

[Latin American Studies Association \(LASA\)](#)

Federalism and citizenship in the republican press (1870-1889)¹

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Prepared for delivery at the 2010 Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Toronto, Canada October 6-9, 2010.

Abstract:

This is a study about the political culture shared by the republicans in the context of propaganda, that is, in the period when their projects were divulged with the aim of establishing the Republic in Brazil. For the purposes of this article, our main source was the most important manifesto published by the movement in Rio de Janeiro, which at the time was the capital of Brazil – the 1870 Manifesto – and we analysed republican periodicals that circulated in the province of Minas Gerais, especially the newspaper “O Movimento” [The Movement], which circulated throughout the province.

Key words: republicanism, political culture, the press.

The inauguration of the Brazilian republican regime, which took place at the end of 1889, was accompanied by the establishment of federalism and by discussions regarding the need to extend citizenship. The country was going through a period of modernisation, which, according to Bendix, is understood as a set of social and political changes which went with industrialisation. During this process extension of public authority and citizenship took place. The advent of citizenship came about from the rupture of paternalistic relationships, as a result of the proliferation of social protests (BENDIX, 196, p.39).

According to this author, as regards the European experience, the traditional paternalistic system had also been broken by two revolutions: one political one (the French Revolution) and one economic one (the Industrial Revolution in England). Although the trajectories of France and England were the exception rather than the rule – even in the heart of Eastern Europe itself – the transformations that took place, both cultural and technological, spread gradually to most nations, by means of diverse

¹ This study is one of the results of research financed by the CNPq [Brazilian National Research Council] and Fapemig [Foundation for Support to Research in Minas Gerais].

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mechanisms, even among those that had not experienced revolutions with the impact of those mentioned (BENDIX, 196, p.91, 104 and 324). In this way appeals for citizenship also arose in adverse environments, in places where historical circumstances would not have engendered them.

This was the case of countries that were late to embrace technological development. We need to have a more specific understanding of the trajectories of these countries so that they are not seen as lagging behind in the fulfilment of transitory stages towards an ideal type of development, which will never be repeated in the same way as it was in the more prosperous nations. Their peculiarities should be taken into account.

Brazil falls into this category. Its process of modernisation took place inspired by the European experiences of change allied to its most consolidated traditions. Therefore, to understand Brazilian modernisation implies not only linking it to the European or North American context, but equally taking into account its own traditions.

Based on the announced prerogatives, we believe that the process of construction of citizenship, which took place in parallel with the expansion of the National State in Brazil, should be analyzed in the light of its own political trajectory, without disregarding the relationships and cultural interchanges with previous experiences. Likewise, we do not believe that the best way is that marked by an evolutionistic tone, that is, based on the assessment of its distance from or proximity to the French, British, or even the United States model. If this were the case, this process of modernisation could only be understood through the lens of absence: absence of people, absence of wealth, absence of citizenship, of nation, among others.

We understand that Brazil, at the end of the 19th Century, had many of its traditions shaken by the introduction of two specific changes: the abolition of slavery and the republican regime. Both these events provided conditions for the process of modernization to get under way in Brazil. The abolition of slavery made it possible to construct citizenship and the Republic, established from the diffusion and consolidation of liberal principles, enabled the expansion of public authority, as a result of the extension of political rights.

It is a well-known fact that the more one increases the number of people's rights, the more the intervention of the State in society increases (QUIRINO, 1987, p.31). From the abolition of slavery and the introduction of the republican regime onwards, the instruments of enlargement of political liberties were formally systemised, and the civil liberties provided for in the 1822 Letter were maintained, with slight modifications. And federalism gave rise to the expansion and decentralisation of political authority. We believe that this combination of widening of political rights and decentralisation provided the country with the basic requirements for its modernisation.

Based on the perspective outlined above, we intend to study how it was that paternalistic relationships, which had existed since the earliest Brazilian political traditions, came to co-exist with the ideals of modernity that deferred to values such as those of citizenship, democracy, freedom, and equality, among others, which were already consolidated in Europe. Through the study of republicanism we intend, in this text, to sketch a little of the republican political culture constructed by the main political actors of the period, focusing on the relationship that they proposed between the State and civil society.

We will attempt to analyse the different projects of Republic proposed by the main leaderships that made up the republican propaganda, focusing on the expansion of public authority – the increase of the institutional ostentation of the State – and of citizenship – the proposition of channels of inter-relationships between authority and

civil society – in the context of the modernisation of Brazil. We will do this by means of the analysis of part of the republican press.

Based on the *Bill of Rights* – promulgated by the British Parliament in 1689, and later taken up by the United States in their independence and by France in the context of the revolution – it was the responsibility of the State to correct natural inequalities among men, passing laws to guarantee principles that would ensure citizens' rights (QUIRINO, 1987, p.28). Influenced by the French and American experiences, which led to two different models of Republic, the Brazilian republicans had to make several choices.

