

COFFEE PLANTERS, POLITICS, AND DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZIL*

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Coffea brasiliae fulcrum.
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By 1920 the state of São Paulo boasted the largest coffee economy in the world and was leading Brazil's transition from export expansion to industrialization and "dependent development." The state was well on the way to becoming a showcase of socioeconomic development in Latin America. This essay explores the role played by the São Paulo coffee elite in the politics of this development process, particularly with respect to the demise of the regime known as the Old Republic in the Revolution of 1930.¹

Coffee was indeed king in the Brazilian Old Republic (1889–1930). Although the coffee economy may have accounted for no more than 16 percent of Brazil's gross domestic product (Leff 1982), it was the mainstay of the national economy. At its peak, the coffee industry generated three-fourths of Brazil's export earnings.

The phenomenal "march" of coffee in the western plateau of São Paulo after the early 1880s made that state the undisputed leader of the world's coffee economy and the dominant region in the Brazilian federation. Over a million European and Japanese migrants entered the state, providing the human resources needed for economic expansion and colonization of frontier lands. While most were encouraged to migrate and provide labor for the large *fazendas*, many brought pioneering and entrepreneurial talents essential to São Paulo's dynamism. With the help of these immigrants, São Paulo became the producer of half the

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world's coffee by the end of World War I and had taken the lead in the industrialization and urbanization of Brazil (Cano 1977).

Still at issue is the relative importance of traditional large planters and socially mobile immigrants in transforming the state. Standard accounts of early development and the onset of industrialization in São Paulo stress the role of the large Paulista coffee planters, who have often been viewed as economically predominant or monolithic or politically hegemonic (e.g., Silva 1976; Mello 1982; Dean 1969). This view implies high levels of cohesiveness, economic homogeneity, and vitality during the critical decade of the 1920s.

The evidence summarized here points in a different direction, revealing significant factionalism and cleavage within the Paulista elite during the 1920s. Complementary evidence indicates growing diversification of forms of production in the coffee economy and weaknesses in the fazenda system. Moreover, divisions and antagonisms within the Paulista elite suggest relatively serious impediments to planters' exercising economic power and political hegemony. The emergent social order in São Paulo after World War I may actually have posed a major threat to the hegemony of large coffee planters.

Explaining this hypothesis of hegemonic decay requires analyzing four aspects: first, forms of production in the coffee and general Paulista economy; second, the associational and electoral collective action of coffee growers; third, forces pushing for political realignment in the state (including the emergence of new social actors and their relationship to the official Partido Republicano Paulista and the opposition movement after 1926); and fourth, political conflict in the state prior to the Revolution of 1930. While this essay will touch on all these areas, its chief purpose is to introduce the hypothesis of hegemonic decay in a compendious manner, rather than to provide detailed evidence on each of its several components.²

THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL BACKGROUND

The Paulista transition from export-sector growth to industrialization both preceded and followed the demise of the regime known as the Old Republic in the Revolution of 1930. The relation between structural and political change—particularly the significance of the Revolution of 1930 and the role the Paulista coffee elite may have played in it—have remained surprisingly open to question.

The coincidence of the developmental transition with the revolution led by Vargas caused some observers to speak of a bourgeois revolution (Sodré 1976) against the "oligarchic," coffee-dominated agrarian social order, which is sometimes described as *feudal*. Such a perspective (which seems to agree at least in spirit with the well-known CEPAL

analysis) viewed the subsequent period as "progressive." But this characterization is not consistent with arguments about the relatively advanced capitalist nature of coffee production in São Paulo (e.g., Cardoso 1960a, 1960b, 1961) or with emergent views criticizing the limited and "dependent" forms of development observed after 1930 (Cardoso and Faletto 1979). This kind of "class analysis" of contemporary Brazilian history and political dynamics has been subsequently attacked as "economistic" by other observers (Martins 1976, 1982).

A rather different approach rejected explanations of contemporary political dynamics based on changes in modes of production. Interpreting the society of the Old Republic as "capitalist," it minimized or denied the structural significance of the Revolution of 1930 and pushed back in time (or left unanswered) the question of the origins of Brazilian capitalism. In general, Brazil's Old Republic was viewed as a regime characterized by the hegemonic leadership of Paulista planters, who in turn were seen as the agents of mature capitalism. Key elements of this interpretation of twentieth-century Brazilian history were presented early by Prado Junior (1966) and were later enriched by Oliveira (1977), Mello (1982), Silva (1976), Cano (1977), Fausto (1970), Martins (1976), Reis (1979), and others. North American scholars appearing to share that perspective to some degree were Dean (1969) and Love (1980).

If planters and related export elites tend to be perceived as bourgeois within this perspective, the large fazenda coffee economy is portrayed as the fountainhead of industry. The export economy is conceived as representing or functioning much like a single process of capital accumulation. The broader theoretical approach underlying this perspective has been referred to as "functional-capitalist" (Bresser Pereira 1984) or "ultraholism." It posits the centrality of a unitary and continuous process of accumulation and capitalist development linking the large fazenda export economy to industrial capitalism.

