s coffee reserves, making a profit of 4 million pounds over 4 years of price appreciation. Meanwhile, farmers in São Paulo saw profits of 130%, with some even reaching as high as 400%.



O Malho magazine of 9.18.1915, page 42. Photographs showing the coffin of General Pinheiro Machado setting sail aboard the ship Deodoro da Fonseca to be transported to Rio Grande do Sul, the politician's home state. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

This political and economic context of Wenceslau Brás's government (1914-1918) outlined fragile political adjustments without consolidated definitions, which would lead to the presidential succession of 1919. The assassination of Pinheiro Machado, in September 1915, weakened the *perrecista* faction and the more immediate ambitions of the PRC and Rio Grande do Sul in national politics, precisely during the second biennium of Wenceslau Brás's administration, when political maneuvering for the succession of the then-president would begin.

The pulling back from national politics of the state of Rio Grande do Sul—now under the leadership of Borges de Medeiros as president of the PRC on one side, and the program to drive up the coffee price on the other, created a context of increasing rapprochement between Minas Gerais and São Paulo. In this scenario, *the name of Rodrigues Alves had to be put forward through the reconciliation of broader interests, such as those of the federal government, the PRC, the allied parties, and the people from São Paulo* (Viscardi, 2012, page 234).

The nomination of Epitácio Pessoa, the presidential campaign and the 1919 election

By mid-1916, the succession scenario was already taking its first steps—and the nomination of Rodrigues Alves, from São Paulo, seemed to reflect broader interests—beyond the ambitions of Minas Gerais and even President Wenceslau Brás himself, since internal political disputes in Minas Gerais failed to put forward a candidate who could challenge the nomination from São Paulo. It is interesting to note that the definition of the Rodrigues Alves/Delfim Moreira slate, in mid-1916, for an election that would take place in March 1918 and with support from Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul and the Northern and Northeastern states, seemed to have restored harmony within the country's ruling elite. With Pinheiro Machado dead, there would be no divergences, nor would major adjustments be necessary since, by maintaining a supposed independent stance, Borges de Medeiros, at the head of the PRC and the state of Rio Grande do Sul, was not willing to risk the internal loss of capital from political plots either with the

people from Minas Gerais—due to the alliance with the then President Wenceslau Brás—nor with the interests of the state of São Paulo.

However, although elected in 1918, Rodrigues Alves did not take office. Already elderly and having contracted the Spanish flu, the then president died on January 16th, 1919. The vice-president, Delfim Moreira, however, could not assume the Presidency permanently, since the Constitution established that the vice-president could only take over the position permanently if the president died two years after taking office. Thus what seemed like a combination of aligned forces once again had to be negotiated within the political factions.



The picture shows the vice-president of the Republic, Delfim Moreira, going to the Federal Senate on November 15th, 1918, to be sworn in as interim president. *Fon-Fon* magazine of 11.23.1918, page 21. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil

In this regard, the political support of Vice-President Delfim Moreira was necessary within the power relations in place at the time, because Delfim's premature removal could lead São Paulo to gain absolute control over the succession process and, consequently, result in the loss of Minas Gerais' influence in decisions about

the candidate for the presidential succession after Rodrigues Alves. According to the recommendations of Antônio Azeredo, vice-president of the Senate, *it is necessary to reach a candidate of ours, that is, not from Minas Gerais* (FRANCO, 2001, p. 438). Therefore, the focus shifted back to power games and negotiated decisions, but with the aim of maintaining the rotation system among the political elites of the major states in the Federation. To that end,

[...] Rio Grande do Sul, in the absence of names to submit, limited itself to vetoing the likely candidates. On this occasion, Borges de Medeiros affirmed that he would support the name indicated by Minas Gerais and São Paulo, provided that the candidate did not come from either of the two states. However, Minas Gerais was determined not to support a name chosen without their consent. Minas Gerais had been involved in all the succession arrangements since 1906. It would not accept a subsidiary role (Viscardi, 2012, page 241).

In this context of uncertainties, Rui Barbosa's candidacy had become established as promising, and although it was not based on consensus, its announcement forced swift decisions either by supporting the candidate from Bahia or by defining another name that would unite the triad of the most politically powerful states at the time. This was because the elections were scheduled for April 1919, and the uncertainties had been dragging on since the death of Rodrigues Alves in January 1919.

Among the advances and setbacks in the political agreements, the name of Epitácio Pessoa was put forward as an alternative, because the then retired judge of the Federal Supreme Court (STF) had already achieved national prominence, first when he defended the candidacy of Rodrigues Alves against the attacks from Rui Barbosa, in 1916, and later when he played an important role as head of the Brazilian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. But it was only at the National Convention where the representatives of the national political forces were gathered (first conceived under the presidency of Arthur Bernardes as leader of the state of Minas Gerais) that a decision was made on the consensus candidate of the political elites of the larger states of the federation: with 139 votes, Epitácio Pessoa defeated Rui Barbosa, who obtained 42 votes.



O Malho magazine of 3.1.1919, page 16. Photograph of the National Convention held on February 25th to appoint the future president of the Republic. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



News item in the newspaper A.B.C. of 3.15.1919, page 18, reporting the work of the National Convention in which the choice of Epitácio Pessoa as president of the Republic was announced. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



This enshrining of Epitácio Pessoa as the candidate of the national political elites was supported by the states of Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, Mato Grosso, parts of Bahia, Maranhão and Pernambuco. Rui Barbosa, despite being defeated, launched himself as the opposition candidate with the support of Rio de Janeiro, parts of Bahia and Pará. Thus, the following candidates were defined for the electoral race of April 13th, 1919: Epitácio Lindolfo da Silva Pessoa, from the state of Paraíba, a law graduate and retired justice of the Supreme Federal Court. His running mate and vice-presidential candidate was Delfim Moreira da Costa Ribeiro, from Minas Gerais and also a law graduate, who served his second term as vice-president on Epitácio Pessoa's ticket until 1920, when he withdrew from politics. Meanwhile, the opposition candidate was Rui Barbosa de Oliveira, from Bahia, a law graduate, diplomat, and journalist, whose vice-presidential candidate was Alfredo Ellis, from São Paulo and a medical graduate, who had served as a federal deputy for the PRP.



Epitácio Pessoa

Epitácio Lindolfo da Silva Pessoa was born in Umbuzeiro, in the hinterland of the state of Paraíba, in 1865. He graduated with a law degree from the Faculdade de Direito of Recife in 1886. After serving as a constituent deputy (1891), in 1898, he became the minister of Justice under President Campos Salles, where he contributed to the drafting of the Civil Code (which was finally approved in 1916) and the Education Code of 1901.

Photograph of Epitácio Pessoa on the front page of *Fon-Fon* magazine of 3.22.1919. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

He was appointed judge of the Federal Supreme Court (STF) in 1902, where he served until 1912, when he was elected senator for the state of Paraíba. In 1918, he was part of the Brazilian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. After serving as president of Brazil (1919-1922), he held a position at the Permanent Court of International Justice established by the League of the Nations in The Hague; he was re-elected senator in 1924. He supported the Liberal Alliance and the 1930 Revolution but withdrew from public life in 1931. He died on February 13th, 1942.

The election campaign dominated the newspapers, and before the official announcement of the candidates, the *Correio da Manhã* newspaper from Rio de Janeiro, on the day the so-called National Convention met to decide which candidate would be *recommended to the nation*, boldly declared: *The candidacy of the Brazilian ambassador stands against the candidacy that the people have been acclaiming from north to south [...] and the struggle will be fought with all the the revolt of the Brazilian conscience [...] against the meaningless phrase: 'for the presidency, everyone but Rui Barbosa'* (*Correio da Manhã*, February 25th, 1919, page 1). Daily, the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* editorialized about the backroom deals and the decisions made behind closed doors, alleging that the choice of Epitácio Pessoa had been orchestrated in order to maintain the *status quo* of the current political system, without considering the will of the nation. It also asserted that this fact could be perceived, for example, by the inexplicable vote of Bahia's political leader, J. J. Seabra, *considered an enemy of Epitácio Pessoa, yet who voted in his favor. This caused an uproar.* (*Correio da Manhã*, February 26th, 1919, page 1).

For the Rio de Janeiro newspaper, it was hard to understand how the state of Bahia, represented by J. J. Seabra, rejected its native son, Rui Barbosa, and voted for a confessed enemy of the then parliamentarian, Senator Epitácio Pessoa. On the same day, the *Correio da Manhã* published an article saying that



Fon-Fon magazine of 6.21.1919, page 28, reporting Epitácio Pessoa's travels in Italy.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

the greatest lesson in honor and loyalty came from the state of Paraíba, as both the opposition and the ruling factions of that state had set aside their political quarrels and voted for Epitácio Pessoa, something not seen in Bahia (*Correio da Manhã*, February 26th, 1919, page 1).

The curious thing about this nomination is that all the political negotiations were carried out without the presence of Senator Epitácio Pessoa, who was the head of the Brazilian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. When he was informed on the telephone of the decision of the National Convention by the foreign minister of the Campos Sales government, Olinto Magalhães, he replied: *How is this possible, Olinto? Can't you see that these are jokes?* (Pessoa, 1925, page 298). Once his nomination was confirmed, his answer came via a telegram sent to the president of the National Convention, senator Antônio Azeredo: [...] *I accept, then, the candidacy that you offer me and, if I am elected, do not doubt for an instant that my sole concern in the government will be to justify the nation's trust* (*Correio da Manhã*, February 28th, 1919, page 1).

Epitácio Pessoa's words reinforced the idea that the *justification of trust* raised by the then candidate would not necessarily be to the nation, but rather to the political group that backed him and was responsible for his nomination. In other words, if elected, Epitácio Pessoa would reaffirm the commitment to the governors' policy and honor the actions of the political elites from the major states, especially São Paulo and Minas Gerais. This was, at least, what the PRP, PRM, PRC from Rio Grande do Sul, and the coalition parties in the states expected.

The São Paulo newspaper *Correio Paulistano*, an institution of the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP), proudly announced the nomination of Epitácio Pessoa with a manifesto—to the Brazilian nation—whose tone consisted of praising the diversity of those who had nominated Epitácio Pessoa as candidate *by voting, in the freest broad-mindedness of ideas and putting forward of names, all political shades, without excluding a single one [...] the result of this free, considered and competent expression of will was the choice of one name by all titles, the illustrious and respected Epitácio Pessoa.* (*Correio Paulistano*, February 28th, 1919, page 1).



The electoral campaign was intense in the newspapers, with accusations and legal issues filling the pages from February to April 1919. Epitácio Pessoa's campaign was entirely run by his supporters, since the official candidate of the dominant elites would only return to Brazil on July 21st, 1919—after election day, scheduled for April. Rui Barbosa, in turn, acted as best as he could: he went to São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Bahia; gave interviews; wrote articles; delivered speeches; and fiercely attacked the political establishment's *gros bonnets*. Against his absent competitor, he aimed at what he perceived as his most vulnerable point. (Pessoa, 1925, p. 325).



Political meeting in São Paulo in favor of Rui Barbosa's candidacy, *Fon-Fon* magazine of 2.15.1919, page 19. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The main argument of Rui Barbosa's campaign was that Epitácio Pessoa was not an eligible candidate because, as a retired justice of the Federal Supreme Court, he could not run, a claim widely publicized by the newspapers and led to heated debates. However, the Brazilian legal expert Clóvis Beviláquia, when consulted by the PRP and by its allies, clarified the issue: [...] *Mr. Epitácio Pessoa is not prohibited from receiving the popular mandate, to hold an elected office.* [...]