As well as the concern of the most prominent political actors of the time with the best way to make the new regime institutionally feasible, from their observation of the historical experiences that served as reference to them, at least two theoretical projects could, in principle, be seen as relevant; that of the republican tradition that went back to the time of Machiavelli, the emphasis of which was found in the power of the community, that is to say that collectivity was seen as the bearer of civic virtue; and that of liberal tradition, which emphasised individual rights and saw the upholding of these as the path that might lead to the inclusion of the people in the project of the nation that was being outlined at that time (PUTNAM, 2002, p.101).

Based on Richard Morse (MORSE, 1988) we can assert that Brazilian traditions pointed towards emphasis on integration, since they were inherited from Iberian Thomism. But we cannot disregard the importance that the experience of the United States had on national traditions and the impact that the liberal Anglo-Saxon culture always had on them.

Faced with this range of opportunities, it becomes discernible that the inclination of the republicans was that changes should occur only in the sphere of politics, giving special treatment to parliamentary debates and decisions.

When we take into account the discussions held throughout the republican propaganda in Brazil, we can identify two theoretical streams that served as a horizon for their main actors: the French one and the American one (MATTEUCCI, 1986, p.1109). The French model had two different lines: a Republic in a more conservative tone, the positivist one, and one in a more radical tone, the Jacobite one (CARVALHO, J.M., 1990, p.22). According to the historiography already produced on this subject, the most prominent Brazilian intellectuals followed one of these models. Special mention is made here of the impact made on Brazil by the experience of the United States especially, as regards the proposal of adapting the French model to territories of large dimensions, which came about through federalism.

However, according to the available analysis, none of these proposed models won the day. So a Republic was built that was not a military dictatorship (the positivist model), did not include the people (the Jacobite model) and established an unequal federalism (the American model). The Republic in Brazil has been studied based on its distortions with regard to its original foundation stones.

This study aims to focus on this theme in a different way. Based on the above-mentioned assumption that the process of modernisation in Brazil was constructed based on the permanence of paternalism – which was gradually influenced by the emergence of European and American thinkers, who announced the need to break with this model – this text aims to analyse the proposals of the republicans not as deviations or distortions compared to the original external milestones. We intend to understand the logic of the propositions of the most prominent actors, based on their own historical references, both in the field of political cultures shared by them and in that of the historical events experienced by that generation at that time.

As well as analysing the available models, there were significant historical contributions about the different theoretical landmarks that the so-called generation of 1870 had contact with. Positivism, doctrinary liberalism and evolutionism were the best-known doctrines that influenced Brazilian thinkers of that time.

According to studies by Astor Diehl, the scientific approach proliferated in the academic milieu, through the divulgation of the theories of Darwin, Taine, Comte and Renan, among others: eclecticism, positivism and evolutionism. But these thinkers had confused

... the originality of the history of Brazil with the European theoretical-methodological novelties. These forms were not subjected to critical treatment, they were adapted not always to the interpretation of historical reality, but to create a legitimizing history for political stances, for social groups or for the State itself (DIEHL, 198, p.94).

The Brazilian Monarchy itself, attempting to differentiate itself from the other Latin Republics, encouraged an approximation to the European models of scientificity, civility and intellectuality. In her study on the racial question at the time, Schwarcz also criticises this supposed scientificity, because, according to the author, the main theorists in Brazil only had access to manuals and diffuse works from Europe: compilations which did not always maintain the integrity of the originals. Nevertheless, they felt that they were wise, and in this feeling they had the support of the Emperor, who saw himself as a scientist (SCHWARCZ, 1993, p.31).

According to this author, the intellectual panorama in Brazil at the end of the 19th Century had become more diversified with regard to the past, in that the Law School of São Paulo had followed a more liberal line and the School of Recife had moved closer to social Darwinism (SCHWARCZ, 193, p.25).

Both institutions had been set up in 1828, but about forty years later they were quite different in theoretical terms. The Recife one, whose theorist of greatest expression was Tobias Barreto, was more drawn to the study of the German philosophers and social Darwinists, and the São Paulo one addressed itself less to philosophical discussions and acted more as a forming body for political staff for the country (GRINBERG, K., 2001, p.17 and 18).

As well as these studies which focused more on the political and cultural thought of the generation of 1870, there is also a range of studies on how the political movement of the republican propaganda was processed, in which many of the intellectuals formed in this milieu took part.

For many years studies on the republican propaganda in Brazil were not only few in number, but were also regionalised. We highlight studies on the republican movement in the state of São Paulo (CASALECCHI, 1987), in the state of Rio de Janeiro (FERREIRA, 1989) and in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (LOVE, 1975). Despite the fact that the monarchic regime was centralized, those historians that studied the final phase of the regime, with the aim of studying the origin of federalism, had a tendency to approach the theme from the point of view of each state, probably influenced by what happened after 1889.

This perspective has begun to change recently, since the publication of works which discuss the republican thinking in Brazil from new viewpoints, such as the attempt to link republican thinking to the political interests and practices of its main protagonists (ALONSO, A., 2002, p.35) and to the popular cultural references that

existed at the time, on which the theories of the generation of 1870 were based (MELLO, M.T.C. de, 2007, p.12). As there are still few such works, to study the republican movement from a nationwide viewpoint is a challenge that has yet to be surmounted, to which we wish to contribute.