Given the putative absence of "contradictions" between export-sector elites and emergent industrial groups, the Revolution of 1930 was interpreted as merely a political readjustment among regional elites, one devoid of major structural meaning (Martins 1982). The view of a politically united and strong Paulista elite was essentially maintained even by those like Fausto (1970) and Love (1980), who noted its apparent incompatibility with overt intra-elite conflict, including factionalism and open conflict between planters and the dominant Partido Republicano Paulista (PRP) before October 1930.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PAULISTA COFFEE ECONOMY

What structural grounds exist to justify a reinterpretation of the dynamics of the Paulista society and economy? Various recent findings

on the changing socioeconomic structures during the Old Republic qualify the monism associated with the ultraholistic view. These findings raise questions about the allegedly universal “modern capitalist” nature of the Paulista fazenda, document the existence of important processes of differentiation within the coffee economy, and suggest major sources of development in the state other than the “big coffee” economy.

Problems of the Fazenda

Analysis of the Paulista economy in the monistic or ultraholistic approach relies on a model of expansion based on the modernity and rationality of the fazenda as a mature instrument for generating and appropriating surplus value. The allegedly mature capitalist relations of production under the *colonato* labor system, in which wages are posited as the primary link between owners and workers, are assumed to have impelled large coffee growers to respond to market opportunities.

Two facts qualify this view. *Colonos* derived real income not only from paid labor for cultivating and harvesting the coffee groves and from daily wages for various occasional tasks. They also generally had access to land where they could produce the crops and animal products required for their own subsistence. Authors such as Sallum (1982) and Souza Martins (1979) have focused on the structural complexities in the colono role to qualify the characterization of colonos as closely approximating proletarians and that of planters as pure capitalists relying on the mature extraction of surplus value. Land use by colonos entailed a dual relationship in which they operated both as wage laborers and land operators (subsistence tenants). From the planter perspective, colono land use can be viewed as involving a rent equivalent, an aspect that betrays the “landlord” nature of their role. The difference between what colonos received and the value of their labor was “rent” income. This income was market wage for all labor performed minus money actually paid in wages.

Moreover, the functionality of this arrangement, precapitalist or not, vis-à-vis the requirements of planter capital accumulation appears to have been exaggerated. Planters intended that land-use rights operate so as to reduce their wage bill and burden workers with the major share of the labor power required for reproduction. An unintended consequence was that land use eventually allowed colonos to operate as petty commodity producers by selling food surpluses for cash—a status cherished by colonos and particularly resisted by planters who were running out of unused lands. The geographic mobility of colonos often represented a search for enhanced access to land, especially in the frontier moving toward the west (Monbeig 1984). As Holloway (1980) sug-

gests, these pressures may have accounted for the explosive expansion of the Paulista export economy.

The fazenda was not able to generate a stable labor force throughout the Old Republic (see also Prado Junior 1969, 210–13). At least one-fourth of the labor force may have needed replacing every year (Bassanezi 1975), as thousands of colonos left the estates to till their own plots, engage in small-scale commerce, migrate to the cities, or repatriate. The fazenda system based on the low-wage colonato survived only because of continuous fresh flows of cheap, subsidized immigration. Continuous immigration remained a major planter demand up to the end of the Old Republic (Font 1983), confirming the importance of the labor question. The inability of the fazenda to retain a labor force among the hundreds of thousands of immigrants provides telling evidence of its shortcomings as a modern capitalist enterprise.

From Colonos to Smallholders

Another, perhaps more basic reason exists to question arguments about the economic predominance of the fazenda. By the early 1920s, nearly a third of São Paulo's coffee harvests were produced by either the same immigrants who had arrived to work on the fazendas or their descendants. This proportion increased throughout the decade with the expansion of the frontier, where immigrant smallholders comprised the majority. Official 1932 and 1934 data show that 39 and 42 percent of the coffee trees in the state were owned by foreign-born growers (Holloway 1980, chap. 6). The Instituto de Café do Estado de São Paulo reported in 1927 that 37 percent of the coffee trees in the state were on units having less than fifty thousand trees (Normano 1935, 41). The large coffee estate under the established Paulista elite, which had monopolized coffee production, was losing ground to another form of production.

This development in the Paulista economy coincided with the rush to the far west of the state made possible by the expanded state-wide railroad system (Milliet 1941; Monbeig 1984; Matos 1981; França 1960). New regions, each encompassing numerous new towns and municipalities, were named after the railroad lines penetrating them—Noroeste, Alta, Sorocabana, Araraquarense, and what later came to be called the Alta Paulista. The explosive demographic growth of São Paulo during these years occurred in the frontier regions, which soon eclipsed the older Central, Mogiana, and Paulista regions.

Accounts of the emergence of a smallholding system in São Paulo are found in Milliet (1941), Prado Junior (1969), and Holloway (1974), with Holloway providing a systematic discussion of the subject. Although views differ as to the main determinants of the ability of

immigrant colonos to gain a foothold in the coffee economy as smallholders, petty production was probably pivotal (see also Monbeig 1984). Colono families with a high ratio of labor power to family size could sell cash crops and animal products to growing markets. Planters had largely ignored these products, choosing to specialize in coffee. But with colono enterprise, the state of São Paulo, which had imported vast amounts of food during the expansion of the coffee economy, was becoming self-sufficient and even exporting some food surpluses by World War I (Cano 1977).