The Constitution gave Congress alone, in other words, the federal legislative body, the power to use the votes given by the Brazilian people, to choose its president (Pessoa, 1925, page 327).

Faced with this legal opinion, Rui Barbosa's campaign continued to express its suspicions about the illegality of Pessoa's candidacy, but shifted to attacking the government plan of the establishment candidate. In its pages, the newspaper *O Imparcial* stated that the plan of the then candidate from the *leading states* was nothing more than a private conference for friends, as what had been presented as a government platform had been read at a banquet in favor of Rodrigues Alves in 1916. The same newspaper also accused Epitácio Pessoa's candidacy of being *vice-ridden and born out of plots* (*O Imparcial*, March 4th, 1919, page 2).

The 1919 presidential elections presented Brazilians with an unusual dynamic—the slates in contention could not confront each other directly, owing to the absence of the candidate Epitácio Pessoa. However, the perception created by the newspapers was that Rui Barbosa's candidacy was in tune with the aspirations of

Political meeting in the state of Bahia. *Fon-Fon* magazine of 4.12.1919, page 27. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.





the Brazilian people and, with just over a month of the campaigning left to go, the journalistic pages appealed to Rui Barbosa's political strength and oratorical ability. The analysis published in *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper was as follows: *Mr. Rui Barbosa has lifted the nation from the stagnation in which it was immersed [...] he upheld his name at the polls because he could not accept the result of the Convention of February 25 [...] the vote he has received so far is brilliant, with real benefits for the country* (*Jornal do Brasil*, April 14th, 1919, page 4). Regarding Epitácio Pessoa's performance, the newspaper merely stated that his noble mission as head of the Brazilian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference was no less important, but that it only revealed the character and cultured personality of the then candidate (*Jornal do Brasil*, April 14th, 1919, page 4).

This was also the perception of some periodicals of the time, such as the magazine *Careta* from Rio de Janeiro, which published:

[...] what makes senator Epitácio Pessoa incompatible with the Presidency of the Republic is not the rejection of his past [...] it is the fact that Brazil is a republican country with a leader elected by the direct vote of the people, and the fact that the people want, not Mr. Epitácio Pessoa, but Mr. Rui Barbosa. [...] the truth is that the people are indifferent to Mr. Pessoa and want Mr. Barbosa. (*Careta* magazine, March 29th, 1919, page 6).

However, the newspaper *Correio Paulistano*, an institution of the PRP, had a daily front-page column, from February to April 1919, which set out the purposes and legitimacy of the National Convention to choose the candidate *recommended to the nation*. The qualities of the political representatives were praised; and the idea that emerged in the text published by the newspaper conveyed the idea that this representation was national and that the interests were also national, not those of groups or political deals.

In the middle of the fevered debates, the campaign followed its course. Rui Barbosa's rallies in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Salvador, were well-attended, with expectations of hearing Rui's oratory and his government platform. Without

major incidents, the newspapers reported the public's enthusiasm for Rui Barbosa and, to some extent, paid little importance to Epitácio Pessoa's candidacy, except in Paraíba, his home state. In turn, Epitácio Pessoa's rallies in Rio de Janeiro, and the capital of Paraíba were held by his allies without the candidate's presence: the career of the legal expert was praised, and his participation in the Paris Peace Conference highlighted.

In the city of Rio de Janeiro, in March, the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* reported a small incident which led to a fight and the arrest of supporters, but without major repercussions—according to the newspaper.

Two days after the election, *Correio da Manhã* had already announced the candidate Rui Barbosa as the winner of the contest: *Against the forces of the government machines [...] even Mr. Epitácio Pessoa cannot accept the position of president [...] when the real electorate vetoed his candidacy so emphatically.* (*Correio da Manhã*, April 15th, 1919, page 2). But, amidst the vote counting, the newspaper *O Imparcial* published the following editorial: *The reports from the manipulated states begin to inflate the vote count for Mr. Epitácio Pessoa.* (*O Imparcial*, April 16th, 1919, page 1).



Front page headline of *O Imparcial* newspaper of 4.16.1919 on the election results.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Epitácio Pessoa and the electoral machine. *Caretta* magazine of 4.26.1919.

Author: J. Carlos (José Carlos de Brito e Cunha – 1884-1950). Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Rui Barbosa's victory was not certain. The ballot boxes of the allied states were opened, and the situation quickly turned around. Epitácio Pessoa emerged victorious. In fact, the political machine of the PRP, PRM and their allies in the states was the winner of the 1919 election, as the candidate from the political machine didn't even need to appear or reinforce his government platform. All that was necessary was the news that he was fulfilling a highly distinguished mission, due to the context of the First World War that the world had experienced from 1914 to 1918.

Thus, the presidential election of 1919 elected the governors' political machine, endorsed by the interests of the São Paulo and Minas Gerais elites and legitimized by the approval of Rio Grande do Sul and the allied states of the Federation. The machine's official candidate went through a smooth election, without disturbances, and Epitácio Pessoa received 249,342 votes against 118,303 given to Rui Barbosa, with the prerogative of appearing three months later to take office.

Even though he could not expect to have the same freedom of action that a candidate from São Paulo, Minas Gerais or Rio Grande do Sul would have due to the natural prerogative of their state of origin, Epitácio Pessoa was not as aligned as his national political support base had hoped (Lewin, 1993, page 280-281), when, for example, he formed a cabinet entirely composed of civilians and promoted the creation of the Instituto Federal de Obras contra as Secas (IFOCS—a *federal government body to fight the effects of droughts*).



Correio Paulistano newspaper of 7.28.1919, page 1. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Recommended further reading

BESSONE, Darcy. *Wenceslau: um pescador na Presidência*. Belo Horizonte: Sociedade de Estudos Históricos Pedro II, 1968.

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PESSOA, Epitácio. *Pela verdade*. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1925.

SILVA, Hélio; CARNEIRO, Maria C. R. *História da República brasileira*. São Paulo: Editora Três, 1975.

VISCARDI, Cláudia Maria Ribeiro. *O teatro das oligarquias: uma revisão da “política do café com leite”*. 2. ed. Belo Horizonte: Fino Traço, 2012.



The picture shows the vice-president of the Republic, Delfim Moreira, going to the Federal Senate on November 15th, 1918, to be sworn in as interim president.

Fon-Fon magazine of 11.23.1918, page 21.

Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The Oligarchy Crisis of 1922: the Republican Reaction as a threat to official casuistry

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Brazil's political and cultural scene in 1922 was marked by a series of events that shook the country, including Modern Art Week, the creation of the Brazilian Communist Party, the Lieutenants' Movement, and the celebration of the Centenary of Independence. These and other episodes gave a picture of profound transformations in society. Likewise, the events manifested a crisis in the oligarchic system of representation, with a demand for greater participation by urban sectors and dissatisfaction from the military. The sum of these factors was a threat to the patterns so far established in the First Republic.

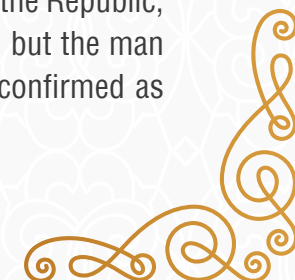
In the political sphere, the government of Epitácio Pessoa, a native of the state of Paraíba, was coming to an end, marked by fragility and dependence on other states since, unusually, Epitácio did not come from a strong state that could provide the basis for his government. This encouraged the interference of other oligarchic states during his administration, especially in the process of choosing the future candidate of the ruling party.

In fact, the main power base of Epitácio's government was Minas Gerais, the state responsible for his election and for guaranteeing him conditions of governability. The presence of Minas Gerais in the government can be seen in the figures of Pandiá Calógeras and Raul Soares, ministers of War and the Navy respectively. The presence of two civilians at the head of departments that were so important to the military displeased the Armed Forces. Moreover, it showed the strong influence of politicians from Minas Gerais, occupying key positions in Epitácio's administration and guiding the government's future steps.

This condition gave credibility to the nomination of Arthur Bernardes, president of Minas Gerais, as the government's official candidate. The names of Washington Luiz, president of São Paulo, and the former president of the Republic, Hermes da Fonseca, were put forward against Bernardes' candidacy, but the man from Minas Gerais prevailed as the oligarchs' favorite, and he was confirmed as the official candidate.



O Malho magazine, the arrival of 1922, of 12.31.1921, page 26.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.





Careta magazine of 1.6.1923. Centenary Exhibition.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



O Imparcial newspaper of 12.18.1921, edition 1,453,
page 1. Headline about electoral race.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



A Gazeta newspaper of 2.16.1922, page 5.
Announcement of Modern Art Week with Villa Lobos.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Careta magazine of 11.12.1921, page 23. Elegance and futurism.
Artist: J. Carlos (José Carlos de Brito e Cunha – 1884/1950).
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



O Malho magazine of 5.6.1922, page 1. The dish of the day.
Artist: J. Carlos (José Carlos de Brito e Cunha – 1884/1950). Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



A native of the most influential state in the First Republic, Arthur Bernardes had been involved in the political contests in the interior of Minas Gerais since the beginning of his career, when he was elected councilor in the town of Viçosa in 1904. A prominent presence in the National Congress since 1909 as a representative of the Zona da Mata region of Minas Gerais, he was one of the politicians responsible for overcoming the *Hegemony of South Minas*, the political grouping led by Wenceslau Brás which dominated the intra-state contests from 1898 to 1918. Bernardes not only won the fierce internal disputes, being elected as president of Minas Gerais in 1918, but he also managed to pacify the state.

In 1922, in addition to support from Minas Gerais, Bernardes' presidential candidacy also had support from São Paulo and the Catete. In order to put this alliance into effect, the representatives from Minas Gerais granted President Epitácio Pessoa the right to nominate the candidate for vice-president, who would complete the ruling party's slate. The name chosen by Epitácio Pessoa was that of Urbano

dos Santos, from Maranhão, who would die in May 1922 and would be replaced by Estácio Coimbra, a choice which displeased the states of Bahia and Pernambuco, which were seeking the position with the names of J. J. Seabra and Andrade Bezerra, respectively. This disagreement complicated the formation of a unanimous slate which, according to the political culture of the Republic, would lead to a smooth election. Otherwise, the formation of an opposition slate, composed of dissatisfied states, would make the coming election extremely unpredictable.

Artur da Silva Bernardes

Arthur da Silva Bernardes was born in Viçosa (Minas Gerais) on August 8th, 1875. In 1900, he graduated in Legal and Social Sciences from the

Escola de Direito de São Paulo. He was elected councilor in Viçosa (1904), state deputy (1907) and federal deputy (1909 and 1915). He was elected governor of Minas Gerais in 1918 and, successively, president of the Republic (1922-1926). During his administration, the only proposal to amend the Constitution of 1891 was adopted. After leaving the Presidency, he was elected senator in 1927. Following the Revolution of 1930, Bernardes became involved with politicians from the state of São Paulo in the Constitutionalist Revolution, whose defeat led him to seek exile abroad. He managed to be elected federal deputy in 1934. During the Estado Novo, he remained active in the opposition, signing the Manifesto dos Mineiros in 1943. In 1945, he was elected a constituent deputy for the Republican Party. He was elected once again in 1954, but died on March 23th, 1955.

