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## 8 THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY

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The fall of the empire in 1889 is usually attributed to the alienation of the monarchy's three important sources of support—the Church, the planters, and the military. Conflict between Church and State, culminating in the imprisonment of the bishops of Pará and Pernambuco, tarnished the Crown's image among the general population; abolition turned the planters against the regime, encouraging them to adopt republican ideas; and the military's dissatisfaction with the government, which had grown steadily since the Paraguayan War, finally drove them, in the coup of 15 November 1889, to overthrow the monarchy and establish a republic in Brazil.<sup>1</sup>

To prove that Brazilians showed limited enthusiasm for republican ideals, historians often pointed to the insignificant numbers actually registered in the Republican party and the scarcity of Republican representatives in Parliament. In their view the proclamation of the republic was a product, not of republican sentiment and agitation, but of dissatisfaction on the part of monarchists themselves. Their complaints had discredited the monarchy so totally that a military parade was enough to overthrow the regime. This, in brief, is the argument presented by Oliveira Vianna in *O Caso do Império* (*The Fall of the Empire*), an interpretation that continues to appear in most textbooks.<sup>2</sup>

Not all historians, however, accept his version. Some feel that the monarchy, from the beginning, was an exotic plant in America; it was only by chance that a republican regime was not adopted in Brazil at the time of independence. As the revolutionary movements that developed both before and after independence proved, the republic had always been a national aspiration. It was therefore natural that the actions of the Republican party, which was founded in 1870, would ultimately bear fruit. The incompetence and the excesses of the Crown merely hastened the advent of the republic by discrediting the monarchical system.

These two explanations of the fall of the monarchy, which are some-

times combined, merely reproduce contemporary opinions about the events of November 15. Relying exclusively on eyewitness accounts, historians have endorsed the participants' perceptions of the complex process that culminated in the proclamation of the republic. Soon after that event, a monarchist and a republican version of the fall of the monarchy emerged.

The monarchists idealized the monarchy and considered the overthrow of the regime an infelicitous accident. Unable to perceive any flaws in monarchical institutions, they could not understand that the system had been undermined by growing tensions since 1870. Because of their inability to evaluate the regime, they refused to admit that the republican movement could have been based on rational demands. In their opinion the republic was the product of a military coup motivated by petty personal interests. The Republicans, an insignificant minority with no popular support, had fought against the monarchy for their own benefit. At the last minute they were joined by an unruly and discontented army and by slaveowners who resented abolition.<sup>3</sup>

The republican version was in some ways more objective, although still inexact and incomplete. For the Republicans, a change in government was the only way to eliminate the vices of the monarchical regime—abuse of the emperor's personal power, election of senators for life, excessive centralization, and electoral fraud that gave the government total control over the ballot. The republican movement had answered national aspirations; together the Republican party and the military had carried out the will of the people. Under the widespread influence of positivism, some chroniclers portrayed the monarchy as an institution condemned by history—an institution that had to give way to the republic.<sup>4</sup>

Both the republican and the monarchist accounts gave great importance to individuals in the political arena and considered their actions crucial in explaining the events that culminated in the fall of the monarchy. Benjamin Constant, Quintino Bocayuva, Silva Jardim, Deodoro da Fonseca, Floriano Peixoto, the viscount of Ouro Preto, the princess Isabel, her husband, the conde d'Eu, and the emperor Pedro II were the main actors in the historical drama. Writers took great pleasure in analyzing their ability or ineptitude, their inclinations, and their idiosyncrasies. Since monarchist and republican writers had been personally involved in the events they described, they had difficulties in understanding the process as a whole, and they drew diverse and contradictory pictures of what they witnessed.