Available colono family budgets suggest that well-endowed households may have derived large shares of their income (in some cases more than 50 percent) from cash crops and animal products (see Font 1985b). Although this resource may have helped keep the costs of labor reproduction for the fazenda low, it allowed some colonos to save enough to become independent producers within several years of arriving in São Paulo.

Elite Differentiation

The emergence of a smallholding system in coffee production—as well as in “cereals” (the name used to refer to maize, beans, rice, and the like) and some cotton—reflected a broad process of diversification of the Paulista agrarian economy (see also Monbeig 1984). The frontier created important—perhaps essential—conditions for agrarian change. At the elite level, consolidating and selling land as well as commercial intermediating and processing (*beneficiamento*), functions linked to the frontier and smallholders’ economy, led to much differentiation according to income sources. Politics also determined smallholders’ ability to claim land, as economic and political elites got involved in land development and colonization schemes.³

Within the coffee economy, new elites linked to the alternative economy came to represent interests different from those associated with the big fazenda. The interests of the rising alternative economy—perhaps more competitive and capitalist than those of the fazenda economy—were articulated via new commercial networks centered in the city of São Paulo, with the largest intermediaries organized in the *bolsas de cereais* and *mercadorias* (cereals and commodities exchanges). The new commercial elites were often immigrants; for example, more than half of the commercial capital registered in the city of São Paulo during the late 1920s belonged to individuals born outside Brazil (Font 1985c). This emerging commercial network provided an alternate channel of access to markets and exporters to the one traditionally monopolized by *comissários*. The new network was fostered by the innovative practice among exporters (especially those from the United States) of

penetrating the interior of the state by purchasing directly from *maquinistas* (processing operators) or other low- and medium-level wholesalers.

CLEAVAGES AND NEW PATTERNS OF ELITE CONTENTION

The degree of cohesion or factionalism as such within the Paulista elite during the 1920s can be evaluated by analyzing the degree of political stability in the state and the extent to which elites agreed on or coalesced around the important issues they faced during this crucial decade. These patterns reveal intra-elite cleavages and serious scissions indicating an apparent failure to act cohesively on vital issues.

The Paulista polity underwent substantial changes during the decade. The governorship of Washington Luís Pereira de Sousa (1920–1924) provided a period of political centralization and stability marked by major forms of elite mobilization. Differentiation and even agitation were occurring well before an opposition party formed in 1926. Significantly, new planter associations that began to articulate elite concerns were formed around the turn of the decade: the Sociedade Rural Brasileira (SRB) in 1919 and the Liga Agrícola Brasileira (LAB) in 1921. The SRB and the LAB came to play contending roles in the politics of coffee. Two planter congresses were held in 1920 and 1921, new local associations proliferated throughout the state until 1923, and periodic campaigns were launched demanding various forms of protection from state and federal authorities.

São Paulo's political system seemed to be gravitating toward a polity or representational model.⁴ But just as a new president took office, a major rebellion against the national and state governments erupted in São Paulo in July 1924, creating an altered polity as part of its aftermath. While the rebellion centered on the military, some members of the local elite—among them the owner and publisher of *O Estado de São Paulo* and the president of the Associação Commercial de São Paulo (ACSP)—clearly sided with the rebels. The rebels were forced to flee São Paulo after several weeks of occupation, with many continuing the struggle via the itinerant guerrilla band known as the Prestes Column. When authorities reasserted control strongly for several months after the uprising, many of the elite protested the repression and censorship. Politics in the state would never be the same.

By February 1926, many who had played active roles in the new associations or supported the 1924 rebellion helped launch the state's first opposition party, the Partido Democrático (PD). Political polarization was also reflected in intra-associational factionalism. In 1926 and 1927, internal turmoil erupted in virtually all the major elite associations in the state—including the SRB, the LAB, the ACSP, and the Associação

Comercial de Santos (ACS).⁵ These internal conflicts usually pitted a faction favoring the PD against another linked to the state government and the ruling Partido Republicano Paulista (PRP). In one such implosion within the ACSP, industrialists and allies were associated with the PRP while their adversaries were clearly linked with the PD (Dean 1969, chap. 8). In 1928 industrialists formed their own pro-PRP trade association, the Centro de Indústrias do Estado de São Paulo.

The years between 1926 and 1930 witnessed increasingly sharp party struggles involving the Partido Democrático, which represented dissatisfied elite and middle groups in the state, and the Partido Republicano Paulista. As party politics became key channels of open political contention, associations began to play a relatively circumspect representational role. But coffee issues continued to dominate the political agenda throughout the entire decade.

Social Bases and the Significance of Political Party Differentiation

Analyzing the seriousness of intra-elite conflict and the role planters played in the Revolution of 1930 requires examining debates about the contrasting social bases of the official Partido Republicano Paulista and the Partido Democrático as well as the activities of the latter from its formation in 1926 to 1930. Influential studies of the Paulista elite by Fausto (1970) and Love (1980), whose conclusions somewhat support the ultraholistic thesis, reported findings that actually challenge analyses emphasizing a monolithic and strongly cohesive Paulista elite during the Old Republic.