Once the states of Pernambuco, Bahia, Rio Grande do Sul and Rio de Janeiro had declared their dissatisfaction, this was exactly what happened. The dissident states converged around the name of Nilo Peçanha and transformed the 1922 election into one of the most closely-fought in the First Republic. Peçanha's name was launched together with J. J. Seabra as candidate for vice-president, ensuring the unity of the dissident states.

The launch of the opposition slate, on June 24th, 1921, also represented the creation of the *Republican Reaction*, a movement of *dissident* states that made the electoral contest tighter. The dissident strategy was to make public complaints and allegations about the political organization of the old oligarchies, as well as combating the mechanisms of fraud. The main demands of the manifesto were to revise the process of choosing the presidential candidate, to demand greater autonomy for the legislature from the executive and to defend the armed forces. In this way, the Republican Reaction sought to denounce the Republic's main political vices, stirring up the urban population against that model. The scenario was one of a new closely-fought electoral race within the national oligarchies, as had occurred in 1910.



Arthur Bernardes in the magazine *Fon-Fon* of 8.27.1921, page 16. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The Dissident Manifesto and the launching of the Nilo-Seabra slate. *Fon-Fon* magazine of 7.2.1921, page 16. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The choice of Nilo Peçanha as the head of the opposition slate is explained by the fact that he was, for almost two decades, the main leader of the oligarchies in Rio de Janeiro, as well as having strong popular appeal in his favor. Throughout his career, Nilo sought to ally himself with the owners of the most influential newspapers in the Rio de Janeiro press at the time, *Correio da Manhã* and *O Imparcial*, and he adopted as a political strategy the construction of a positive image for himself. Particularly important was his closeness to the journalists Edmundo Bittencourt and José Eduardo de Macedo Soares, who helped to forge a combative, democratic and original image for Nilo Peçanha, while denouncing the personalism and anti-democratic character of Bernardes and other figures in *status quo* politics.



Correio da Manhã newspaper of 11.6.1921, page 1. Apotheosis and Demonstrations. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The civic campaign of Mr. Nilo Peçanha. *O Imparcial* newspaper of 11.2.1921, page 1. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

In this way, the *Republican Reaction* event played an important role in mobilizing the urban electorate, since by adopting massive electoral propaganda as a strategy, something unusual at the time, the founders of the movement were seeking to encourage broader political discussion, dialoguing with new and different sectors. With his campaign, Nilo Peçanha managed to break into the urban electoral area, especially in the Federal District, by meeting the desires of urban groups left aside by the state oligarchies. The candidate also scored a major success by choosing military sectors as his partners in dialogue—they had long been dissatisfied with Epitácio's government and were extremely mistrustful of the official candidate, Arthur Bernardes. Nilo Peçanha's strategy consisted of approaching the urban population and the dissatisfied military, calling on the two segments to support his candidacy.

As for his economic platform, Nilo Peçanha argued for diversification of production and financial orthodoxy. He saw the need to support domestic agriculture, weighing up diversifying production, even though he recognized the dominance of coffee and did not oppose the policy of trying to raise the coffee price implemented by politicians from the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais. On the financial front, the candidate adopted the orthodoxy of the oligarchies' commitments, and his economic plan was little different from the official manifesto.

In an atmosphere of intense political agitation, the presidential elections were held on March 1st. The electoral results gave the victory to Arthur Bernardes, who obtained 466 thousand votes, while Nilo Peçanha achieved 317 thousand. However, the *Republican Reaction* did not recognize the defeat and, in addition to demanding an investigation into the electoral process, launched a campaign of popular mobilization and intensified military dissatisfaction. Throughout the first half of 1922, the pro-Nilo Peçanha press took a combative attitude, denouncing fraud in the electoral process. This stance by *the Republican Reaction* caused great social commotion and gave the federal government the excuse to respond with the use of force, particularly punishing the most exalted military sectors.



Fon-Fon magazine of 11.11.1922, page 26. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



O Malho magazine of 11.25.1922, page 22.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The arrival of the future president. *O Malho* magazine of 10.22.1921, page 34.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Conflicts between the military and the federal government had been growing, especially since Epitácio Pessoa took office, and the appointment of civilians to military departments, plus the well-known episode of the false letters—when correspondence that was disrespectful of the Armed Forces, supposedly written by Arthur Bernardes, was published in the Rio de Janeiro press—opened the way for military dissatisfaction, transforming these facts into an important destabilizing element in the post-electoral period.



O Malho magazine. The *Republican Reaction*, Shipwreck 1922, page 1.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

With a serious scenario, a long-awaited military rebellion broke out in July 1922 with the participation of soldiers from Campo Grande, Niterói, and the Federal District. The rebellion became known as the *Rising of the 18 of Copacabana Fort* and is regarded as part of the nascent Lieutenants' Movement. On July 5th, 17 soldiers marched to Copacabana beach, joined by a civilian. The National Army attacked the group, and only two lieutenants survived. Faced with this situation, Epitácio Pessoa decreed a state of siege in order to ensure that the swearing in of the new president went ahead.



Comedy of the Recognition. *Correio da Manhã* newspaper of 5.19.1922, page 1.



O Imparcial newspaper of 5.23.1922, page 1. State of siege. The presidential succession of 1922 was marked by political tension, both before and after the election, and culminated in the decreeing of a state of siege in July of that year.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Months after the first rising was put down, in November 1922, Arthur Bernardes took over the government of a country that was still embroiled in conflicts. Federal troops had to repress riots during the presidential successions in the states of Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul and Bahia. Aiming to ensure the stability of his government, the president decreed a state of siege and his mandate was marked by strong repressive measures.

Finally, the presidential succession of 1922 had peculiar characteristics for the period. For the first time, the confrontation between the large states and the intermediate states was clearly part of a contest for the succession, revealing tensions between the regional oligarchies. Various factors contributed to the scenario of instability: first of all, the political crisis in the choice of vice-president on the official slate; secondly, the economic measures that continued to pay more attention to coffee as opposed to diversifying agricultural production; thirdly, the rise of a *proto-populism* seen in the attention that Nilo Peçanha paid to the urban masses. But the decisive factor in understanding the *Republican Reaction* was the struggle between the principal oligarchies and the intermediate ones. In this way, the *Republican Reaction* signified a rupture with the oligarchic model, showing the building of an alternative axis of power which sought to increase the participation of secondary oligarchies. The crisis within the oligarchies culminated in the end of the regime.

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The arrival of the future president of the Republic. *O Malho* magazine of 10.22.1921, page 34. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



The elections of 1926: a succession of rigged elections

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The turbulent government of Arthur Bernardes: dissidence, the Lieutenants' Movement and repression

In his last presidential message to the Chamber of Deputies at the start of November 1926, Arthur Bernardes gave an account of the acts carried out during the period of the state of siege in the country, which had been continuously renewed since the middle of July 1924. The decree, which initially affected the Federal District and the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, was, over time, extended to cover the whole country.

The suspension of constitutional guarantees and the concentration of power at the top of the Federal Executive Branch allowed Bernardes to impose tough repressive measures, such as press censorship, the threat of suspension of civil liberties, detention of political enemies, summary judgments of lieutenants and civilians involved in revolts, exile of prisoners in remote parts of the national territory, and prohibition of political associations.





The Three Wise Men... Years. O Malho magazine of 1.6.1923, Rio de Janeiro, year 22, edition 1,060, page 1.

Cartoon alluding to the problems of the administration of Arthur Bernardes. There is a mention of the *Greek presents* represented in the figures of the wise men: the first is the state of siege bringing with him the press law; the second is the Political king, bringing the cases of the states of Rio Grande (do Sul) and Rio de Janeiro; and the last one is the Financial king with more taxes and the Issuing Bank (an allusion to the Banco da República do Brasil, which in 1923 obtained from the Tesouro Nacional the right to issue currency and gold reserves). Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

This serious set of authoritarian measures shows how much the Arthur Bernardes administration was plagued by instability and the difficulty of building a consensus. Even his inauguration, in November 1922, was marked by the effects of the military revolt in the Copacabana Fort, which broke out on July 5th, leading the then President Epitácio Pessoa to decree a state of emergency and to censor the press, which lasted until December 31st. In 1923, the newly sworn-in incumbent faced a serious civil war in the state of Rio Grande do Sul; in 1924, a revolt by lieutenants which broke out in the state of São Paulo, leading to the bombardment of the city of São Paulo itself; in 1925, opposition soldiers who aimed to bring down the government organized a march that criss-crossed the interior of the country and only ended in the period of a new government, in 1927.



Photograph published in the magazine *Fon-Fon* of 12.22.1923, page 63, showing the heads of the revolution and the candidate Assis Brasil (furthest right) seeking to solve the conflict in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



As became clear, not even the whole apparatus of repression could silence the new social actors who were demanding reforms and leading roles in the political arena. The urban middle classes and Army officers continued to demonstrate, leading to an atmosphere of conspiracy and agitation in the barracks and in state capitals throughout the country.



Picture of General Setembrino, responsible for the negotiations between those who supported Borges de Medeiros and the supporters of the Freedom Alliance, which culminated in the Peace Agreement of Pedras Altas, signed on 12.14.1923. Illustration from the publication *Pelotense*, year 5, No. 21, page 1. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

Bernardes took office with full powers granted by the state of emergency and, thus, he treated the members of the *Republican Reaction* as sworn enemies, which proved an obstacle to alliances and the building of consensus. He carried out a federal intervention in the state of Rio de Janeiro, calling new state elections—from which the government candidate emerged victorious, defeating his original adversary, Nilo Peçanha. In the election for the presidency of the state of Rio Grande do Sul in 1923, Bernardes supported the candidacy of Assis Brasil against the long-time state president, Borges de Medeiros, which was not accepted by the opposition, leading to a bloody conflict that lasted throughout that year. In the final agreement, Borges de Medeiros managed to remain in power on condition that the constitutional guarantee of his re-election was suspended. With that, Bernardes won the support in Rio Grande do Sul that was vital for fighting and defeating the rebellious lieutenants during the São Paulo Revolution of 1924, with those

military officers fleeing the state capital in the direction of the state of Paraná.

At the end of his mandate in the Catete Palace in Rio, Bernardes managed to secure the support of the opposition oligarchies, who abandoned their alliances to support the government in the face of an even greater danger, represented by the

possibility of military rebellion, in the form of the march of the so-called Prestes Column, which seemed as if it might compromise order in their oligarchic domains.

A candidacy without competitors

The turbulence of Bernardes' period in office meant that discussion of the succession issue was left practically to the last year of the government. During the revision of the constitution that started in 1925, the government tried to guide the debates in the National Congress so that measures would be approved that aimed to concentrate more powers in the Federal Executive Branch. Thus, the new text of the constitution was promulgated only in the following year, delaying the start of negotiations over the presidential succession. Many of the issues put up for debate in the revision included controversies: introduction of a partial veto of acts of the legislature; the question of the limitation of the use of the legal institution of habeas corpus; limitation on the principle of equality of foreigners compared with Brazilians; prohibition on state governors being able to seek re-election; broadening of conditions for the decreeing of a state of emergency and situations that allowed federal intervention in the states.