Thus, this article aims to identify, from the material produced by the main political actors involved in the propaganda, what political cultures they shared. Inspired by the European theoreticians and by the known republican historical experiences, what choices they made from the different appropriations made from the speeches available. We know that the republican movement was made up of diverse social groups: young military officers, journalists, teachers, doctors, coffee growers and graduates who devoted themselves professionally to politics. Each group had a different set of interests. To relate these interests to different projects of Republic will provide a re-reading of the period, contributing toward new answers to questions that are still open. Thus we believe we will obtain original results, not only because of the break with a quite regionalised view of the republican movement but also because we propose a re-reading of the process of construction of the political cultures inaugurated or re-invented based on the republican movement in Brazil.

We think that the best way to understand the political cultures shared by the architects of the Brazilian Republic is to gain access to the consensuses produced by them, which can usually be found in their party texts or in their official press, that is, the newspapers that functioned as official organs of the republican parties. For the purpose of this study we set out the following priorities: firstly the analysis of the most important republican manifesto, regarded as a foundation stone of the propagandist movement. Secondly, we analyse the republican press of Minas Gerais, with special emphasis on one of the most important republican newspapers of the province, “O Movimento” [The Movement], an organ of the Republican Party of Minas Gerais. In both of these sets of documents we will be mindful of the attainment of the above-mentioned aims.

The Republic in the 1870 Manifesto³

The Republican Manifesto was first published in the newspaper “A República”, on 3rd December 1870, with the purpose of founding a nationwide republican party. Of unknown authorship, it was signed by fifty-eight supporters.

It is important to start any analysis with its signatories. The professions of forty-eight of the fifty-eight signatories were recorded. Taking into consideration the fact that some signatures were accompanied by two professions, we have the following table:

PROFESSION	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Lawyers	15	21.73
Medical Doctors	9	13.04
Businessmen/Capitalists and Landowners	9	13.04
Politicians	8	11.59
Journalists	8	11.59
Engineers	5	7.24
Civil Servants	3	4.34
Teachers	2	2.89

³ The Republican Manifesto of 1870. In: PESSOA, Reynaldo C. *A idéia republicana no Brasil através dos documentos*. São Paulo: Alfa-ômega, 1973, p. 39 to 62.

No data	10	14.49
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As can be seen, the great majority of signatories belonged to the intellectual elite of the Empire, since they were bearers of rare titles of higher education that existed at that time in Brazil. The productive sector was also represented even though to a lesser degree than those connected with the service sector. The large number of lawyers can be explained not only because graduation in law was one of the few existing courses in the country, but also because our elite has for time immemorial been acknowledgedly made up of law graduates (VENÂNCIO FILHO, 1982 and ADORNO, 1988). Even though there was no higher education course in journalism, many of those who called themselves journalists were either law graduates or self-taught. So they belonged to a literate minority of opinion formers.

This may be why the manifesto alluded so much to the existence of a public opinion which was favourable to the proposals of change. There is no reference in the text to who formed this opinion or how it appeared. It was an abstract being, as if it were the expression of a national consensus (p.41 and 43).

We can thus see a strategy chosen by the authors of the manifesto to make themselves heard: that of being the spokesmen of a national aspiration, of a collective will, of a political culture shared by most of the nation. In the effort to avoid the stigma of being called unruly, revolutionary, utopians or outsiders, the signatories, who were militants of the republican cause, looked for the legitimisation of their proposals in the history of Brazil by reinforcing their links with tradition and not with modernity. For this reason, they claimed to be the bearers of legitimacy because they could express a public opinion that dated from the past of the nation.

For this purpose they ended up interpreting earlier events in a very biased manner. For them, the nation had been betrayed after independence in 1822. Only the form had been changed, through the replacement of one ruler by another, but the essence of the regime of colonial domination had been maintained. Therefore the republicans saw the establishment of the Republic as the real manifestation of freeing Brazil from the Portuguese yoke and not the events of 1822 (p.42).

For the republicans, at the moment of independence dynastic interests took precedence over national interests and the democratic ideals of the Brazilian people had been spurned. The abdication of Pedro I, on 7th April 1831, was read as a possibility of recovering the national sovereignty that had been lost. The regency period which followed his abdication was seen as a genuine expression of the most democratic interests of the nation. But the end of the regency period meant the end of Brazilians' dreams of becoming a free nation. According to the new interpreters of Brazilian History, our institutions were not strong enough to ensure the advance of democracy. The changes made in the law ended up restricting individual freedom and the sovereignty of the people was reduced to naught (p.44 and 45).

In the text the nation is presented as being in constant danger, with the republicans having the mission of saving it. The prospect in fact was one of moral decadence, economic disorder and lack of administrative organisation. Two paths were therefore indicated for the future: either total regeneration or the decline of freedom. This fact was further aggravated by the action of the ruler, who did not treat his subjects as equals, but discriminated against them on the grounds of race, intellectual level and social position (p.41 and 42).

In its attempts at legitimisation the text also displays its concern to confer legitimacy on its authors. To do this it makes reference to several important figures in the Empire, highlighting their criticisms and complaints with regard to the regime in

force. It quotes countless politicians not linked to the movement but who expressed their discontent with the Monarchy. It makes reference to the non-republican press and to the criticisms published by the newspapers of the problems they claimed to be crucial for the regime (p.48 to 52). They thus attempted to not appear as a lone voice in the wilderness but as bearers of a collectively accepted project.