Boris Fausto's analysis of links between all sectors of the Paulista elite and the opposition movement that overthrew the PRP and the Old Republic in 1930 found several indicators of coffee elite discontent with the PRP. This Paulista historian articulated an important hypothesis linking the emergence of the opposition Partido Democrático in 1926 to disaffected coffee planters, pointing out their high level of representation in the party's leadership (see also Carone 1974) as well as much lower numbers of industrialists. But while recognizing the structural significance of the PD and several dissident movements within the PRP and of attacks on the government by the coffee planter congress of 1929, Fausto did not explore the full range of connections that may have existed between these events and other indicators of intra-elite conflict (for example, he largely attributed the attacks on the government to the coffee crisis of 1929). Nor did he seek additional evidence of intra-elite conflict that might have led to questioning more directly the thesis of a united Paulista elite.

Joseph Love (1980) covered the same empirical terrain as Fausto with a computer-aided study of biographies of members of the Paulista

elite. He also noted various indicators of potentially important cleavages and other evidence of intra-elite conflict.⁶ But while remaining relatively inconclusive about their meaning, the study followed the theme of a cohesive and hegemonic coffee elite.

Love also discussed various other important indications of intra-elite conflict, such as the dissatisfaction and cleavages that may have been expressed in the creation of the *Sociedade Rural Brasileira* and the *Liga Agrícola Brasileira* (1980, 221–27). The study also provided persuasive evidence about the limits of São Paulo's influence on the federal government during this period (1980, 177–99). Yet a detailed study of the interactions between these associations and the state authorities and between the associations and the PD might have provided grounds for a different interpretation.

To test Fausto's hypothesis about the agrarian elite character of the *Partido Democrático*, Love compared the social background of members of its executive committee with their counterparts in the PRP (1980, 164–66). While the PD was found to have somewhat fewer industrialists than the PRP (35 percent versus 44 percent), it was much less representative of landowners (35 percent versus 60 percent). The PD was also reported as having a higher proportion of upper-class professionals (particularly lawyers and educators). Using these data, Love qualified Fausto's hypothesis and stressed the presence of industrialists and other modern classes in the PD.

Reasons exist for questioning whether these data fully reflect planter preeminence in the PD or industrialist support for the PRP before 1930. Love's percentages are based on multiple occupations held between 1926 and 1934. Given the small numbers of cases involved (twenty-eight and twenty-six individuals, respectively), the relative estimates would probably change noticeably if shorter time periods or main occupations only were to be considered. A different picture emerges if one focuses only on members of the PD directorate before 1930—a procedure well justified by the fact that the Paulista polity changed drastically after the Revolution of 1930, when both major political tendencies in the state united in opposing the central government under Vargas. Love identified thirteen individuals in the PD directorate before 1930 (1980, 297). Of these, at least eight can be readily recognized as members of elite families whose primary income sources came from coffee agriculture: Antônio da Silva Prado, Luís Queiroz Aranha, J. J. Cardoso de Mello Netto, Paulo de Moraes Barros, Paulo Nogueira Filho, Prudente de Moraes Netto, Henrique de Souza Queiroz, and Joaquim Sampaio Vidal.⁷

Three of the remaining members of the PD executive committee on Love's list were professors at the São Paulo law school: F. Morato, Waldemar Ferreira, and L. B. Gama Cerqueira. The swelling presence in

the PD of alumni and faculty of the law school may have helped give that party a “progressive” image, but the law school was closely tied to the traditional coffee elites of São Paulo. In fact, all three of these law professors were linked to prominent coffee families by marriage, and Gama Cerqueira himself belonged to a traditional coffee family. The PD party was founded and chaired until his death in 1929 by Antônio Prado, the quintessential traditional coffee planter in the state. Lawyer F. Morato, who was naturally more involved with professionals, took the party reins in 1929 and may have been responsible for their increased representation. An additional reason for the relatively high level of professional and white-collar involvement in the PD is that from its inception that party sought alliances with various urban sectors, while the PRP was a well-established, even overconfident political organization.

My study of the 180 lists of PD supporters published in *O Estado de São Paulo* between April and December of 1926 shows that 3,474 of the 10,727 signatories (31.4 percent) identified themselves as agriculturalists.⁸ Considering the small number of planters in the population, that figure may actually represent a high level of planter participation within the party. Also, their wealth and social standing probably gave them a great deal of weight, especially in view of another estimate suggesting that at least two-thirds of the original members came from the socially amorphous category of “middle-class professionals or white-collar workers” (Love 1980, 340, n. 42). Various kinds of evidence showing that (at least before 1930) coffee planters constituted the predominant social class in the PD have been reported and analyzed in Font (1983, chaps. 5–8).

What party did industrialists support? Love minimized the importance of the differences he observed in industrialist involvement in the PD and PRP leaderships (35 percent compared with 44 percent). It should first be noted that the 9 percent difference in favor of the PRP is not insignificant. Moreover, his figures probably overestimate the extent of industrialist support for the PD and underestimate their support for the PRP.