At the beginning of the agreements for his succession, Arthur Bernardes actually put forward the name of an ex-senator from São Paulo, Álvaro de Carvalho, but the nomination was rejected by the leadership of the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP). They still had very recent memories of Carvalho's involvement with the Republican Coalition, a dissident faction that emerged in the PRP in 1924 and was supported by leaders of the coffee



Reproduction of the Italian weekly *Il Moscone* published in Brazil. The title of the cartoon is What never changes. The article published as a political news item says that Messrs. Washington Luis and Mello Vianna have been chosen as president and vice-president of Brazil, respectively. Below the cartoon, the voice of the people expresses itself thus: Governments change; men change... But the magnificence of Paraventi coffee never changes... *Il Moscone* of 1925, year 1, No. 32, page 5. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil



growers united by resentment and opposition to the government of Washington Luís. Washington, the then president of São Paulo, was accused of acting arrogantly and excessively personally in leading the party and the business of the state.

Although he was a native of the municipality of Macaé, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Washington Luís was known as *Paulista de Macaé* (*paulista*, someone from the state of São Paulo). He was born in 1869 and studied at the Pedro II High School, in Rio de Janeiro, the headquarters of what was then the imperial court. He completed a Law degree at the Faculdade de Direito de São Paulo in the Largo de São Francisco, at the very start of the Republic. In 1893, he began his professional life in Batatais, a coffee-growing district in the interior of São Paulo. He was elected a city councilor in 1897, chaired the municipal Chamber and held the post of municipal mayor (1898-1900). His political career was further advanced by his closeness to the influential political boss, Joaquim da Cunha Diniz Junqueira, known as *colonel Quinzinho*, from the city of Ribeirão Preto in the north of São Paulo state, who brought him into the ranks of the PRP. Washington Luís was elected a state deputy for the three-year period of 1904-1906, but he did not complete his term, as he was chosen for the position of secretary of Justice and Public Security in the state government of Jorge Tibiriçá. He was once again part of the next government, of Albuquerque Lins (1908-1912). In 1914, he was appointed mayor of São Paulo city and elected for a second term, which lasted until 1919.



Image: collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República.

Washington Luís Pereira de Sousa

Washington Luís Pereira de Sousa was born in Macaé (RJ) on October 26th, 1869, the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Joaquim Luís Pereira de Sousa and of Florinda Sá Pinto Pereira de

Sousa. He completed a Law degree in 1891 and worked as an attorney until 1897, when he was elected councilor to the Municipal Chamber of Batatais. In 1904, he was elected state deputy for the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP). Between 1906 and 1912, he was secretary of Justice in São Paulo. In 1913, he was chosen as mayor of São Paulo city and, in 1920, he was elected state governor. In 1925, he was elected senator and, soon afterwards, president of the Republic. Exiled after the Revolution of 1930, he lived in France until 1947. After returning to Brazil, he did not participate in politics. He died in São Paulo on August 4th, 1957. Source: Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil of Fundação Getúlio Vargas/RJ (CPDOC) /entry: Washington Luís.

At that time, Washington Luís had established close contact with the network of the São Paulo elite, and was admired by some of the members of the PRP's powerful Executive Committee. He was regarded as competent in administrative management, efficient in handling the bureaucratic apparatus and known for his party loyalty.

Despite this, Washington Luís certainly had ambitions for a more prominent position and, in fact, he achieved it due to the close friendship he had maintained with the president of the state of São Paulo, Altino Arantes, since his time in Batatais. Both of them began their careers simultaneously and stood out as promising young members of the PRP, a challenge to a party whose elite members were growing old and which found it difficult to transfer power to the younger generations.



Photograph showing the arrival of the new president at the Government Palace, after his swearing in at the Congress of the state of São Paulo. Published in *A vida moderna* of 5.6.1920, page 20. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

As his successor, Altino Arantes officially nominated the mayor of São Paulo city, and despite opposition to Washington Luís's name, Arantes imposed his will, benefiting from the security provided by the candidate's administrative experience and by the support of the heads of the party's regional directorates. In November 1920, soon after his swearing in as president of São Paulo, Washington Luís began to form his own group of supporters, appointing a secretariat that was totally independent of party nominations. This attitude provoked indignant reactions from Altino Arantes and the heirs of the late councilor Rodrigues Alves. Washington Luís was not deterred: he put together an alliance with the state of Minas Gerais to elect Arthur Bernardes as president of the Republic, and obtained in exchange a guarantee that the federal government would maintain the subsidy in order to implement a third program of raising the price of coffee.

It was precisely Carlos de Campos who decided to launch and lead a campaign in favor of Washington Luís as candidate for the Presidency of the Republic at the start of 1925. In principle, there was no great difficulty in promoting him. His behind-the-scenes efforts among the internal party leadership created the desired effect. Rodolfo Miranda, the powerful political boss and experienced negotiator, sent a telegram to Washington Luís when the latter was in Paris, in February 1925, in which he confirmed that the PRP would support his candidacy.

What remained was to gain the political support of Minas Gerais and of the Catete Palace—the *headquarters of the federal government*—for the nomination. As the campaign progressed, Arthur Bernardes sent the Minas Gerais deputy, Antônio Carlos, to São Paulo as his special envoy in order to confirm Minas's support for Washington Luís's candidacy *in a preliminary and secret agreement*. In order to prevent the rise of a dissident movement or an opposition candidate, Washington Luís suggested as a strategy that the accord between São Paulo and Minas regarding the presidential succession should be publicized in the press, prior to the subsequent presentation of the candidate to be carried out by various states.

The choice of Washington Luís ended up occurring as had that of Arthur Bernardes, without prior consultation with the political leaders and the new social actors. The difference from the previous period was the political quiescence achieved by continuous acts of repression; and the strengthening of the Federal Executive Branch at the expense of the autonomy of the oligarchies had created favorable conditions for the coming to power of the winning candidate without any major ruptures. Bernardes even assured Washington that, in the manner that he was being put forward, his candidacy would not face any competition. He had even chosen a vice-presidential candidate to appear on the slate, Miguel Calmon from the state of Bahia.

This combination, which had begun to be sketched out only a little more than a year before polling day, developed slowly, giving the impression that Bernardes had still not chosen his successor, when he was acting so as to disguise his true intentions, negotiating the necessary support for the slate to be viable.



O Malho magazine of 1.9.1926, Rio de Janeiro, year 25, edition 1,217, page 1. Cover image of Washington Luís holding an egg with the word opposition written on it; below, with the candidate saying: *We're going to make a success! In the intervals, you come in and do a few somersaults, for those who like the circus.*
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

In order to put forward *worthy names against the mediocre ones of the national comedy* (*O Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper, 10.13.1925), the opposition founded the Youth Party (*Partido da Mocidade* in Portuguese), whose main idea was secret voting and, in its manifesto, it denounced the undermining of democracy, the arbitrary power of the Sole Executive Branch, the breach of individual rights, the Legislature's subservience, the evil oligarchies and the suspension of freedom of opinion. It launched a slate composed of Assis Brasil (president) and Alexandre José Barbosa Lima (vice-president), which innocently sought to run against the official ticket.

Despite its transient existence, the program of this party would later be incorporated by the Democratic Party, a grouping founded in February of the following year, at the home of Councilor Antônio Prado, in the city of São Paulo. This party would stand out for its strong internal cohesion; it would manage to take on the *status quo*, electing representatives in the states and in the National Congress, giving a foretaste of the movement that would become the Liberal Alliance in the presidential elections of 1930.



The election of March 1st, 1926

At a banquet held at the Automóvel Clube do Brasil on December 28th, 1925, the candidate for the Presidency of the Republic proceeded to read out his platform for government. The points of his program were somewhat well-known, since he had revealed them in an interview granted shortly beforehand to the American Agency: pacification; amnesty; economy and finances; exchange rate; circulation and currency; constitutional revision.



Fon-Fon magazine of 1.2.1926, edition 1, page. 43. Traditional banquet launching the official candidacies of the candidates Washington Luís and Mello Vianna, where the former read out his platform for the four-year period 1926 to 1930. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

The candidate Washington Luís sought to set out his opinions in quite a careful way, avoiding committing himself too much on matters that related to the administration he was concluding. On the one hand, he avoided making commitments on thorny issues, such as that of an amnesty for military men involved in rebellions and, on the other hand, he sought to show that the agreements signed for his candidacy did not mean total continuity with the financial policy adopted by Bernardes.

As he announced the theme of *pacification* of the nation, he made clear that this would be achieved by the strengthening of the Executive Branch, which was in charge of keeping order. On this comment, Washington acknowledged the problem of rebellion among the military, but he gave advance notice that the procedure he would adopt to resolve it would not involve accepting the demands of that sector. He even disparaged the soldiers involved in the Prestes Column, calling them *a thousand crazy people, rebels without ideals who, moving from act of pillage to act of pillage, from fires to robberies, not finding support anywhere, but rather being rejected by all parties, are wandering sinisterly through the interior of the country.* (Debes, 2002, page 58).



The Washington interview. *O Malho* magazine of 10.10.1925, Rio de Janeiro, year 24, edition 1,204, page 1.
Artist: J. Carlos (José Carlos de Brito e Cunha – 1884/1950). After his interview with the American Agency, there is still doubt about the possibility of Washington Luís granting an amnesty if he is elected.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

What Washington Luís failed to consider was the fact that the march, which had started back in April 1925, numbering 3,500 rebels from São Paulo and contingents of the Army of Rio Grande do Sul led by Luís Carlos Prestes, had been criss-crossing the interior of the country (7 states and 25 thousand kilometers) resisting and making trouble for federal troops, state militias, groups of paramilitary fighters, ordinary laborers in the interior, and the former leaders of hired criminal robber gangs, thus exposing the deficiencies of the government. He underestimated the weight and political significance of the Lieutenants' Movement, given that many of its most prominent members would later be involved in the conspiracy to bring down his government, in October 1930.

The question became caught up in the thorny issue of an amnesty, owing to the considerable number of political prisoners who had been detained during the state of exception in the Bernardes administration, precisely when there was discussion of limiting the right to *habeas corpus*. Washington Luís merely stated that, as it was a constitutional guarantee, it would have to be approved by the National Congress.



O Malho magazine of 7.4.1927, page 32.
Photograph showing some officers of the Prestes Column, in the state of Bahia.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



In the economic and financial area, Washington Luís emphasized the country's progress and growth, without mentioning the gap between the surging urban-industrial sector of São Paulo and the rest of the nation. He did not touch on the point of disagreement between the allies, since the Bernardes government had started to question the costs of maintaining the policy of supporting the coffee price, which restricted the entry of foreign capital and was generating bigger and bigger exchange deficits. In 1924, Bernardes almost broke off the agreement signed with Washington Luís, when he replaced the people from São Paulo who were in control of the national economy. Next, he ended the federal government's steering of the coffee market and transferred to the producing states the responsibility for taking out foreign loans that were necessary to carry out the intended policy of constantly defending the product.

This change led to discontent among the São Paulo coffee growers, who began to criticize the measures taken by Washington Luís and by his successor Carlos de Campos (1924-1927). They complained about the government's refusal to maintain the subsidy for immigration and about the consequences of the measures within the competence of the Instituto Paulista de Defesa Permanente do Café, an agency of the government of the



O Paiz newspaper of 6.11.1926, Rio de Janeiro, year 42, No. 15,209, page 1, announces in a headline the official recognition by the National Congress of Washington Luís as president of the Republic. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

state of São Paulo created to support the production and export of coffee, which they regarded as damaging for the sector. They felt that the 10 million pounds sterling loan arranged with bankers in London, to start the operation in 1926, had ended up benefiting the importers and speculators, who were manipulating the stocks to achieve enormous profits, damaging the producers. There were huge internal divisions in the world of coffee and between the coffee-growing states.