These early versions were repeated by historians in the decades that followed the proclamation of the republic and are still to be found in

most textbooks. But after the 1930s there was a shift. Some historians began to see the fall of the monarchy in an entirely different light. Many factors combined to change this perspective. The process of urbanization and industrialization that occurred in the first three decades of the twentieth century brought new groups to the political scene. The Brazilian population doubled and the new urban middle classes and the growing urban proletariat could not be absorbed by the system of clientele and patronage that had regulated the relationship of the elites to the masses for more than a century. Although many industrialists were still linked by family to the traditional agrarian elites and continued to invest money in both the agrarian and the industrial sectors, there were many newcomers, particularly immigrants, who did not always agree with policies adopted by the government, which was controlled by the rural oligarchies. Besides the tensions between new and traditional groups, the struggle for power at the local and national levels during the First Republic (1889–1930) had caused conflict among the traditional elites themselves.

The increasing dissatisfaction of those who had no control over the state apparatus was expressed in a series of workers' strikes, middle-class conspiracies, and military uprisings. Finally the 1929 economic depression, which reduced coffee exports catastrophically, weakened the rural oligarchies that had controlled the government since 1889, and in 1930 a revolution brought new groups to power under the leadership of Getúlio Vargas. The Vargas era inaugurated a period of intense industrialization and a new political style characterized by appeals to the urban masses. When Vargas was cast out of power in 1945, his "populist" strategies were adopted by many politicians. A new ideology, growing out of the Vargas era, placed high value on economic development and social harmony, emphasizing the commonality of interests among workers, the middle classes, and the industrialists—all of whom, according to the new ideology, were interested in modernizing Brazilian society. At the same time the rural oligarchies were portrayed as conservative and "reactionary."

Thus it is not surprising that historians who wrote between 1930 and 1960—facing a new Brazil and looking at the past from a new perspective—became more attentive to economic and institutional factors and more sensitive to the political roles of socioeconomic groups.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, they offered a new interpretation of the 1889 movement, deemphasizing the personalities and anecdotes that had so impressed the early chroniclers and historians. Projecting backwards the experience of their time, they portrayed the events that led to the proclamation of the republic as confrontations between progressive and

conservative groups. And they attributed the fall of the monarchy to the inadequacy of existing institutions in the face of new social and economic realities. This was the interpretation suggested by Caio Prado, Jr., a Marxist historian, and it was endorsed by Nelson Werneck Sodré.<sup>6</sup> According to these authors, the proclamation of the republic was the result of profound economic and social transformations during the second half of the nineteenth century. Immigration, industrialization, and urbanization combined to weaken the monarchy and ignite the sparks of subversion. The most progressive groups—the middle classes and dynamic segments of the landowning elite—were eager for reforms: abolition, electoral reform, federalism, and the republic. They opposed the stagnating and backward groups, the traditional rural oligarchies who supported and were supported by the Crown. The army, identified with the interests of the middle class, had the final hand in ousting a regime that had paid little attention to the needs of important segments of the population, a regime whose institutions stood in the way of progress.

If the traditional historians had incorporated and endorsed the myths of the past and overemphasized the role of individuals in historical events, the new historians tended to portray men as puppets of impersonal historical forces. Despite this limitation, their interpretation represented an advance. It called attention to problems that had not previously been recognized. Oddly enough, however, the traditional versions continued to appear in most textbooks; Prado and Sodré's new directions were not developed.<sup>7</sup>

Both the traditional and the Marxist interpretations can of course be criticized. The newer version often reifies the historical process and projects onto the past the myths of the present; the traditional version, on the other hand, is naively voluntaristic and relies much too heavily on the myths of the past. In some way both were right and may even complement one another. Traditional historians rightly perceived the actions and thoughts of those who participated in the republican movement as important. In analyzing past events, however, the historian must go beyond the surface phenomena seen and registered by contemporary observers to the transformations of social and economic structures and their larger political consequences, which are sometimes invisible to those living through them. What appears relevant to contemporaries is what is most easily observed: individual actions, discovered conspiracies, the most notorious episodes and intrigues. Even when it is clear and accurate, the eyewitness account tends to personalize social occurrences and to ignore the larger social context in which people live. The chronicler often forgets that, in order to