The basis of the manifesto is the criticism of the monarchic regime. And there are so many criticisms that in the end the clear impression we have is that the document has very few proposals. The most obvious target is the moderating power. The fourth power is criticised by the republicans not because of its adoption, but because of the control that it exerts on the other powers. With it there was no national representation, individual freedom or free manifestation of the will of the citizens. In other words, it made democracy non-existent. The nation had become militarised, the Civil Service had become dependent and sovereignty an illusion (p.46 and 47). In this way, the criticism of the concentration of powers by the monarch is exhaustively repeated. The power wielded is assessed as omnipotent, perpetual and above the law and people's opinion (p.41).

Even though the appraisal of the conjuncture contained references to the absolute character of the power wielded by the Emperor, what appears in the text as the main target to be censured was the falsifying of the democratic institutions by the appointed powers. Thus, rather than absolute, despotic, or authoritarian – adjectives used by the signatories, referring to the monarchy – the Empire was false, corrupt and vitiated. What are most vehemently condemned are the sophisms of the exercise of power, the falsifying of the democratic institutions, the proliferation of corruption, personal favouritism, among other blemishes. The republicans felt they had been deceived and betrayed by the Emperor, rather than victimized by his violence, which would explain the epithet “absolutist” that they used when referring to the ruler or the regime.

So civil and political freedom, provided for in the 1824 Constitution, were seen by the signatories of the manifesto as sophisms, in that they did not work in practice (p.42). Economic freedom was falsified by a restrictive legislation; the freedom of the press was curtailed by the censorship of the civil servants; freedom of association was subject to the authorisation of the Emperor; freedom of education was limited by the official monopoly of schools; individual freedom was violated by preventive custody, by the imposition of military service and by the limited working of the institution of *habeas corpus*. These were clear manifestations of the falsifying of the democratic institutions announced in the Letter of 1824 (p.47).

In face of this, especially since the Monarchy was acknowledged to be a pacifically-minded government, the strategy for change consisted less of revolution and more of reform. What was intended – and in fact this is the only concrete proposal that exists in the manifesto – was to summon a constituent assembly to give the country a new *magna carta*. That is, the proposal was to carry out an institutional change of a reformist nature, which would take effect based on three prerogatives: persuasion by the word, moral revolution, and the implementation of changes in legal procedures (p.40 and 60).

A text must also be read according to its omissions. When we read it we discern a document contaminated with conservatism, even though it proposed some changes. This conservatism is seen through its omission as regards the more serious problems the nation faced at the time, that is, the issue of slavery. For a movement which was taking its first steps, the bearer of an emergent political culture, but a minority one, it suited them to bring together the greatest possible number of followers, forgoing, as a strategy

to conquer this space, the possibility of touching on controversial questions, which could keep away from the movement a group that had great influence: the landowning elite. The abolition of slavery was not a consensus; the Republic, even less so. To include these would be to risk losing everything. That is how such an important omission can be justified.

Another theme that appears very little in the manifesto is the laicisation of the State, which was demanded by a dynamic sector of the republican movement, that of the positivists. There is only one reference to the privileges enjoyed by a certain sector of the Church, which was in detriment to the freedom of conscience (p.47). The proposition of religious freedom or the separation of the State and the Church, one of the premises most emphasised by the bases of the movement, was kept out of the manifesto. Once again, we see this omission as a careful strategy of the republicans so as not to keep the Catholics and their leaderships away from the movement, since they were important to make up a dominant public opinion.

As well as the convocation of a new constitutional assembly, there is, however, another quite concrete proposition in the manifesto: the setting up of federalism in the American style, but which appears only at the end of it. “In Brazil, even before the idea of democracy, Mother Nature took it upon herself to establish the federative principle” (p.53). By this the signatories of the 1870 manifesto alleged that the geographical conditions of the country pointed to the convenience of de-centralisation of power. The centralisation of a nation that is so diversified in its geography was seen as an artificial element imposed on our trajectory, because since colonial times the metropolis had acted through the establishment of local de-centralised powers. By federalism they understood simply provincial autonomy. The absence of this implied despotism (p.55).

Finally, the motto “We are from America and want to be Americans” (p.60) associated the monarchy with Europe and held up the regime as an eccentricity in the American continent. The continuance of the Monarchy would lead to difficult relationships with our neighbours, isolating Brazil from our sister nations.

From what we have seen here, we would like to reflect on how this republican political culture was made up. Where did the concepts come from which were used by the people at that time? In the text we find only one reference to a foreign politician or intellectual. This is Leon Gambetta (p.58), a French lawyer and politician, who had strong republican ties and an outstanding participation in the consolidation of the Third French Republic. His acknowledged importance for the formulation of a republican constitution, even among a majority that was committed to the Monarchy, served as inspiration for the Brazilian republicans, in that this was the path they aimed at for Brazil.