The 35 percent figure for industrialist presence in the PD almost certainly overestimates their support prior to 1930. Of the same thirteen members in the executive committee up to that year, no one (with the possible exception of Antônio Prado) was a full-time or major industrialist. Paulo de Moraes Barros owned a textile factory, but it was not among the largest, and in any case, he considered himself primarily a planter (having been president of the SRB and the LAB). In the case of Nogueira (who later wrote the main work diagnosing the PD as “progressive bourgeois”), although his grandfather owned a textile factory and several other commercial and agrarian businesses, Nogueira was

best known as a wealthy coffee planter from Campinas. Regarding Antônio Prado, a truly consummate entrepreneur, Levi (1977) has shown that during this period Prado and his clan were in a phase of retrenching from industrial and commercial activities and reaffirming their agrarian interests.

Immigrant industrialists, particularly those of Italian origin, constituted the main fragment of the Paulista industrial class during the 1920s (see also Camargo 1952, 3:126). They did not join or support the PD, to be sure: not a single important immigrant industrialist nor any prominent immigrant was to be found in any leadership position in the PD.⁹

Immigrant industrialists shunned direct political participation at this time, perhaps in part because of perceived or real ambiguities about their national allegiances (see also Dean 1969, chap. 8). The low propensity of immigrant industrialists for occupying political positions means that their level of support for their party would be underestimated when using the procedures selected by Love.

But one may further infer the political stance of immigrant industrialists from other kinds of evidence. The alliances and interests that the PD promoted suggest that industrialists were aligned with the PRP. The PD projected a "progressive" or "leftist" image and therefore expected to draw support from the "popular" sectors and to form the mass movement deemed necessary to defeat or overthrow the PRP. Admittedly, the party was trying to harness for political purposes the still-militant Paulista workers' movement. Considering that relations between proletarian and industrialist just before 1920 had reached the level of near total conflict (Maram 1979), this strategy would corroborate the view that at least prior to 1930 the PD may have actually looked upon big industrialists (mostly immigrants) as antagonists rather than allies. Moreover, the fact that agrarian interests in the PD would seek such an alliance reveals the shortcomings of their modernization ideology. Similar conclusions have been reached elsewhere about the claims and issues addressed by the PD (Font 1983, 459–68). No record exists of any form of industrialist support for the PD before 1930, but the 1920s provide much evidence of growing collaboration and coalition among immigrant industrialists, immigrants in general, and the PRP (Font 1983, 1985c; see also Dean 1969, chap. 8).

Issues

The seriousness of the cleavages and factionalism affecting the planter class and the Paulista elite is also suggested by substantive issues and their persistence through the 1920s. The new planter organizations and the planters' movement during 1920–1924 made diverse

demands: first, for a coffee institute and a regulatory apparatus controlled by planters; second, for more government-sponsored immigration to the fazendas; third, for government credit and financing; and fourth, for more predictable government responsiveness to planter interests (Font 1983, chap. 3). These demands expressed animosity toward state politicians by protesting government insensitivity to planter interests and asking for complete government responsiveness to the coffee elite. Explicit political threats were made during the planters' congress of 1920, threats even of "Revolution, supreme refuge of the oppressed."¹⁰ How should these demands and threats be interpreted?

The planters' rhetoric, the nature of the claims, and the form in which they were made indicate that planters felt threatened rather than confident and in command. These complaints also suggest that a serious rift had already occurred between planters and state authorities.

The call for institutional mechanisms to regulate the coffee economy and coffee prices recurred after the relatively short-lived downswings in coffee prices during 1920–21, suggesting that important local factors were at play. The pressure of local competition was real and no doubt had much to do with increased levels of supply. Much of the increase in production between 1905 and 1920 came from the frontier areas, where smallholders proliferated. The growth of a smallholding system in coffee meant that the market was approaching saturation. The strains and conflicts between various producers and regions had been effectively thrust into the commercial arena, and planters and traditional coffee merchants were searching for ways to regain control of the export sector.

Government involvement in various "valorization" interventions after 1917, culminating in the creation of the Instituto de Café do Estado de São Paulo in 1924–25, placed the state government in the middle of this complex and pivotal issue. Access to the São Paulo's transportation and commercial systems emerged as continuing issues in their own right with the construction in 1923 of "regulatory warehouses" by the federal government. Because the Coffee Institute was granted extensive powers to regulate the coffee economy and establish quotas to limit shipments to the port of Santos from the interior, the government was in a position to determine the fate of regions and producers.

The Coffee Institute had become a major source of contention even before its inception. Planters cried out loudly against their lack of institutionalized control of the coffee economy and came to oppose many of the institute's policies. No more important issues were addressed during the 1920s than those pertaining to setting up this agency. The state coffee institute was created in December 1924 after the federal government, under Artur Bernardes (1922–1926), decided to abandon coffee price protection altogether. The months between late

1924 and early 1926 fatefully widened the rift between the coffee elite and political leaders, as in the already noted processes of implosion in all major elite associations, the rebellion of July 1924, and its aftermath.