Fig. 21. This caricature, published in the *Revista Illustrada*, shows Brazilian farmers abandoning the monarchy after abolition and following the republic.

understand the actions of an individual, we must take into account not only his personal motives but also his opportunities and the limitations imposed on him by circumstances. It is the historian's task to analyze events in the context of this larger reality; for while individual behavior is in part a matter of personal ideas, sympathies, and idiosyncrasies, it can be understood only by considering the entire process within which it occurs. In studying the proclamation of the republic in Brazil, it is less important to know the personal inclinations of Mar- shall Deodoro da Fonseca and Benjamin Constant than to analyze the social contradictions that facilitated the diffusion of republican ideas among the groups who would conspire against the monarchy.

Most of the sources used by early historians on the fall of the monarchy do not, however, offer enough data for such analysis. We must therefore shift our angle of observation and look to other sources for insight into the social and economic tensions at the end of the empire. This will help us to understand the political arena. Equally important is to examine both the political structures which defined those who had power and those who had not, and the political mythology that inspired their actions.

The idea that abolition provoked the fall of the monarchy because the landowners, former supporters of the Crown, showed their resentment of the new law by supporting the Republican party, began to circulate even before the law was signed. Supporters of slavery, who warned that unimaginable catastrophes would follow closely upon abolition, prophesied that the monarchy would fall if slavery was abolished. The day the law was passed (13 May 1888) several politicians predicted that by decreeing slave emancipation the princess would lose the throne. And indeed the monarchy fell the following year, which seemed to confirm these grim predictions. In July of 1889, a few months before the proclamation of the republic, Joaquim Nabuco, an important abolitionist leader, commented in the Chamber of Deputies that the strength of the Republicans was based on the discontent engendered by abolition. Other chroniclers of the time agreed with him. This interpretation, born of a superficial and hurried appreciation of the facts, was later endorsed by many historians.

In fact, the *Lei Áurea* merely dealt the final blow to a colonial structure of production and labor that had barely managed to survive the changes occurring in Brazil since 1850.<sup>8</sup> The segments of the land-owning class most dependent on the traditional system of production were already weak; modernization had left them far behind. Many had given away their slaves and were indifferent to abolition.<sup>9</sup> The new

elites that had appeared in the dynamic frontier areas, facing increasing opposition on the part of abolitionists and unable to put down slave insurrection, had finally accepted the idea of free labor, and by 1888 most of them supported the law. Only a few representatives voted against it in 1888; they expressed the interests of a minority of coffee planters whose plantations were mortgaged and who hoped that slavery would not be abolished without compensation. If some of these landowners supported the Republican party out of vengeance (something which has not yet been shown to be true), they were isolated cases that cannot explain the fall of the monarchy. The most that can be said is that abolition, by dealing the final blow to rural sectors that had traditionally supported the Crown, precipitated its fall. Abolition was not the cause of the republic; it would be more correct to say that abolition and the proclamation of the republic were repercussions, at the institutional level, of changes in the economic and social structure, and in people's perceptions.

If the role played by abolition in the fall of the monarchy has been exaggerated, so has the impact of the conflict between Church and State (the "questão religiosa").<sup>10</sup> This conflict had started when the bishops of Pará and Pernambuco, in accordance with the pope's new guidelines, had barred Freemasons from participating in church activities and had forbidden Catholics to join the Masonry. When Masons protested and appealed to the government, the Crown invoked the right of royal patronage—which subordinated the Church to the State—and supported the Masons. The bishops stubbornly resisted, challenging the state's authority. In response the government had the bishops arrested, a decision that caused a great uproar and was hotly debated in Parliament and the press.

The bishops were finally released but many observers felt that the incident had alienated Catholics from the monarchy. On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that the Church itself was divided; a number of priests and Catholics were themselves Freemasons, and it was precisely this fact that had created the trouble in the first place. Thus the incident was primarily a conflict within the Church complicated by the interference of the State. State interference in Church matters was nothing new. It had a long tradition in the colonial period, and it had legal support.