Incorporating these issues into his platform in his own way, Washington Luís announced the need to sort out the exchange rate in order to contain the depreciation of the currency, caused by the issuance of unbacked money, which was generating inflation and an increasing cost of living. The suggested solution was the adoption of the gold standard via the creation of an exclusive issuing bank, which was implemented in December 1926 through the creation of the Stabilization Fund (Caixa de Estabilização in Portuguese), which fixed the value of the pound at 40 thousand réis. This measure stimulated coffee-producing activities, compensating, due to the depreciation of the currency, for the small fall in the external prices of the product. Despite this, the sector's dilemmas were much more complex and were far from being resolved.

Meanwhile, the *O Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper reported prominently, in its edition of March 2nd, 1926, the holding of the election for president of the Republic with the two slates: that of the *status quo* and that of the Youth Party. The process of finally verifying the elections only took place on June 8th. In the count, Washington Luís won 688,528 votes; and Mello Vianna, 685,754, being elected respectively president and vice-president of the Republic. For their part, the opposition candidates, Assis Brasil and Barbosa Lima, won only 1,116 and 1,112 votes respectively.

The result of the poll powerfully confirmed the strength of the alliance between the states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo, without any serious challenge from the opposition or from the states excluded from the succession process. The federal Presidency in the Catete Palace had seized more and more powers in an authoritarian manner, severely repressing and censoring the urban and military sectors.

On June 10th, the minority leader in the Chamber of Deputies, Plínio Casado, gave the vote of the opposition in favor of recognizing the election, but accompanied by a statement criticizing the newly elected president for being a continuation of the Bernardes government: *Also, they make a point of declaring, firmly, explicitly and emphatically, that this vote achieves nothing nor removes the unbreakable determination to continue the fight, without pause, against the wicked official policy, whoever the holders of that power are* (Debes, 2002, page 89).

In the cartoon entitled *The twilight hour*, published on the front page of the magazine *O Malho*, the irony about the return to the state of São Paulo at the end of the mandate of the then President Washington Luís is explained by the slogan by which the latter was known during his government of São Paulo: governing is building highways.



The Twilight Hour. O Malho of 2.6.1926, year 25, No. 1,221, cover.
Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Formation of the new government: from continuity to the rupture of the alliance

In assembling his cabinet, Washington Luís resorted to procedures that had also been used by his predecessor: choosing leading names that did not threaten his authoritarian exercise of individual power. For the post of Interior and Justice, Viana do Castelo, the Agriculture secretary of Minas Gerais; for the post of Agriculture, deputy Germiniano Lira e Castro, the leader of the representation from the state of Pará in the Chamber of Deputies; for Transportation and Public Works, deputy Vitor Konder, from Santa Catarina; for the Navy, he reappointed Admiral Arnaldo Pinto da Luz; for the Ministry of War, general Nestor Sezefredo de Passos; for Foreign Affairs, Otávio Mangabeira, the leader of the representation from the state of Bahia in the Chamber of Deputies; and for Finance, Getulio Vargas.

Vargas' appointment was not in keeping with the others, because he was the only unchallengeable leading figure from the state of Rio Grande do Sul with great potential to project himself on the national stage. Washington's reasons were perhaps part of the indirect Bernardes strategy of suppressing Borges de Medeiros' power in Rio Grande do Sul. After implementing the monetary and exchange rate reform proposed by the government, Vargas left the cabinet to run as candidate for the Presidency of Rio Grande do Sul. Presenting himself as a conciliator, he won support from the PRR and the Liberation Party, being elected in December 1927. The end of the rule of Borges de Medeiros did not, however, mean total adherence to the federal government's policies. Vargas began to support certain items from the agenda of the opposition movement, but sought to maintain a good relationship with Washington Luís in exchange for federal funds.



Change of government. O Imparcial newspaper of 11.16.1926, Rio de Janeiro, year 15, No. 5,728, page 1. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



At the beginning of his government, Washington Luís began to partially suspend the state of exception and, with the gradual reduction in the atmosphere of instability, freed political prisoners. There was even popular celebration. The president of the Republic, however, remained resistant to the idea of granting an amnesty to the military rebels, because he was under pressure from leading figures in the Army and, at the same time, was afraid of the conspiratorial movements of the members of the Prestes Column, who had sought exile in Bolivia.

In August 1927, the *Celerada* Law (a set of strongly repressive measures) was approved; press censorship was re-established; the Communist Party was outlawed; lieutenants were forbidden from electing their leaders; and the right to demonstrate was limited, targeting the workers' movement, which had been growing stronger.

This authoritarian impulse strengthened the theory that the government of Washington Luís would be merely a continuation of the previous one, even though the alliance of the states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo was starting to crumble. Renewal in the ranks of Minas's political leaders, represented by the election of Antônio Carlos for the State Presidency, made the focus of the debate the criticism of the control exercised over the federal government by the coffee-growers from São Paulo, disturbing the equilibrium that Bernardes had created during his term. In its place came an unsustainable economic policy that privileged the coffee sector at the expense of the rest of the national economy. Discontent in Minas Gerais ended up leading that state to become closer to Rio Grande do Sul, led by the ambitious Getúlio Vargas, an agreement that would lead to an even more turbulent succession than that of Arthur Bernardes, and one that had unpredictable consequences.

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The campaign of the Liberal Alliance in the elections of 1930: between the forgotten March 1st and the well-remembered October 3rd

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The elections of March 1st, 1930, are still viewed in history as merely a backdrop to the event that followed: the Revolution of 1930, an event undoubtedly indelible in the national history that marked the end of the First Republic. However, recovering the uniqueness of that intense election, filled with a fierce political contest and deviating from the usual patterns attributed to the period, makes it possible to understand both the political arrangements and the elections themselves as an event in their own right, rather than as just a precursor to the so-called October 3rd Revolution.

There is no doubt that the idea of revolution was indeed present in the discourse of some of the key figures in that process. However, there must have been some exceptional, almost teleological, element capable of triggering the events that culminated in the deposition of Washington Luís.

In the short term, it is important to make clear that the events that followed the election had a major influence on the opposition's *turn around*. More specifically, there would have been no October 3rd without the March 1st elections. The poll and its nuances, however, unfolded without the actors knowing that it

would eventually lead, months after the ballot result, to an armed revolt that would take power, even though some did not rule out this possibility. October 3rd, thus, marked many interpretations of the elections of March 1st, 1930, and it would likewise become a constant memory in many other elections in Brazil's history.

Initially, it is important to note that, like the elections of 1910 and the *Republican Reaction* in 1922, the 1930 election caused excitement and agitation on the streets of Brazil's major cities, bringing a significant contingent of people to the streets and the polls. However, given the *modus operandi* of the selection of the candidates and the alliances between the state oligarchies were similar to those of previous elections, it was not this mobilization that would decide the result. Rather than the sovereign will of the people, what emerged from the polls was the agreement made prior to the election among the most powerful oligarchies, with the electoral system merely confirming the ticket that was already known in advance to be the winner. This was how the 11th direct presidential election in Brazil since Emperor Pedro II had embarked into exile on the morning of November 17th, 1889, was shaping up.





Pictures of the candidates for the Presidency and of the candidates for deputies and senators in the Federal District. *Revista da Semana* magazine of 2.22.1930, page 23. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

A crucial event for understanding that process took place in May 1928, when then-President of the Republic Washington Luís, elected by the powerful São Paulo Republican Party (PRP), referred to the politician from São Paulo, Júlio Prestes, at the inauguration of the highway connecting Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo, as the future occupant of the Catete Palace. It was not an official declaration; however, it was a frontal attack on the political aspirations of Minas Gerais, especially those of its President, Antônio Carlos Ribeiro de Andrade. The latter was seeking once again to have someone from Minas Gerais as president of the Republic, reinforcing the time-honored but not always harmonious policy of *café com leite*. The relationship between São Paulo and Minas Gerais, already strained by the economic policy of Washington Luís, took another blow with the decision to rally behind Júlio Prestes' candidacy.

Faced with this position, politicians from Minas Gerais began to seek new allies, found in the third-most important state in the federation, Rio Grande do Sul. This solution was not insignificant, since Antônio Carlos was aware of the prestige carried by the young president of Rio Grande do Sul, Getúlio Vargas, who was even being considered for the vice-presidency on Júlio Prestes's ticket.

At 47 years old, Vargas was far from having the popularity he would achieve in the following decades, but he was not a newcomer: he had been a federal deputy, Washington Luís's minister of finance, and had gone on to govern Rio Grande do Sul with the departure of Borges de Medeiros from the state executive after 25 years in power, of which the last 15 were uninterrupted. In order to complete the slate alongside Vargas, a candidate for vice-president was needed. It was necessary to show



that rather than being an isolated sally, the opposition ticket that was being formed had a national base. Thus, after attempts to bring into an alliance of politicians from the Federal District and from the states of Bahia and Pernambuco, the final choice for vice-president was João Pessoa, from the state of Paraíba, with the blessing of his uncle and former president of the Republic, Epitácio Pessoa, who had long been an ally of the politicians from Minas Gerais.

Getulio Dornelles Vargas



Image: Collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República

Getulio Dornelles Vargas was born in São Borja (Rio Grande do Sul), em 1882. A graduate of the Faculdade de Direito of Porto Alegre (1907), he earned a degree in Legal and Social Sciences. He was elected as a state deputy for the Rio Grande do Sul Republican Party (1909-1913), then a federal deputy and leader of his state's representation in the federal chamber between 1923 and 1926. He served as minister of finance under Washington Luís (1926-27) and as president of Rio Grande do Sul (1927-1930). In 1929, he ran for the Presidency of the Republic on the opposition Aliança Liberal ticket. After his defeat, he led the revolutionary movement of 1930, through which he became head of the provisional

government (1930-34) in November of that year. He led the *coup d'état* in 1937 and governed thereafter with dictatorial powers during the so-called *New State* (*Estado Novo* in Portuguese) from 1937 to 1945. After the return to democracy, he was elected senator for two states: Rio Grande do Sul (running for the Social Democratic Party [PSD]) and São Paulo (under the banner of the Brazilian Labor Party [PTB]). In the first of those positions, he was also elected to the Chamber of Deputies, but for the PTB. In São Paulo and in the Federal District, he headed the list of winning candidates of the PTB for the Chamber and received the most votes

of any candidate. In Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais he was placed second in the election for the Chamber. And, also for the PTB, he was elected to the same House of Congress in the states of Bahia and Paraná. He held the position of senator for the PSD. He was elected president of the Republic in 1950. He committed suicide with a shot to the heart on August 24, 1954, leaving behind a letter in which he accused the enemies of the nation of being responsible for his suicide. Source: Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil (CPDOC/FGV).

These politicians, who presented themselves as the opposition to the federal government, were part of a new generation of the regional elites who did not participate in the founding of the Republic. In the early 1920s, they emerged with a reformist discourse that pointed to the need for industrial investments, attention to social issues, and support for the idea of greater state intervention in society. It was the gradual abandonment of the liberal discourse, noticeable not only in Brazil but also in the post-World War I world.