The encapsulation of coffee politics by emergent fiscal interests was another issue. The Bernardes administration had earlier embarked on deflationary and other stabilization policies (see Fritsch 1983). During and after 1926, planters became resentful of even more ambitious policies for fiscal and monetary reform announced by the new president, the PRP's Washington Luís Pereira de Sousa. Planter suspicions that coffee policies reflected the priorities of the new stabilization plan were essentially correct. Monetary reform leading to the adoption of the gold standard and a new currency to be known as the *cruzeiro* was central to Washington Luís's program. It called for reducing federal deficits, achieving external balance of trade, and obtaining gold for the eventual *metalização* of the national currency. Coffee price supports were deemed essential for the stabilization plan to work. Such motives were more influential in promoting the "coffee defense" policies than was planter pressure as such (see also Fritsch 1983).

The Instituto de Café do Estado de São Paulo came under attack as a mere *repartição pública* (public or government agency) serving broader fiscal goals. Some elites even came to suspect that most of the borrowing from abroad—often done in the name of "coffee defense"—was intended to enhance the value of *milréis* rather than to protect coffee prices and planters. Planter opposition to such a policy suggests that it was adopted to maximize revenues in hard foreign currencies. Valorization, particularly the policy of seeking high coffee prices through governmental market intervention, was denounced by Antônio Prado and his allies, who feared that such a policy would lead to an even greater surplus and more competition.

FROM CLEAVAGE TO REVOLUTION

The changing patterns of elite political contention throughout the 1920s suggest increasingly serious intra-elite differentiation and conflict. Starting in 1920 and continuing during the Paulista Revolution of 1924 and its aftermath, the founding of an opposition party in 1926, and support for the revolutionary movement of 1929–1930, threats of dissidence were succeeded by a growing tide of political confrontation and, finally, a frontal attack on the Republican regime.

Paulista coffee elites were finding local politicians most intractable at a time when the planters felt great need of their allegiance and control of the policy-making apparatus. Planters had traditionally felt secure in the belief that the single-party political system and the ruling Partido Republicano Paulista would reliably protect their interests. But

now the state and federal governments were increasingly claiming operational autonomy and were seeking objectives of questionable compatibility with the interests of the "big coffee" economy (see Fritsch 1983, chap. 7).

An autonomous entrepreneurial vision of statemaking probably first appeared among state politicians and bureaucrats as a sequel to the state's involvement in large-scale projects via various valorization schemes (in 1908, 1917, and 1921), multi-million-dollar immigration programs, railroad construction, foreign debt management, and general modernization of the government apparatus (Love 1980). This stand no doubt was induced by the constraints, pressures, and resources emanating from international capital markets as well as from other external factors. But planter opposition to the pretensions of autonomy by the professional politicians and bureaucrats, whom they increasingly attacked as "dictatorial" and "oligarchical," assumes a fuller meaning in the broad context of socioeconomic and political differentiation.

The autonomizing impulses among the Paulista political elite led by Washington Luís were reinforced and made more ominous by their links to increasingly important alternative socioeconomic groups. Suspicions were aroused by the increasingly favorable state policies toward the alternative economy emerging with respect to land and regional development schemes in the New West of the state and related transportation, administrative, and demographic issues. In a critical election for control of the coffee institute in 1926, the state government succeeded in electing its own slate of growers' representatives with the votes of several thousand immigrant smallholders.¹¹ Another source of uneasiness among the coffee elite was the emerging governmental coalition with the urban-industrial economy in the state. As discussed earlier, planters were often at loggerheads with the state government while industrialists were usually supportive.

Industrialization and the alternative agrarian economy represented mutually reinforcing movements of the Paulista economy (Font 1985c). Rather than being wholly, or even primarily, an offshoot of the fazenda coffee economy, industrialization in São Paulo was strongly linked to immigrants and the alternative agrarian economy based on medium- and smallholders. The alternative agrarian economy was linked to industrialization in a fourfold sense: as a source of cheap inputs; as a source of cheap food to feed the growing urban and industrial population; as a source of capital (largely via commercial appropriation of surpluses); and as an internal market for manufactured goods. To that extent, industrialization not only signified the rise of new urban and industrial elites and classes but also fueled the expansion of the alternative smallholder economy.

Capital accumulation by commercial and financial networks out-

side the “big coffee” economy appears to have provided a significant financial resource that fueled early industrialization. Congruent with this view are three factors: the predominant role of immigrants in the new commerce and industry emerging in the state between 1900 and 1930; the commercial origin of much immigrant capital; and the emergence of the commercial metropolis of São Paulo (the major entrepôt of the alternative agrarian economy) as the main site of industrial concentration, instead of Santos or Campinas.

From that vantage point, the segmentation of the export economy reinforced and was reinforced by the development of state autonomy, urbanization, and industrialization. Combined with these developments, segmentation represented movement toward a much more competitive, complex, and dynamic society in São Paulo than that required by the *fazenda* coffee economy.