During the conflict between the cabinet and the bishops there was no unanimity within the ranks of the Conservative and Liberal parties. Republicans too were divided on the issue. Some were inclined toward the Freemasons and others toward the bishops. Those who supported the Freemasons found themselves in the awkward position of back-



O SONNO  
GIGANTE.



J.M. — *Garre enorme que ate a grande não acordar e sentir chorada. Ora porquê? — Mas amigo, se elle não acordar com feioz são mudez que e se não se acordar e que não...*

*... e talmente com a grã devida? — E como passamos a viver que são os honores e a nossa voz?!*

FIG. 22. This caricature, published in the *O Polichinello* in 1876, shows the Vatican (the snake) threatening Brazil who sleeps surrounded by frogs (a choir of flattering voices). On the ground lies popular sovereignty.

ing the government. Many of the Republicans called themselves "free thinkers," an expression that suggests their hostility to anything that smacked of Church or clergy. The Republican party program "included complete freedom of religious practice, equality of all religions before the law, and consequent abolition of the Catholic church's official position. This would imply the separation of secular and religious education, the institution of secular marriage, the creation of a civil register for births and deaths, and the secularization of the cemeteries and their administration by the municipalities. Considering this program it is tempting to conclude that Republicans were more concerned to emancipate society from the Church than to emancipate the Church from the State. And, on the whole, they would hardly be inclined to protect the Church's prerogatives.

In fact the Brazilian elite as a whole was not known for its deeply clerical spirit. On the contrary, the most educated sectors of the male population often assumed an indifferent and somewhat anticlerical, almost Voltairian posture, even in Catholic circles. Brazilian politicians frequently boasted about their independence in spiritual matters and looked with distaste on what they saw as the Church's manipulations. This explains why Princess Isabel's well-known religiosity served as ammunition in the Republicans' campaign against her.<sup>12</sup> They knew that emphasizing her devotion was an effective way of alienating from her the most enlightened and politically active segments of the population.

Given these facts, the *questão religiosa*, which generated a split between Church and State, could not have been a primary cause for the fall of the monarchy. At most, by revealing the potential conflict between secular and religious powers, the crisis could have increased the number of people on both sides who saw a need for the separation of Church and State, thus indirectly feeding the republican cause.

The role of the army in establishing the republic is also misrepresented by traditional historians.<sup>13</sup> Certainly the proclamation of the republic was not the unexpected result of a military parade, nor was the army a mere tool of the Republicans.<sup>14</sup> Several military leaders possessed solid republican convictions bolstered by positivist ideas. Under the tutelage of positivists like Benjamin Constant, Serzedelo Correia, Solon, and other officers they had been conspiring for some time. Convinced that the dissolution of the monarchy and the installation of the republic would solve all of Brazil's problems, they were inspired to action by a profound belief that only the military could save the country.<sup>15</sup>

This opinion had become increasingly widespread since the Paraguayan War and gained adherents as the army became more institu-

tionized. The military had many grievances. They complained about their low wages and accused the government of neglecting the needs of the army. They resented the interference of politicians in cases of promotions and transfers. They also condemned the politicians' use of the draft during elections, when those in power drafted—or threatened to