Alongside Vargas, politicians such as Lindolfo Collor, João Neves da Fontoura, and Osvaldo Aranha were rising in Rio Grande do Sul. They would play a central role in the events of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The political-party landscape in Minas Gerais underwent a similar process of renewal, and alongside the sexagenarian Antônio Carlos, figures such as Francisco Campos, Odilon Braga, Bias Fortes, and José Bonifácio Lafayette de Andrada emerged.

In his campaign platform for the presidency of Minas Gerais, in 1925, Antônio Carlos had already included demands that involved the deepening of Brazilian democracy, such as changes in the electoral rules and the implementation of secret voting. Meanwhile the process of renewal in the state of Paraíba had as its prominent figure João Pessoa, who, in his speeches, criticized the abuses of the colonels and violent crime, while also advocating for secret voting and state intervention to help the Northeast, which was plagued by long droughts.



Cover of *O Malho* magazine portraying Getúlio Vargas as the devil, referring to the positivism in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and the episode of the letters he wrote aligning himself with Washington Luís. *O Malho* of 8.24.1929, page 1. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Cover of *O Malho* magazine, portraying the Liberal Alliance as a decrepit old woman and referring once again to how bad the letters were for their electoral campaign. *O Malho* magazine of 10.5.1929, page 1. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



In the end, it was a generation that was critical of liberalism and the very oligarchical system that had given rise to it. It is well known that the three states shared a significant degree of internal renewal and a platform with visible similarities. The opposition to the government was being formed: the famous Liberal Alliance. The main feature of this coalition was, in fact, its heterogeneous nature, formed by oligarchies—some dissident, others less so—broad urban sectors, and insubordinate military groups who were against the current policy of the Republic. Despite their close ties, the various groups that supported and helped to build the Liberal Alliance were mainly united by the fight against a common enemy, to be preferably defeated at the polls, but without ruling out the possibility of doing so through force.

The agreement between the members of the oligarchies that made up the alliance was sealed at a secret meeting, held at the Hotel Glória in Rio de Janeiro, on July 17th, 1929, where the representatives of the Minas Gerais Republican Party (PRM), Francisco Campos and João Bonifácio, met with the leader of the Rio Grande do Sul Republican Party (PRR) in the Chamber of Deputies, João Neves da Fontoura. The famous Pact of Hotel Glória definitively marked the opposition of these states to the candidacy of Júlio Prestes. It took no more than a month for the tickets that would run in the elections to be defined and ready to hit the streets, with the electoral campaign even being marked by moments of extreme violence.

The Getúlio Vargas-João Pessoa slate had broad support from the urban sectors, from a significant portion of the press—especially the powerful media network of Assis Chateaubriand—and from dissident oligarchies within the states. Among these, it is worth highlighting the important participation of the São Paulo Democratic Party (PD), formed by the state's elite who had broken with the PRP. Despite all this, none of it was enough when faced with the machinery of the *status quo* slate of Júlio Prestes, from São Paulo, and his candidate for vice-president of the Republic, Vital Soares, from Bahia, who had the support of 17 states of the federation. Given the functioning of the oligarchic electoral machine, the victory of the Prestes-Soares slate seemed predictable.

Even though it was formed by elements from the oligarchies, the campaign of the Liberal Alliance showed some innovative aspects that were essential in mobilizing new social groups, primarily urban ones. The greatest example of this process was the struggle for secret voting, the creation of an Electoral Justice system, and amnesty for those who had been detained during the lieutenants' uprisings of the 1920s. The so-called *lieutenants*, junior officers who for almost a decade had shown themselves to be resentful of the abuses of power of the oligarchies and the Republic they led, were relatively close to the politicians of the Alliance. While some of these military men, such as Juarez Távora, João Alberto Lins de Barros and Siqueira Campos, approved of the idea of supporting the Liberal Alliance, others, such as Luís Carlos Prestes, then the great leader of the movement, a figure with huge political capital, were against any agreement: he wanted a revolution, not votes.



Getúlio Vargas as a giant anteater: his large claws show how Getúlio Vargas betrayed Washington Luís. *O Malho* magazine of 1.11.1930, page 25. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Cartoon showing supporters of the Liberal Alliance talking about revolution. *O Malho* magazine of 2.1.1930, page 43. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Liberalism takes Getúlio Vargas away from the Catete Palace, the presidential palace. *O Malho* magazine of 3.1.1930, page 30. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



During the electoral campaign, Getúlio Vargas and Luís Carlos Prestes met personally on two occasions in Rio Grande do Sul, once in September 1929 and again between January and February 1930. It was the Alliance politicians who arranged the meeting, seeking the support of the leader of the *Coluna Invicta*, thereby linking his great popularity to Vargas's candidacy. Prestes's interest in the meeting was to seek material support so he could continue his revolutionary plans. Despite the attempts, no agreement was reached. Prestes did not trust Vargas's promises of change in Brazil, considering him just another oligarch seeking power, as he had within the Liberal Alliance allies like former Presidents Wenceslau Brás, Epitácio Pessoa and Arthur Bernardes—two of whom, in fact, had ordered action against the *lieutenants* when they were the nation's top leaders. Getúlio Vargas, for his part, at that time, did not believe that taking up arms would ensure victory, despite choosing this option, it is worth noting, many months later.

However, the *lieutenants* and the members of the Alliance did not part ways, since having an amnesty as one of their campaign slogans attracted part of the rebel movement and its supporters. But, despite Prestes's refusal, Alliance politicians such as Osvaldo Aranha, João Neves da Fontoura and Batista Luzardo never ruled out taking up arms to secure the recognition of an unlikely victory or, in a somewhat incipient way, to reach the Catete Palace. During the electoral campaign, Aranha orchestrated the purchase of ammunition abroad while Luzardo, at a Liberal Alliance rally in the Federal District, on September 7th, 1929, declared that victory would be achieved: *by the broad path of the law, if those in power allow us, or by the short cut of revolution, if the despots block our way!* (*Correio da Manhã* newspaper, September 8th, 1929, page 2). However, the dissident oligarchies and the *lieutenants* only formed a definitive and broad alliance starting in July 1930, about five months after the elections, when João Pessoa was assassinated.

Prestes's distancing of himself reduced the explosive character of the election campaign, but did not bring an end to the enthusiasm and the conflicts stirred up among broad sectors throughout the country. The *liberal marches* were the most innovative initiative.



Reference to the conflicts of the Liberal Marches. *O Malho* magazine of 2.15.1930, page 32. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Images of Getúlio Vargas, in the Hotel Glória. *Caretá* magazine of 1.4.1930, page 13. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.



Image of Getúlio Vargas in Rio de Janeiro at the election rally in the Castelo Esplanade. *Caretá* magazine of 1.11.1930, page 16. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

These processions passed through Minas Gerais and some states of the Northeast, holding outdoor rallies, at which Alliance politicians defended their main causes and sought to attract more people to their movement. The rallies took the candidates and their platforms out of the luxurious salons and brought them close to a portion of the Brazilian population that was not accustomed to this type of political event.

In the Federal District, the rallies became increasingly fierce, and were widely reported by the Rio newspaper *Correio da Manhã*, which became an ardent advocate of the Liberal Alliance's platform. In the Chamber of Deputies, Alliance members—such as Flores da Cunha from Rio Grande do Sul, and José Bonifácio from Minas Gerais—heated up the debates, bringing an amnesty on to the agenda. Fights in plenary sessions became more and more frequent, and the federal government ordered its deputies to abandon their benches, preventing a quorum for the sessions. The opposition's solution was to give speeches on the Chamber's staircases, which soon led to more conflicts. One of these ended with the death of a deputy from the state of



Pernambuco, Souza Filho (a supporter of Júlio Prestes), shot by a deputy from Rio Grande do Sul, Simões Lopes (the treasurer of the Liberal Alliance).

Meanwhile, in Minas Gerais, Fernando Melo Viana, the vice-president of the Republic, who had so far supported the candidacy of Getulio Vargas and João Pessoa, broke with the leadership of the PRM and launched the grouping known as the Conservative Concentration, splitting the party as he declared his support for the Júlio Prestes-Vital Soares slate. As well as causing the opposition to lose votes in the country's largest electoral college, the Conservative Concentration clashed with supporters of the Liberal Alliance in the town of Montes Claros (Minas Gerais), resulting in five deaths and several injured, the latter including Melo Viana himself. As can be seen, these conflicts reflected the tension that surrounded the 1930 election campaign. With just 14 days left until the election, the Rio Grande do Sul newspaper *Correio do Povo* reported 15 deaths and 48 serious injuries in clashes between supporters of the two candidacies. Those numbers were reached, by the way, without the necessary investigations.



Image of Getulio Vargas in Rio de Janeiro at the election rally in the Castelo Esplanade. *Careta* magazine of 1.11.1930, page 17. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

In the midst of this turmoil, where was Getulio Vargas? The president of Rio Grande do Sul seemed reluctant to engage more vigorously in his own campaign, knowing that his chances of victory were minimal, if not non-existent. After all, as Washington Luís's ex-finance minister, he understood the power that the federal government had at its disposal to crush troublesome opposition. It was necessary to ensure that the state of Rio Grande do Sul did not suffer reprisals from the federal government after a possible or almost certain, defeat. Thus, his attitude was very hesitant throughout the campaign: his correspondence shows that, while the members of the Alliance were fighting (including physically) for his victory, Vargas thought several times about giving up his candidacy and finding a peaceful solution to the situation. Some of these letters were published in the newspapers of the Federal District, which threw even more fuel on the flames of the electoral contest.

An example of Vargas's insecurity during the campaign is found in the agreement made with Washington Luís in which, to his allies' displeasure, he committed to not leaving Rio Grande do Sul to campaign. Had it not been for the direct and intense efforts of figures like Osvaldo Aranha and João Neves da Fontoura, Vargas would have effectively abandoned the Liberal Alliance for the sake of the peaceful co-existence of Rio Grande do Sul—and his own state government—with the federal government, or he might even have fulfilled his promise to the president not to leave his home state.

Vargas did not keep his word. Around 5:00 p.m. on December 30th, 1929, a Varig seaplane landed in the waters of Guanabara Bay, bringing Vargas accompanied by a small entourage. He disembarked on the island of Enxadas, where he was awaited by João Pessoa and several political figures. The Liberal Alliance candidates then made their way together to Praça Mauá, where they were welcomed by a crowd, which followed them to the Hotel Glória, where they stayed. The enthusiastic reception lasted late into the night, with speeches by the Alliance politicians José Bonifácio, João Pessoa and Epitácio Pessoa, who spoke quickly to the crowd gathered in front of the hotel. The purpose of the trip? To present the Liberal Alliance campaign in the federal capital. This event, however, did not take place at a gala dinner or ball in the salons of the Rio elite, as was usual.