As well as the reference to republican France, two other concepts occur frequently in the text: sovereignty and democracy. For them, democracy consisted of sovereignty of the people. And sovereignty was defined as the “collection of desires of a people” (p.59). Moreover, for the signatories of the manifesto, democracy could not coexist with Monarchy. Indeed the republicans either did not know about or omitted the possibility of the existence of a constitutional Monarchy as in England, as can be seen from the following assertion: “... the element of monarchy has no possible co-existence with the element of democracy.” (p.59). The constitutional model aimed at was that of the Third French Republic and not that of the English parliamentary Monarchy, certainly much closer to the Brazilian model in existence at the time.

The incompatibility between Monarchy and democracy derived from the hereditary character of the former, which was against the election of rulers, for them an inseparable principle of the latter: “... to accept a mixed system as a rational and

practicable system is to go beyond the limits of the absurd, because it means that human authority prevails over divine authority.” (p.57). For them, the Monarch was necessarily founded on the divine authority of the kings because it was hereditary, whereas in democracy authority was based on the people. We can therefore conclude, based on the text of the manifesto, that for its authors the opposite of Monarchy was democracy and not the Republic.

This may explain why the word “Republic” is not found very often in the manifesto. Although it is entitled “republican manifesto” and was published in a recently established newspaper which alluded to the term, the idea of republic is absent from the text. With the exception of the title, the proposed regime only appears at the end of the manifesto, in its conclusion. On the other hand, the word “democracy” is very frequent, which leads us to think that the authors of the manifesto saw it as a synonym of Republic, or that a republican regime would be the only one capable of guaranteeing democracy.

Starling and Lynch, as part of the project “Iberconceptos no Atlântico” [Iberconcepts in the Atlantic], attempted to find the origins of the terms “republic” and “republicanism” for Brazilians, in the period prior to the republican movement, that is between 1750 and 1850 (STARLING and LYNCH, 2009, p.225 to 245). The authors identify four different phases that the concepts went through. In the first phase, between 1750 and 1792, the concept of Republic was associated with the classical Roman accounts by Polybius and Cicero, that is, the idea of community directed at the common good or of government administered by sectors originating from the popular social strata. In the second phase, which goes up to the 1817 Uprising in Pernambuco, the Republic, inspired by the French Revolution, was seen as the guarantee of rule by equals. The third phase of the concept comprised the period from 1821 to 1834. In this phase the Republic was associated with the Constitutionalist Revolution of Oporto and was a synonym for democracy or elected government. In this phase the Republic was associated with the North American federalist experience, but the republicans were still shy, hiding themselves behind the acceptance of a democratic constitutional Monarchy. In the fourth phase, which began with the constitutional reform of 1834, the Republic began to be seen as a synonym of separation and, in consequence, of disorder. The authors do not move on to the next phase, that is, the one where the Republic won back its followers, who went on to regard it as the salvation for all the nation’s problems.

From the analysis that we have carried out of its founding manifesto, the term Republic, after 1870, took on the meaning of the third phase again, that is, it was associated with democracy and federalism. However, since the political scene had changed, the republicans could now express their project of change less reticently.

The manifesto was published in the capital of the Empire and had a strong repercussion on the other regions of the country. Rio de Janeiro became the main stage of the republican movement. Analysing the impact of the movement in a less central region which was more peripheral to the movement enables us to assess the real impact of this emergent political culture in the country as a whole. We will now proceed to the analysis of the republican press of the state of Minas Gerais.

The Republic in the Press of Minas Gerais

We now intend to reflect on the political values defended by the republicans of Minas Gerais in their most important vehicle of communication, the newspaper “O Movimento” [The Movement], as well as using other newspapers published in the state, but less centrally. Even though there were other republican newspapers that circulated

in Minas Gerais, “O Movimento” was the official organ of the Republican Movement of Minas Gerais and was printed in the capital of the province, as well as being circulated in several far-off places in the interior of the state. This newspaper was founded shortly before the establishment of the Republic, just like the party whose ideas it expressed. Among the newspapers we know of, it was the one with the largest circulation, 5000 copies. It worked well as an instrument of aggregation of the republicans of Minas Gerais and expressed the whole of a republican political culture shared among the Brazilian propagandists, in that it received contributions from article writers from all over the country involved with the propaganda of the new regime.

From 1850 onwards Minas Gerais had become a coffee-growing state. Most of its tax revenue came from coffee and that remained true until the middle of the twentieth Century. It was also the province that had the greatest number of slaves in Brazil, concentrated not only in the coffee-growing activity, but also in a dynamic home market economy which was responsible for supplying other provinces of the Empire with innumerable foodstuffs. The province was a political centre of undeniable importance, and supplied outstanding political staff for the monarchic regime. Despite this fact, it nurtured in its bosom a relatively strong and united republican movement, which is evident from the publication of twenty-four newspapers, and the existence of fifty-one republican clubs and sixty political parties, which had their headquarters in its one hundred and thirteen municipalities that existed in 1889.⁴

Brazilian historiography on the advent of the Republic had necessarily to link the proclamation of the republic to the abolition of slavery, since the two phenomena were contemporaneous. Despite being different processes, many of their leading militants took part in the rank and file of both movements, although there were monarchist abolitionists and republican supporters of slavery.