Not until 1925–26 did planters demonstrate full awareness of their need and ability to question the implications of new trends for the *fazenda*-based “agrarian destiny” of the state. Ample evidence exists of antecedents, however. Planters expressed much dissatisfaction throughout the early 1920s. The beginning of traditional elite political movements demanding political reforms became visible toward the end of World War I (just as high levels of socioeconomic differentiation were being reached). Through a campaign for political reforms carried out by *O Estado de São Paulo* and other elite publications, as well as by new political organizations like the Liga Nacionalista (founded in 1917), elites and their allies had begun to protest the incorporation of immigrants or *estrangeiros*; the focal issues were fraudulent electoral practices used in this incorporation—practices that were neither new nor unique to PRP politicians—and the rise of “political usurpers.”

This inchoate movement eventually crystallized into direct opposition to the Partido Republicano Paulista and the regime it represented. In the early years, the movement called for political reforms such as *municipalismo* (municipal autonomy) and relief from the centralization inherent in rising executive power. At the same time, the opposition movement advocated restoring influence and power to the *classes produtoras* (“big coffee” capital and its allies). The mobilization and agitation of planters within the Liga Agrícola Brasileira and the Sociedade Rural Brasileira, as well as other elites in the Associação Comercial de Santos and the Associação Comercial de São Paulo, were central to this movement.

Events of the Paulista Rebellion of 1924 support the hypothesis of brewing intra-elite conflict. While primarily a military movement, this overthrow of the state government for several weeks included a series of municipal takeovers, uprisings, and other forms of collaboration often involving the same traditional elites who previously mobilized

against the government or later participated in the Partido Democrático (Font 1983, 422–38, 448).

In this light, the emergence of the PD in 1926 represented the culmination of intra-elite associational and political differentiation.¹² Launching the PD formalized an antiregime political movement under the leadership of a dominant fraction of the traditional Paulista *fazendeiros*. Headed by Antônio Prado, the best-known traditional planter in the state, many of the party's leaders were militants of the most active planter associations of the time, the SRB and the LAB. Other key figures were Paulo de Moraes Barros (former president of both associations) and Henrique de Souza Queiroz (chief officer and future president of the SRB).

The strategy pursued by the PD between 1926 and 1930 sought to organize and politically articulate “big coffee” capital with financial, commercial, professional, and even industrial groups to which it felt closely related. Second, the PD actively sought an alliance with “popular” sectors (even the industrial proletariat) against the PRP and its alliance with immigrant commercial and industrial capital. Third, the PD actively promoted coalitions with other national forces in Rio Grande do Sul, Minas Gerais, and Rio de Janeiro that opposed the political predominance of the PRP.

Close analysis of PD speeches and programs leaves little doubt that the Partido Democrático emphasized causes and issues central to large Paulista planters. None was more actively discussed and defended than granting planters direct control of the Instituto de Café do Estado de São Paulo and its directly regulating the export economy.¹³

Another set of key issues pursued by the PD concerned the same questions of political reform and of limiting immigrant-based competition that had increasingly preoccupied some of the Paulista elite following World War I. Admittedly xenophobic, the party counted no major immigrant figure among its leaders or supporters.

Through the Partido Democrático, one can view the possible role that traditional planters played in the Revolution of 1930 in a different light. Instead of being the revolution's immediate victims (they were indeed long-term casualties), planters actually played a significant part in articulating a national movement against the Partido Republicano Paulista.

The passionate sentiments of militant coffee elites in opposing the PRP were a significant factor in the Partido Democrático's anti-PRP alliance with the political establishments of Minas and Rio Grande do Sul, the main coalition in the national opposition movement. This coalition's predecessor was the Partido Democrático Nacional formed by the alliance of the PD with the *gaúcho* Assis Brasil. The PD opposed the PRP's choice of Júlio Prestes to succeed Washington Luís as president in

1930. At this time, the PD sponsored the São Paulo visit of "Liberal" presidential candidate Getúlio Vargas.

Just as the electoral campaign got under way, the deep economic crisis of 1929 manifested itself. When the bottom fell out of the coffee market, the contradictions between monetary and "coffee defense" policies intensified. Brazilian harvests between 1925 and 1928 had been valued at an average of sixty-nine million British pounds. The crisis deflated this figure by twenty-five million pounds. Because the federal government failed to come to the defense of coffee prices, Paulista coffee planters in the LAB and the SRB organized a planters' congress in December 1929 to demand government protection (Font 1983, 598–608), but to no avail. Opting to maintain monetary stabilization policies, President Washington Luís effectively told planters that they had to face the crisis on their own. The absence of pro-planter policies in the administration was said to confirm Washington Luís's "oligarchical" rule and lack of responsiveness to "the people." In any case, strains in the government's capacity to address the mounting problems seemed to corroborate prophecies of impending doom made by PD politicians.

When Júlio Prestes won the elections of 30 March 1930, the PD continued to agitate, thus creating prerevolutionary conditions at a time when Vargas had conceded defeat and was said to have been lukewarm about the idea of further revolutionary agitation (Font 1983, 608–65). The Paulista opposition went on to play a significant, although not fully understood, role in fomenting a final revolutionary denouement to the power struggle. It continued to move frontally against the PRP—even when regionalist feelings against São Paulo surfaced, particularly in Minas. The fact that planters continued to foster a movement that by then included regional sentiments against São Paulo suggests the extent of their ill will toward the PRP.