According to some sources, this was due more to circumstances than to a desire to innovate: Washington Luís had instructed the main salons and theaters in Rio, including the ultra-traditional Municipal Theater, not to allow their premises to be used for the ceremony of the Liberal Alliance. Thus, a great election rally was organized by the Liberal Alliance in the Castelo Esplanade, set for January 2nd, 1930. According to the capital's press, the event was a success: a crowd of 100 thousand people gathered in the esplanade, around a small stage decked out with a red cloth and hung with Brazilian flags. Late in the afternoon, the candidates arrived and the crowd cheered the man from Rio Grande do Sul who was taking on the electoral machine of the Catete Palace. Vargas read the 31 pages of his plan for government and did not speak off the cuff. After this event, he went to São Paulo before returning to his own state. In São Paulo, there was another fervent reception: some newspapers reported a total of 120 thousand people gathered in the rain to welcome Vargas at the Estação do Norte railroad station. According to the *Diário de S. Paulo* newspaper, the event apparently surpassed the acclamation received by Rui Barbosa during the Civil Campaign. Meanwhile, the vice-presidential candidate, João Pessoa, returned to Rio de Janeiro, where he tried to organize some of the Alliance's marches, continuing in the middle of January to the city of Belo Horizonte, the capital of Minas Gerais.



Carioca newspaper on election day 3.1.1930. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

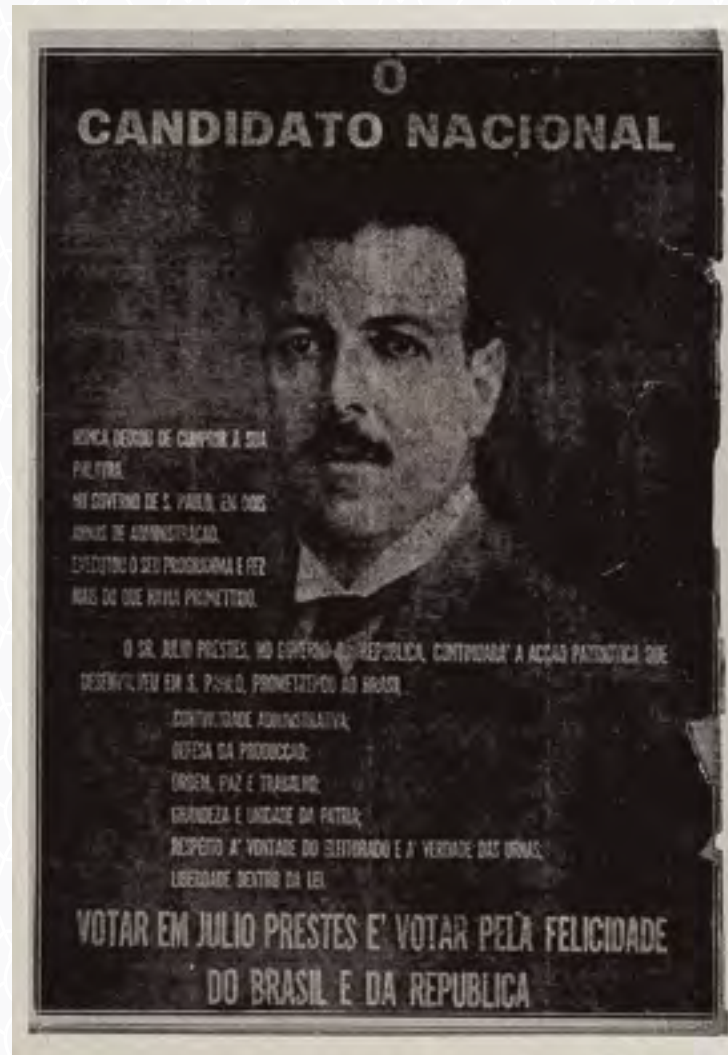
All this mobilization by the Liberal Alliance was not enough to prevent the victory of the government slate. Held as usual on March 1st, the election coincided with the start of Carnival. Thus, on a hot summer's day, a celebratory Saturday, 5.7% of the Brazilian population went to the polling stations to choose the president of the Republic. Despite these figures, the election of March 1st, 1930, was the biggest of the First Republic in terms of the number of voters. The Júlio Prestes-Vital Soares ticket won 1,091,709 votes; while Getúlio Vargas and João Pessoa ended up with 742,794. The results from the states that showed flagrant examples of fraud and arbitrary actions typical of the First Republic were obvious: while Júlio Prestes achieved 320 thousand votes against 30 thousand given to Getúlio Vargas in São Paulo, in Rio Grande do Sul the man from São Paulo won only 1 thousand against 295 thousand for the home candidate. However, it is worth noting how the urban population had become an important factor in this election because, in the Federal District, which was at the time the city of Rio de Janeiro, the contest was quite close, with Vargas losing by a difference of 2 thousand votes (30 thousand against 32 thousand).

Once the elections were over, the opposition states suffered tough federal interventions, actions that contrasted with those of previous elections, when attempts were made to integrate the opposition forces and not exclude them. Associated with the assassination of João Pessoa—a crime of passion, but which served as

a mobilizing factor—and with the creaking political system, the interventions provided the perfect storm.

Washington Luís was deposed 22 days before handing over the presidential sash to Júlio Prestes. This movement—a *coup*, in fact—would become known as the *Revolution of 1930*, and the date on which it began, October 3rd, 1930, would become the date which would become the landmark of Getúlio Vargas' coming to power. In the 15 years which followed, only 3 were under a democratic regime (1934-1937); the other 12 were under dictatorships (1930-1934; 1937-1945). Throughout this period, Brazil's first experience as a republic was given a new name: the Old Republic—and it was to be forgotten, along with the elections that had taken place up until that point. This deliberate forgetting took with it the elections of March 1st. There remained only October 3rd.

With the end of the period of the *Estado Novo*, Brazil entered a democratic period that had never been experienced before, with large national parties, closely-fought election campaigns, candidates with broad social bases, challenges to election results, politicians who claimed to be the saviors of the nation, parties that swore they represented the true will of the people, *coups*, counter-*coups*, dictatorship. To some extent, although the interpretation varied according to the observer's point of view, October 3rd and its consequences would always be there. And this was not by pure chance. The electoral reorganization that took place with the 1946 Constitution established that the new president of the Republic should be elected 120 days before the



Election poster for Julio Prestes. *Correio da Manhã* newspaper of 03.01.1930, page 2. Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

end of the current presidential term, which would finish on January 31st of the fifth year since that current president was sworn in. According to this rule, the precise date of the election would be October 3rd. Coincidences (coincidences?) of Brazilian electoral life.

Recommended further reading

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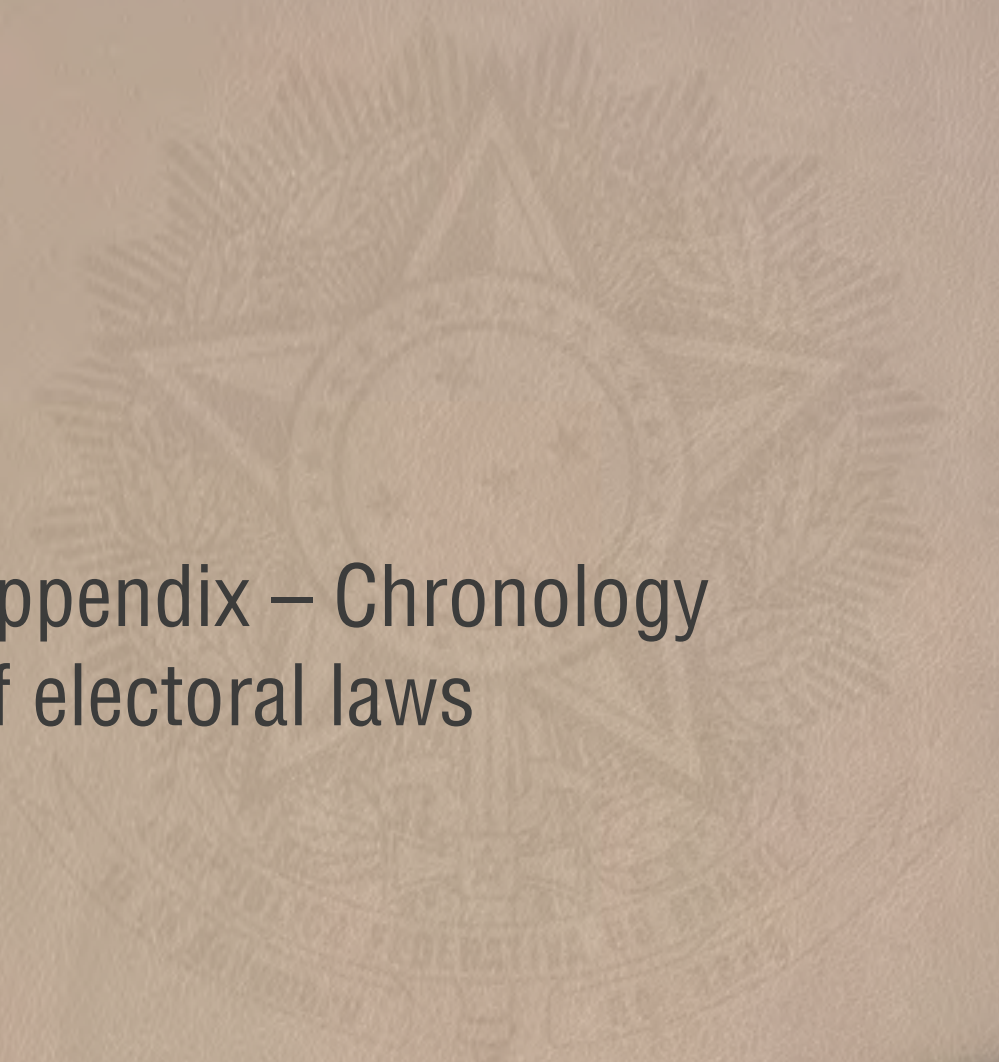
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Appendix – Chronology of electoral laws