This link gave rise to one of the most consolidated theses to explain the advent of the Republic, that is, it had received the political support of the coffee-growers. Dissatisfied with the abolition of slavery, these entrepreneurs blamed abolition for the collapse of the productive structure of coffee. According to this analysis, the lack of a coherent policy to replace the lost labour force, to supply the promising coffee plantations, led hundreds of landowners to embrace the republican project (COSTA, E.V. da, 1991, p.273). This was claimed to be the case in Minas Gerais, a coffee-producing region, which did not receive enough immigrants to replace the workers who were freed after the abolition of slavery and whose economy suffered, indeed, a negative impact after the slaves were freed.

As most of the historiography asserts, the discontented quickly joined the republican project, either out of revenge, or as a way of obtaining some indemnification from the Empire with a view to compensate for the losses caused by abolition. The historian Francisco de Assis Barbosa goes as far as to associate the defence of federalism with the strategy of obtaining this indemnification (BARBOSA, 1960, p.99-101).

Unlike the manifesto of 1870, the association between abolition and the Republic was an intrinsic part of the discourse of the republicans in Minas Gerais, as can be seen from the quotation below, taken from a small propagandist newspaper in the south of the province of Minas Gerais:

⁴ This data was drawn up in previous research of ours, which has not yet been published, but which is in the publishing house, in the form of a chapter of a book: RESENDE, Maria E. L. de. and VILALTA, L. C. *História Provincial de Minas Gerais* [Provincial History of Minas Gerais]. Belo Horizonte: Companhia do Tempo, no date.

Democracy has conquered everyone's spirit, and the freeing of the negroes will inevitably be followed by the freeing of the whites. The dates are very close together. The independence of Brazil has not yet been achieved. Today Ipiranga is a historic lie (...). The nation demands its political independence by means of the federative republic just as it insisted on the immediate freedom of the enslaved. These two redemptions should have the same date, if in our country the will of the Nation had more strength and were not eclipsed in the conflict of personal interests...⁵

Note in this quotation positive references to abolition. The fact that this news was published one week after the approval of the Áurea Law explains the change of position as regards the omissions we mentioned in the 1870 manifesto, which was analysed earlier. When the Minas Gerais newspaper was published, the end of slavery was already a fact. There was no danger involved in the republican movement linking itself to abolition. Note also in the quotation the re-affirmation of a principle declared earlier by the manifesto: the fact that the Republic would indeed mark the independence of Brazil rather than 1822.

But abolition was not without its critics. It was not unusual to see references in the newspaper “O Movimento” to the crisis that agriculture was going through because of the negative impact that abolition had had on the regional economy. Complaints were voiced as to the mistakes made by the Emperor decreeing the end of the process without bringing in preparatory measures before it came into force. In the sphere of the republican newspapers analysed, we see the display of discontentment of the coffee-producers with the shortage of labour, the lack of availability of compensatory credit, the absence of an aggressive policy to attract immigrants, the high customs duties charged on the productive sector of the country, among other complaints. This ample space offered by the republican newspapers to the discontented landowners became a strategy to attract them to the republican cause.

But as soon as abolition was decreed, the republicans of Minas Gerais had another concern, that is, the destiny of the thousands of ex-slaves. In their opinion, the Emperor had not worried about their souls, considered by the illustrious elite of the period as “barbarous and brutish”. The newspaper published the view and recommended that various republican clubs should strive to solve this problem based on the dissemination of education for the freed slaves. It would be the responsibility of the clubs to organize evening classes, given by republicans, in order to teach them to read and write, and to complement the basic education for these sectors.

But it was not only the education of the freedmen that worried the propagandists. One of the most outstanding article writers of one of the most important republican newspapers in Minas Gerais, “O Colombo”, Júlio Barni – the author of a manual aimed at the militants of the new form of government – proposed a new policy of education for all the Brazilian people to prepare them for the coming of the Republic:

Without instruction to enlighten the citizens as to their rights, duties and real interests, people's votes will necessarily be blind; and then

⁵ Correio do Machado, Machado, 20th May 1888, p.1.

*the universal right to vote, instead of being the expression of the will of a free people, becomes an instrument of despotism.*⁶

In the same way as the 1870 manifesto indicated, the republican discourse in Minas Gerais was characterised by the display of discontentment as regards the monarchic conjuncture experienced by its main authors. Both the Emperor and the rest of the royal family were continually being put down by the propagandists. And they were not the only ones who were the butt of criticism. The Council of State, which acted as a ministerial body with executive functions, was harshly persecuted by the republicans. Propaganda was made based on denunciations, which indicated the chaos experienced by the country and the ineffectiveness of the rulers in solving the most pressing problems.

The Monarchy was also seen as an eccentricity. *“For any institution which does not adapt to the temperament and the sociological conditions of its people, is a foreign body in the social organism, which sooner or later will be expelled by it.”*⁷ It was seen as an eccentric regime, far removed from the country’s reality. This eccentricity set Brazil apart from the countries that made up the Americas, leaving the country to be submitted to the influence of the old European nations, seen by the newspaper as antiquated. Among the old nations, the one that did not fit in was France, which, together with the United States, was held to be a model of good administration.