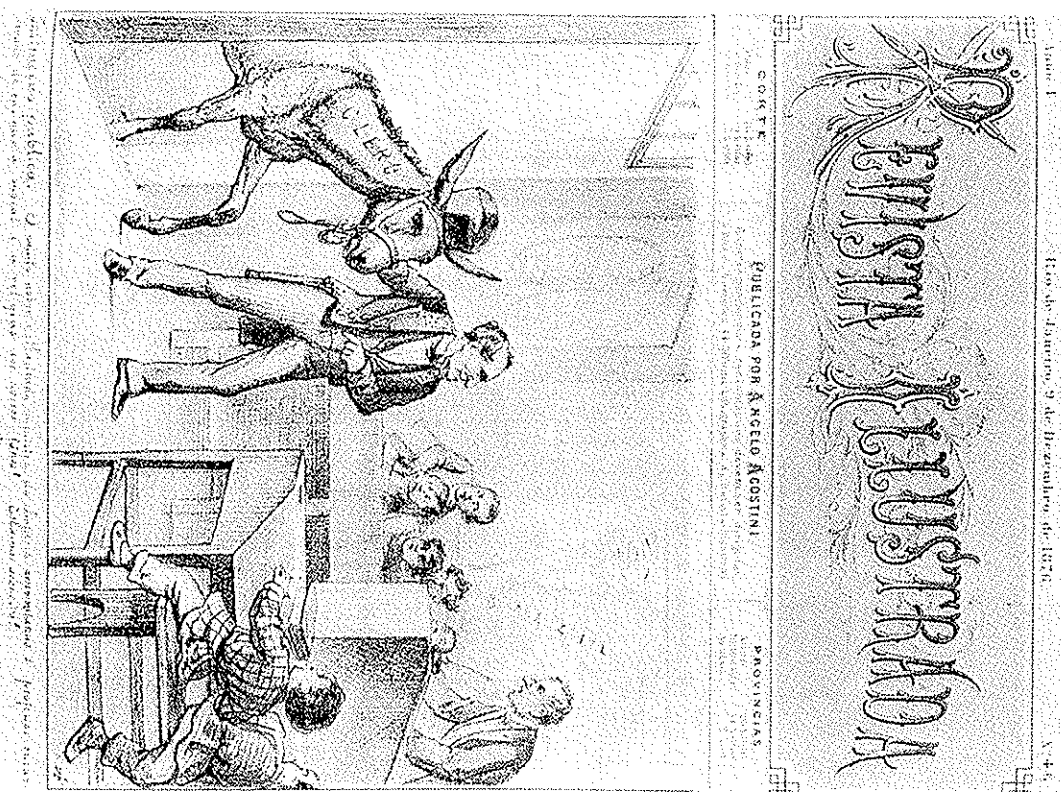


FIG. 23. This caricature, published in the *Revista Illustrada* in 1876, criticized those who wanted to increase the influence of the clergy over education.

draft—their political adversaries' clients to keep them from voting. Military draft deferments distributed by politicians to their friends were another source of discontent among the officers. Political interference in army affairs ended by alienating young officers who, after the demoralizing experience of the Paraguayan War, had grown aware of the need to modernize the army. Their resentment and their commitment to reorganize the army on more efficient terms made them receptive to positivist and republican ideas. This tendency was reinforced when the army started recruiting a larger number of officers among the new middle classes. Lacking personal contact with the political elite, these young officers felt even more hostile to the regime. But it would be a great mistake to portray the army as a political monolith. On the contrary, the military was divided on the best course of action. Republican ideas had a wider following among the lower-ranked officers and recent graduates of the military school; officers at the higher levels continued in general to give their support to the monarchy. Thus although the support of the military was essential to the Republican cause, its role should not be exaggerated. If the army had not been courted by members of the Republican party, it would hardly have taken the initiative in overthrowing the monarchical regime.

While emphasizing the role of the military and the impact of abolition and religious controversy, historians who adopted the monarchist perspective have probably underestimated the role of Republican ideas. This misperception becomes understandable when one examines the sources they use. Looking at the membership of the Republican party and election results, one could conclude that the majority of the Brazilian population was indifferent if not hostile to the Republican program.<sup>16</sup> In fact, although there were Republican clubs throughout the country, Republican nuclei tended to be small except in São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and Rio Grande do Sul. Moreover, Republicans encountered difficulty in presenting their list of candidates and in winning elections. Yet these facts taken by themselves are not an accurate index of the penetration of Republican ideas. The existing electoral system, based on income qualification criteria, denied the right to vote to the majority of the population. On the eve of the declaration of the republic, the Brazilian electorate represented little more than 1.5 percent of the nation's total population. More important, widespread electoral fraud always favored the government party. In the face of these obstacles, the São Paulo Republican party was remarkably successful. In 1889 it controlled one-fourth of the state's electorate.