With the success of the Revolution of 1930, the Partido Democrático moved quickly to take direct control of state government and the coffee institute. In addition to filling many state offices, the PD also managed to place planter Moraes Barros as Minister of Agriculture in the new federal administration.¹⁴ But the Paulista coffee elites found themselves opposing the revolution by early 1931. Henceforth, São Paulo as a whole would find itself grossly underrepresented in the federal government. In July 1932, the Paulista elites launched a constitutionalist rebellion against the central government.

CONCLUSION

The findings presented here suggest an interpretation of the dynamics of the Paulista export economy during the transition to industrialization that qualifies the role of the fazenda and "big coffee" capital.

Although the large fazenda coffee economy may have initiated a junkie-like process of capitalist development, the more decisive path appears to have been opened by the alternative economy related to independent small and medium producers.

At the least, one can speak of a generalized diversification of the Paulista society and economy marked by increasing competition, which probably constituted the core of São Paulo's dynamism. The precise extent to which, in this context, the fazenda may have represented a somewhat less mature form of capitalist production than is frequently argued remains an empirical question. But analyzing the colonato, as well as the dependence of the fazenda on free or low-cost public lands and continuous flows of subsidized immigration, would seem to qualify arguments about the fazenda's alleged predominance and advanced capitalist character.

Expansion of the alternative economy and realignment by political elites with respect to the authority traditionally exercised by planters were important bases for creating a broader developmentalist alliance in the state of São Paulo. In its origins and program, this new alliance challenged the traditional coffee elite. Because it included fledgling industrialists, the new alliance can be characterized as different from the coalition of traditional planters and *comissários* in being more decisively oriented toward the development of the internal economy.

It can be concluded that as far as São Paulo is concerned, the political realignment of the 1920s and the Revolution of 1930 reflected significant structural changes. In fact, political life in São Paulo in the 1920s can be seen as dominated by a planter or seigniorial reaction to restore hegemony. So impelled was this reaction by hatred for the politicians who had "usurped" power in the state that it failed to foresee that the national movement fostered to overthrow the Partido Republicano Paulista and the Old Republic would eventually turn against important economic interests of the coffee elite and end São Paulo's preeminence in Brazilian political life.

NOTES

1. The main research on which this discussion is based consists of a study of associational collective action by the Paulista coffee elites between 1920 and 1930 (described in Font 1983, 1985b, and 1985d). Utilizing procedures derived from Tilly (1978), the project generated a computerized data base extracted from newspapers and other sources. The research also produced a large file of notes and further documentation of day-by-day political conflict in the state. Details and citations have been kept to a minimum here. The author is engaged in further investigations of the subject, and final results will be reported in the near future.
2. An extensive, albeit partial and hurried, argument can be found in Font (1983). Font (1985a) discusses processes of differentiation and segmentation in the coffee economy. For an analysis of the labor system and the political behavior of laborers, see

- Font (1985b). The link between the alternative rural economy and industrialization is treated in Font (1985c).
3. For a discussion of violence and the state in the later march of coffee toward Paraná, see Foweraker (1974).
 4. See also Schwartzman (1982) on São Paulo's "representational" style.
 5. For example, on the Sociedade Rural Brasileira, see *O Estado de São Paulo* (hereafter cited as *OE*), 4 Jan. 1927, middle section, p. 3, col. 6; and *OE*, 5 Jan. 1927, middle section, p. 3, col. 9. On the Associação Comercial de Santos, see *OE*, 1 July 1926, top section, p. 3, col. 7.
 6. See Love's discussion of factionalism and dissident movements (1980, 110–18).
 7. For a somewhat different list, see Prado (1982).
 8. Samples of these lists can be found in *OE*, 24 June 1926, top section, p. 7, cols. 1–2; and *OE*, 14 Dec. 1926, middle section, p. 6, cols. 3–5.
 9. Although judging from the lists of "adherents" published by *O Estado de São Paulo*, the PD apparently attracted support from some immigrants, including self-described industrialists from some towns in the interior such as Sorocaba.
 10. For examples, see *OE*, 10 Sept. 1920, top section, p. 2, col. 5; *OE* 12 Sept. 1920, middle section, p. 4, col. 1; and *OE*, 17 Sept. 1920, top section, p. 3, col. 1.
 11. See *OE*, 14 May 1926, 22 June 1926, 23 June 1926, 14 June 1926, 26 June 1926; and *Correio Paulistano*, 22 June 1926, 23 June 1926.
 12. See also Font (1983, pt. 3). For other views on the PD, see Fausto (1970), Love (1980), and Prado (1982).
 13. See, for example, *OE*, 28 Apr. 1926, middle section, p. 6, cols. 6–7; *OE*, 6 Aug. 1926, top section, p. 6, cols. 8–9; *OE*, 10 Feb. 1927, top section, p. 7, cols. 1–9; and Font (1983, 459–65).
 14. In contrast, in its early stages the revolutionary government expressed hostility towards Paulista industrialists (see Dean 1969, chap. 10; Martins 1982).

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