Legislation	Title	Comments
Decree No. 200-A of February 8 th , 1890	Promulgates the electoral regulation.	Defines the rules for the election for deputies to the Constituent Assembly of the Federal Republic of the United States of Brazil. Became known as the Alvim Regulation.
Decree No. 277-E of March 22 th , 1890	Determines how to delete the names of registered foreign voters who, within the period set in Article 1 of decree No. 58 A of December 14 th , 1889, have declared that they do not accept Brazilian nationality, and provides other measures concerning the electoral registration process.	Excludes from voter registration foreign registered voters who, within six months, have not accepted Brazilian nationality.
Decree No. 277-D of March 22 th , 1890	Declares that foreigners who request it, subject to the legal requirements, will be considered Brazilian citizens and included in voter registration.	Allows foreigners who have fixed residence in Brazil to vote.
Decree No. 511 of June 23 rd , 1890	Orders compliance with the regulations for the election of the first National Congress.	Regulates the elections to the Constituent Congress.
Decree No. 648 of August 9 th , 1890	Establishes that citizens who are registered voters under Law No.3,029 of January 9 th , 1881, and who have not been included in the recent electoral registration, can exercise their right to vote.	Allows those who enlisted under the Saraiva Law of 1881 to vote.
Decree No. 1,189 of December 20 th , 1890	Provides measures regarding the first election of the legislative assemblies of the States.	Defines norms regarding the work of the electoral boards and of the counting Chambers or superintendences, and regarding the need for certain measures to better ensure the regularity of the electoral process.
Decree No. 641 of November 3 rd , 1891	Dissolves the National Congress, summons the Nation to choose new representatives and takes other measures.	Dissolves the National Congress without setting the date for convening a new one, establishing that the revision of the Federal Constitution will not cover the federative republican form and the inviolability of rights concerning individual freedom and security.
Decree No. 677 of November 21 st , 1891	Summons the National Congress for May 3 rd , designates the previous February 29 th for the general elections, and indicates which articles of the Constitution need to be revised.	Summons the National Congress.
Law No. 28 of January 8 th , 1892	Establishes the incompatibilities between federal and state positions.	Establishes the loss of mandate for any citizen who accepts a function or job in the government or administration of the states.
Law No. 35 of January 26 th , 1892	Establishes the process for the federal elections [...]	After the Alvim Regulation, this can be considered as the first electoral Law for ordinary elections, remaining in force until the electoral law of 1904.
Decree No. 760 of March 16 th , 1892	Approves the instructions for execution of arts. 59 and 60 of law No. 35 of January 26 th , 1892.	Defines the rules for replacing representatives in the case of death or resignations.
Law No. 69 of August 1 st , 1892	Alters the provisions of Article 3 of Law No. 35 of January 26 th , 1892.	Amends voter registration.
Law No. 85 of September 20 th , 1892	Establishes the municipal organization of the Federal District.	Regulates the elections in the Federal District, defines the functions of the municipal Executive and Legislative branches, the powers of the prosecutors and municipal guards and judicial attributions.
Decree No. 153 of August 3 rd , 1893	Divides the States of the Federation into electoral districts, according to Article 36 of Law No. 35, of January 26 th , 1892.	Divides the states into districts and clarifies which municipalities are part of them.
Decree No. 1,542 of September 1 st , 1893	Approves the instructions for the federal elections to be held on October 30 th .	Defines the number of deputies per state and other rules on registration, the work of polling stations and the counting of votes.
Decree No.184 of September 23 rd , 1893	Adds measures regarding the federal elections of October 30 th of this year, for members of the National Congress, and March 1 st next year, for president and vice-president of the Republic.	Defines rules on voter registration.





(Continuation)

Legislation	Title	Comments
Decree No. 1,574 of October 20 th , 1893	Postpones the elections of deputies and senators to the National Congress.	As a result of the Federalist Revolution, postpones the elections of deputies and senators.
Decree No. 1,608 of December 15 th , 1893	Postpones the elections of deputies and senators to the National Congress.	Postpones the elections to the National Congress to March 1 st for the positions of federal deputies and senators.
Decree No. 1,668 February 7 th , 1894	Gives instructions for the election of president and vice-president of the Republic, and consolidates the current provisions regarding the federal elections.	Attached electoral instructions for the elections set for March 1 st , 1894.
Law No. 248 of December 15 th , 1894	Amends the provisions of Article 7 relating to the organization of the Municipal Council of the Federal District and regulates the process for the elections referred to in Article 83 of Law No. 85 of September 20 th , 1892.	Regulates the election of the Municipal Council of the Federal District.
Law No. 342 of December 2 nd , 1895	Reduces to three months the period established in the sole paragraph of Article 30 of Law No. 35 of January 26 th , 1892, for the duration of the incompatibilities, defined in the above-mentioned article, and revokes Law No. 28 of January 8 th , 1892.	Reduces the period for senators and federal deputies to run for representative positions.
Law No. 347 of December 7 th , 1895	Regulates the vote counting process in the election for the positions of president and vice-president of the Republic.	Defines the rules for vote counting in elections observing the provisions of Law No. 35/1892.
Law No. 426 of December 7 th , 1896	Orders that the following be observed, in federal elections: the provisions of Article 6 of Law No. 246, of December 15 th , 1894, whenever the case envisaged in paragraph 2 or Article 43 of Law No. 35 of January 26 th , 1892, arises, and makes other provisions.	Norms regarding the composition of electoral boards, registration, supervisors in electoral sections.
Decree No. 380 of August 22 nd , 1896	Sets the date on which the ordinary election for the positions of deputy and senator to the National Congress should be held.	Sets the election of deputies and senators for December 3 rd of the last year of the legislature.
Decree No. 2,693 of November 27 th , 1897	Gives instructions for the election of president and vice-president of the Republic.	Attached electoral instructions for the elections set for March 1 st , 1897.
Decree No. 620 of October 11 th , 1890	Establishes the date of the election for deputies and for the renewal of one third of the Senate, and makes other provisions.	Sets for December 31 st , 1899, the elections for deputies and senators.
Decree No. 3,459 of October 28 th , 1899	Gives instructions for the federal elections to be held on December 31 st of this year.	Attached electoral instructions for the elections for deputies and senators.
Decree No. 4,177 of September 28 th , 1901	Gives instructions for the election of the president and vice-president of the Republic.	Attached electoral instructions for the elections set for March 1 st , 1902.
Decree No. 4,616 of October 28 th , 1902	Gives instructions for the federal elections to be held on December 28 th of this year.	Attached electoral instructions for the elections for deputies and senators.
Decree No. 4,686 of November 26 th , 1902	Designates February 18 th of next year for the election of the vice-president of the Republic, in the presidential period from 1902 to 1906.	Sets February 18 th , 1903, for the election.
Decree No. 917 of December 9 th , 1902	Postpones the federal elections to be held on the 28 th of this month to February 18 th .	Postpones elections of deputies and senators to February
Decree No. 4,695 of December 11 th , 1902	Gives instructions for the election of vice-president of the Republic in the presidential period from 1902 to 1906, and for the federal elections to be held on February 18 th .	Attached electoral instructions for the elections for deputies, senators and the vice-president of the Republic.
Law No.1,269 of November 15 th , 1904	Reforms electoral legislation, and makes other provisions.	Became known as the Rosa e Silva law, after the senator from Pernambuco State who organized a broad electoral reform in the National Congress. Replaces Law No. 35/1892.
Decree No. 5,160 of March 8 th , 1904	Approves the consolidation of the federal laws on the municipal organization of the Federal District.	Chapter VI deals with the election of the Municipal Council, and also establishes rules on electoral matters.
Law No. 1,269 of November 15 th , 1904	Reforms electoral legislation and makes other provisions.	Became known as the Rosa e Silva Law, after the senator from Pernambuco State who organized a broad electoral reform in the National Congress. Replaces Law No. 35/1892.



(Continuation)

Legislation	Title	Comments
Decree No. 5,453 of February 6 th , 1905	Give instructions for the federal elections, in accordance with Law No. 1,269 of November 15 th , 1904.	Instructions in accordance with Rosa e Silva Law.
Decree No. 1,425 of November 27 th , 1905	Divides the territory of the Republic into electoral districts.	Reorganizes the district division following the approval of the Rosa e Silva Law.
Decree No. 1,619-a of December 31 st , 1906	Postpones to the last Sunday of March 1907 the elections due to be held on the last Sunday of October of the current year, for the establishment of the Municipal Council of the Federal District and makes other provisions regarding the process of the same elections and the issuing of voter registration cards.	Elections for the Municipal Council of the Federal District.
Decree No. 6,321 of January 10 th , 1907	Gives instructions for the issue and delivery of new voting cards to voters in the Federal District, in accordance with Legislative decree No. 1,619 A of December 31 st , 1906 [...]	Instructions for the issue and delivery of new voting cards to the voters of the Federal District, with the cards previously issued becoming invalid.
Decree No. 2,419 of July 11 th , 1911	Prescribes cases of ineligibility for the National Congress and for the presidency and vice-presidency of the Republic, and amends some of the provisions of the current electoral law.	Defines the cases of ineligibility, the deadlines for ending the holding of the position or public post and other measures inherent to the electoral process (composition of the electoral boards and registration).
Law No. 3,139 of August 2 nd , 1916	Prescribes how voter registration must be carried out and makes other provisions.	Defines the rules for voter registration, providing for greater influence for the Judiciary Branch.
Decree No. 12,193 of September 6 th , 1916	Provides regulations for the execution of Law No. 3,139 of August 2 nd , 1916, on voter registration.	Regulates voter registration in accordance with Law No. 3,139 of August 2 nd , 1916.
Law No. 3,208 of December 27 th , 1916	Regulates the electoral process and makes other provisions.	The new electoral law reforms the Rosa e Silva Law of 1904. Its importance is associated with greater influence on the electoral process of the Judiciary Branch.
Decree No. 12,391 of February 7 th , 1917	Gives instructions for the execution of Law No. 3,208 of December 27 th , 1916, on federal elections.	Instructions for the federal elections, regarding the functioning of the electoral boards and counting of votes.
Decree No. 3,424 of December 19 th , 1917	Postpones until March 1 st , 1918, the elections for the renewal of the Chamber of Deputies and one third of the Senate, and makes other provisions.	The election for deputies and senators of the National Congress set to take place on the first Sunday of February is postponed until March 1 st .
Decree No. 4,215 of December 20 th , 1920	Amends the current electoral legislation.	Norms regarding the electoral process, with particular attention to the Federal District.
Decree No. 4,226 of December 30 th , 1920	Amends the legislation on voter registration, and makes other provisions.	Establishes permanent voter registration.
Decree No. 14,631 of January 19 th , 1921	Gives new instructions for the federal elections.	Rules on the electoral process, abolishes municipalities in electoral districts, clarifies the conditions of ineligibility and establishes penalties for electoral crimes.
Decree No. 5,271 of October 4 th , 1927	Provides for the chairmanship of electoral boards and makes other provisions regarding the establishment of the Municipal Council of the Federal District.	Rules for running for the chairmanship of the electoral boards and numbers of votes to which the voter is entitled.



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ELECTIONS IN BRAZIL'S FIRST REPUBLIC 1889 ~ 1930



Years ago, the political scientist Jairo Nicolau wrote that few countries have an electoral history as rich (Nicolau, 2012, page 7). This book reveals to the broad audience of readers the complex history of the federal elections during the period of the First Republic (1889-1930). Even nowadays, it remains mostly known for being a period dominated by the rule of the so-called colonels (named *coronelismo* in Portuguese) and its consequences for the system of political representation of those times, particularly voter coercion by political bosses who aimed to manufacture false electoral results.

Gathered together by a common interest in revealing the complexity of the electoral history during the First Republic, going beyond the usual field of the rule of the colonels and electoral fraud, the authors of the chapters that follow have engaged in multidisciplinary collaboration to shed light on forgotten aspects; they reconstruct the contests behind the naming of presidential candidates; they recall the central role of political parties in organizing federal elections; they present the electoral rules as tools that linked power relationships, and the politicians themselves as political entrepreneurs. The final product of the work is the sketching of a new view of the set of actors who took part in the First Republic elections.

The book has two parts. The first part deals with broader issues, such as electoral rules, including those that established the electoral calendar (Jaqueline Porto Zulini). This item also includes the process of voting and counting the results of the elections to the National Congress, partly regulated by the internal rules of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate (Jaqueline Porto Zulini and Paolo Ricci). Another chapter focuses on the careers of elected senators, whose trajectories reveal how politicians sought to make careers out of joining political parties, even though the law did not oblige them to join a party to stand for election (Lucas Massimo). Another pattern emerges from reflecting on the electoral results of the contests for the Chamber of Deputies. In line with a recent comparative debate, electoral fraud may be thought of not only as an expression of the violation of certain individual rights, but as a mirror of the competition for controlling the local electoral bureaucracy (Paolo Ricci).

Ministro Luís Roberto Barroso
Presidente do Tribunal Superior Eleitoral



Apoio

Realização