Though the Republican party members still constituted an insignif-

cant minority, the party's use of meetings, conferences, and above all the press as channels of propaganda had helped to create favorable sentiment toward republicanism, particularly among the urban segments of the population.<sup>17</sup> Besides, the fact that Republicans constituted a minority did not necessarily mean that they were an insignificant force in the overthrow of the empire. Active and organized minorities have always been important participants in revolutionary movements, as long as conditions favor the initiation of revolutionary action.

What needs to be explained, then, is not, as the monarchists suggest, the limited appeal of Republican ideas, but their greater appeal in the final years of the empire, especially since we know that these ideas had existed in Brazil since the late eighteenth century, if not before.

By stressing the significance of Republican ideas, Republican historians saw their role more objectively than historians in the monarchist tradition did, but they in their turn tended to exaggerate the role of monarchical abuses in toppling the regime.<sup>18</sup> Criticism of the Crown and of the emperor had existed since independence without bringing down the system. Many times during the empire monarchist politicians had accused the emperor of abusing his prerogatives.<sup>19</sup> These criticisms had issued from the conflict over what was defined in the constitution as the "moderating power" (*poder moderador*).<sup>20</sup> Granted to the emperor by the constitution of 1824 in addition to executive power, moderating power gave him, as we have seen, the right to intervene in both the judiciary and the legislature. The emperor could choose his ministers and councillors of state freely; he could dissolve the Chamber of Deputies and call new elections; he could also choose senators from among the three men with the most votes in each state; and he was empowered to appoint judges to the higher courts. All this could be a source of irritation for candidates and parties who were passed over.

One party or the other would oppose the emperor whenever he exercised his prerogative to appoint a senator. If he chose a Conservative to fill a senate seat, the Liberals would protest the "exorbitant abuses" of his powers; the Conservatives would protest if the situation was reversed. Because prime ministers were freely appointed by the emperor independent of parliamentary majority, their errors fell on his shoulders, despite the fact that the parliamentary system had been created to avoid such problems. When he dissolved the Chamber of Deputies, he appointed a new prime minister, and called for new elections, the new cabinet manipulated the election to insure their party's victory, thus exacerbating the defeated party's discontent and animosity toward the

Crown. This was exactly what happened in 1868. Liberals had a technical majority. The emperor dissolved the Chamber of Deputies and appointed a Conservative prime minister. The new cabinet then succeeded in manipulating the elections and achieved a Conservative majority, provoking rage among liberals. This triggered the greatest political crisis of the empire. Two years later a group of discontented Liberals founded the Republican party. Ironically, the moderating power, which had been created with the intention of protecting the emperor, had placed him at the center of the political arena, the target of all criticism. This constant tension gave rise to the myth of personal power (*poder pessoal*), the myth of the emperor as an abusive and authoritarian monarch.

A more thorough analysis of the functioning of the empire's political system, however, reveals that in matters of national importance, the emperor was rarely able to enforce his will. Imperial policies were actually controlled by the rural oligarchies and their allies, acting through the Council of State, the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, the ministries, the provincial assemblies, and the bureaucracy.

Given the way in which the political system functioned under the empire, it seems ridiculous to blame the emperor for the fruits of the regime. He was not responsible for the agrarian orientation of Brazil's economy, for electoral fraud, or for the survival of a patriarchal and slave society. Nor was it the emperor who promoted abolition, electoral reform, or any other important change that took place under his rule. The social and economic structure of Brazilian society gave immense power to the regional oligarchies, and the emperor, though exhibiting a certain amount of intransigence on small issues, always yielded to the oligarchies on questions of national importance.

