



The consolidation of Governors' politics (1902)

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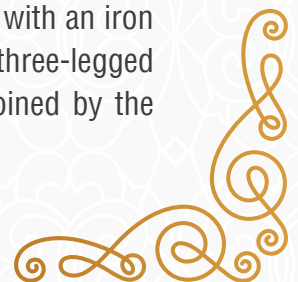
Joaquim Murtinho will be remembered, in the years that followed, for his actions as minister and his intervention in the economy. News report from *Careta* magazine of 4.10.1909, page 25.
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The election of March 1st, 1902 was the fourth presidential contest in Brazil's history. It was the third one carried out by direct voting in the 20 units of the Federation and the Federal District.

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

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

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





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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Rodrigues Alves

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

Image: collection of the Biblioteca da Presidência da República.

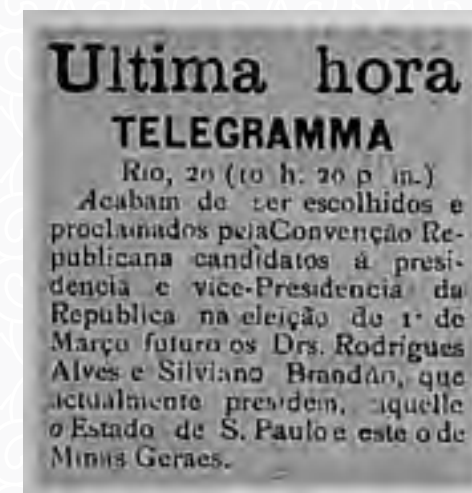


during the Empire, as president of the province, between 1887 and 1888; and as state president, between 1900 and 1902 (he would later hold this position again between 1912 and 1916). A former counselor of the Empire, he served as a deputy in the Constitutional Congress, as finance minister to both Floriano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

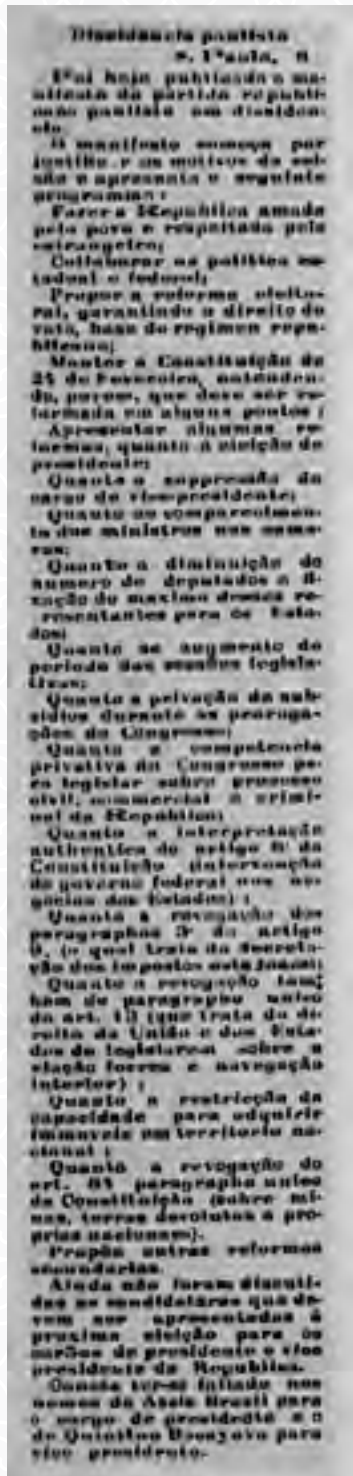
The then president of Minas Gerais, Silviano Brandão, was elected national vice-president together with Rodrigues Alves, but he died before taking office, and was replaced by Afonso Augusto Moreira Pena (1847-1909), also from Minas, elected on February 18th of the following year.

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Recommended further reading

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