This admiration for the American federalists and for the most prominent leaders of the French Revolution was shown through the use of pseudonyms by the article writers of Minas Gerais, who went back to the main leaders of both revolutions, the French one and the American one. Moreover, several reports were published in the Minas Gerais newspapers, all with the aim of exalting the advances they brought about. The great deed of the French was a reason for commemoration in the publications of 14th July, the date of the revolution. The example below describes one of these commemorations:

*The republic of Brazil fraternally greets her immortal sister, the patriotic and legendary France. (...) the facts that we have recorded of our political history clearly show that monarchy does not suit the Brazilian temperament, because it is corrupting, weakens people’s sentiments, dilapidates characters, and the Brazilian, patriotic as he is, aspires to independence, the lofty spirit that he can only have in a republican government, because it is responsible before the people.*⁸

Recalling the Salvationist myth alluded to by the French historian Raoul Girardet (GIRARDET, 1987, chapter 3), the republicans announced the Republic as a panacea to save the nation from all its ills:

*The republican propaganda is executing, calmly and triumphantly, its victory march throughout this wretched nationality that it is called to excite and rejuvenate. It penetrates everywhere and is received by everyone as the supreme hope and the only possible solution.*⁹

⁶ O Colombo, 7th July 1878, p.3 and 4.

⁷ O Movimento, 30th January 1889, Year I, number 2.

⁸ O Movimento, 14th July 1889, Year I, Edition 26, by Vaz de Lima.

⁹ O Colombo, Campanha, 1st February 1874.

Setting up an executioner would mean identifying his victims. The newspapers were lavish in enumerating them. The republicans of Minas Gerais claimed to be persecuted by the National Guard and the local police forces and unjustly maligned. To attract the interest of the coffee growers, they hoisted one of their most important flags: that of the reduction of taxes, siding with those who felt extorted by the tax policy of the Empire.

Those who pay for the party, those who pay for the music, are precisely those who do not dance. The productive class par excellence is the agricultural one, and the government only remembers these people to collect taxes from them. (...) Nevertheless, what agriculture has, it owes to the sun and rain. (...) who are the owners of the land? The people or the parasites? (...) who is it that should blush? You or us?¹⁰

The discourse of victimisation was completed by the association of the republicans with the condition of captives, just like the slaves, but in this case captives of the Emperor. The Monarchy appeared compared to the French *Ancien Regime*, whose absolutist tone was given by the abuses committed by the governor in the use of his moderating power. The poet Camilo de Campos expressed the feeling we are referring to very well:

<i>O Brasil suspire</i>	<i>[Brazil sighs</i>
<i>Ai que dor</i>	<i>Oh what pain</i>
<i>Sou cativo, bem cativo</i>	<i>I'm a captive, truly a captive</i>
<i>Do imperador (...)</i>	<i>Of the emperor (...)</i>
<i>Os brasileiros suspiram</i>	<i>The Brazilians sigh</i>
<i>Ai que Dor</i>	<i>Oh what Pain</i>
<i>Somos cativos</i>	<i>We are captives</i>
<i>Da filha do imperador (...)</i>	<i>Of the emperor's daughter (...)</i>
<i>Quando ficaremos</i>	<i>When will we be</i>
<i>Ai que dor</i>	<i>Oh what pain</i>
<i>Livres da família</i>	<i>Free from the family</i>
<i>Do imperador! ...¹¹</i>	<i>Of the emperor! ...]</i>

The allusions that José Murilo de Carvalho makes (CARVALHO, J.M. de. 1990, chapter 2) to the recovery that the republican movement made of the hero Tiradentes found a fertile breeding ground in Minas Gerais. After all, the province had been the main stage for the manifestation of the struggle for independence. Thus, the republicans of Minas Gerais felt themselves to be more heirs of the conspirators than other people. Moreover, the victimisation of the republican propagandists was backed up by the persecution suffered by the conspirators. They saw in the struggle against the Monarchy a way of avenging the death of the rebels of the previous century, thereby redressing the balance of justice. The Republic appeared as a new founding event of the nation. The following poem makes this redemption clear. The poet is introduced / presented as Tiradentes himself:

¹⁰ O Movimento, 3rd July 1889, Year I, number 24.

¹¹ O Movimento, 16th October 1889, Year I, Edition 38.

*(...) Cem anos fazem agora
Em que eu tentara a vitória
De libertar-te oh! Nação!
Fui preso, fui enforcado
Pela pátria esquartejado
Vendido por um irmão.*

*Hoje do alto do Empyreo
Olho o Brasil, me admiro,
Vendo tudo iluminado;
Se assim for, povo querido,
Por vós o trono abatido,
Tereis o mártir vingado. (...)*¹²

*[It's been a hundred years now
That I attempted to succeed
In freeing you, oh, Nation!
I was arrested, I was hanged
And quartered by the motherland
Sold by a brother.*

*Today from up in the heavens
I look at Brazil and am astonished
Seeing everything illuminated;
If thus it be, dear people,
That the throne is overthrown by you,
You will have avenged the martyr.]*

Recently-created municipalities in the province, which had made little or no contribution to the conspirators' movement appropriated this same memory to justify their adherence to the Republic. The republican manifesto of the city of Juiz de Fora, not founded until 1856, expressed itself thus:

*Because history says that Minas has always known how to be in the vanguard of the great political movements of our country; because the proud and dignified people of Minas, just as they tolled the death knoll, when the founder of the Empire once came near, and hastened the fall of the first dynasty, so today in this country it is they who most valiantly fight for the abolition of dynastic privilege, to claim national sovereignty and to found the United States of Brazil. Yes, precisely because it is the homeland of Felipe dos Santos, of Tiradentes and of the venerable Father Camilo de Britto, the first-born of American democracy, in Brazil; that a minority of courtiers is trying at all costs to convert it into a sordid shop counter of votes, in a base market of consciences.*¹³

¹² O Movimento, 6th August 1889, Year I, edition 29.

¹³ O Movimento, 29th August 1889, Year I, Volume 32.

As well as 14th July, the republicans also commemorated 21st April, the anniversary of the death of Tiradentes. Just as in religious processions, this date was celebrated by re-creating the martyrship of the leader, during the days before he was hanged and quartered. The stones that paved the steep streets of Ouro Preto, at that time the capital of the province, gave the scene an even more mournful aspect, increasing the suffering of the conspirators after they had been betrayed by those who opposed the project of freedom.

Through this re-construction of the past the people of Minas Gerais were presented as if they had always been republicans and as if all their struggles had been with the aim of gaining their freedom. Since they had been defeated and victimized in the past, the republicans were the new conspirators clamouring for justice in the present.

Through the republican publications of Minas Gerais we can see the construction of a new representation for the province. Minas is presented as the stage of the struggle for freedom, even though it has to use revolutionary strategy for this. The discourse of ordering and pacification which always marked references to the province were then transformed in favour of a continuous struggle for freedom. This new construction went through a re-interpretation of its own History, recovering events that had been hidden from memory, as in the case of the participation of the Mineiros in the War of the Emboabas [foreign gold prospectors], in slave uprisings, and in the Liberal Revolution of 1842. The struggle of the republicans was therefore backed up by an invented tradition of Minas Gerais, which highlighted conflict and rebellion as constituent parts of their trajectory.

One of the most important republican propagandists in Minas Gerais was Antônio Olinto dos Santos Pires. In a text written years after the movement he made a point of referring to the participation of the Mineiros in the war of the Emboabas where he emphasized the belligerent spirit of the Mineiros:

...The land seems to evaporate tumults and the water exhales riots; the gold coughs up affronts; the airs distil freedom; the clouds vomit insolence; the stars inspire disorder; the climate is the tomb of peace and the cradle of rebellion; nature is restless with herself and insurgent in there, it is like in hell. Deep thunder rolls incessantly, whence the fiery bolt of lightning falls. (...) (PIRES, 1927, p.19-20)

Olinto used a prior event to justify the reasons for the disobedience of the republicans. It was a rebellion, but a fully justifiable one, since its aim was the struggle against tyranny. In support of freedom any violent action could be fully justified.

The political ideology of the movement was also reinforced by festivities. Each republican nucleus in existence in the province organized public meetings, to which they always invited some outstanding national leader to give a speech in support of the spreading of the republican ideal. These occasions were accompanied by innumerable artistic displays, such as music and theatre.

In general, once the speech was over the demonstrators went out into the streets shouting their greetings to the Republic. Some would sing the anthem of the French revolution in French, others chanted anthems that had been composed to exalt the new regime. The festivities held on the occasion of the visit of Silva Jardim, one of the most outstanding leaders of the Republic, to Ouro Preto were described as follows by a republican newspaper:

A great crowd accompanied him to the hotel while in the square students joined in to hold the demonstration that had been announced. About 500 young men with torches and fireworks paraded along Rua Direita, in a civic march, to the sound of the Marseillaise, among enthusiastic acclaim and, after going through the main streets of Ouro Preto, made their way to the Hotel Martinelli. (...) The crowd frenetically cheered the organised republican party, the federal council and congress, the congress of the Province of Minas, Dr. Saldanha Marinho, Quintino Bocayuva, Campos Salles, Aristides Lobo, Ubaldino do Amaral and Dr. Jardim.¹⁴

We can see an effort to give the republican leaders a halo of exaltation which would help legitimise them as new leaders of the country. Thus they laid the ground for the emergence of a new political culture, the republican one. The coup which was to give foundation to the new form of government would then allow the consolidation of this new culture, which became dominant in Brazil.

The first republican convention provided in one of its articles for the holding of a referendum to choose one of the two forms of government, Monarchy or Republic. The approval of the article, which reflected a last breath of the restorers, remained forgotten, however, for many years. In the meantime the republican ideal was being reinforced and consolidated throughout the country, despite the problems that the new regime had not been able to solve. Over a hundred years later the anticipated referendum was held. The resounding defeat of the monarchists pointed to the raw and naked reality of History: the victors had been successful in transforming a minority emergent political culture into an undeniable truth.

¹⁴ O Movimento, 30th April 1889, Year I, number 15.