The dynamics of the moderating power do not sufficiently explain the advent of the republic. The emperor's use of this power could of course have generated hostility toward him. But criticism of the Crown had a long history. Why then was the republic proclaimed in 1889 and not before? There seems to be only one plausible answer to the question. It was only then that republican ideas, which had circulated in the country for over a century, found propitious conditions for their realization. What were the transformations occurring in Brazilian society that allowed this change? Which social groups served as support for the monarchy? How were they affected by social and economic change? What new groups were rising at the time, and what were their needs and aspirations? Could those needs be satisfied by the monarchical system? Finally, which segments of society made up the Republi-

can party? Those are some of the questions that we have to answer in order to understand the origins of the republic in Brazil.

During the long reign of Pedro II, there were profound changes in Brazil's economy and society. The railroads slowly began to replace the more traditional modes of transportation such as muleback, oxcarts, and river barge. This network, while admittedly limited, was sufficient to revolutionize the system of transportation and production in the most dynamic regions of the country. Equally important was the gradual replacement of sailing vessels by steamships in the coastal trade. In the second half of the nineteenth century, new techniques were gradually introduced in the sugar industry, and sugar "factories" (*usinas, engenhos centrais*) began to appear side by side with the more traditional mills (*bangalês*).<sup>21</sup> On the coffee plantations of the Paulista west, a pioneering and dynamic frontier zone, new coffee-processing methods were introduced to increase productivity. These changes in agricultural technology were accompanied by a change in the system of labor. Slavery as a system came into crisis, both because of the changing international conditions brought about by the industrial revolution and because of transformations occurring within the national borders. Free labor began to replace slave labor, especially in the more dynamic coffee areas, where immigration became, in the 1880s, a remedy for the labor shortage.<sup>22</sup>

Industrial capitalism also made progress in this period. In the decade between 1874 and 1884, the number of industrial establishments rose from 175 to over 600. Although these establishments were as a rule small and modestly capitalized, they presaged a profound transformation in the economy and the society.<sup>23</sup> In conjunction with this growing industrial complexity and diversification, the Brazilian economy saw the multiplication of credit institutions, insurance companies, and public facilities.

As both the economy and the population expanded, certain areas of the country became more urbanized.<sup>24</sup> With the growth of the urban population and the amelioration of the transportation system, the internal market expanded a bit. Agriculture was no longer viewed as the only sector for capital investment: railroad construction, urban facilities, credit institutions, and industrial establishments began to lay a rival claim for available funds.

These economic transformations profoundly affected the society. New groups appeared, whose interests frequently diverged from those of the traditional elites. Those connected to the fledgling industrial



sector, for example, petitioned the government for protection. In 1881 the Industrial Association, organized in Rio de Janeiro, issued a manifesto written by Felício dos Santos asserting that the country could free itself from the instability of a monoculture economy by developing its industry. Only thus could the nation diminish imports, improve the balance of trade, and move toward economic independence. For such a policy to succeed, however, it needed government support, and the agrarian interests, who were more than amply represented in Parliament, were not always supportive of the industrialists—a situation which of course created tensions.

In addition to the ascendancy of groups tied to industry, the empire witnessed the rise of sectors of the middle class.<sup>25</sup> These classes were made up primarily of people linked to mercantile activity, the professions, public administration, transportation, and banking. Most of these middle class groups, though living in the cities, moved in the orbit of the rural elite. They were linked to the landowners by economic interest and family ties and some were the “prodigal sons” of immigrant families, who had left the plantations to try their luck in the cities. Others belonged to declining sectors of the rural elite and had brought with them nostalgia for their lost status.<sup>26</sup> There were also members of the lower classes who had climbed to higher positions through patronage. Yet, despite its economic and cultural links with the rural oligarchies, the emerging urban bourgeoisie developed, on certain issues, a perspective of its own. Life in the city was different from rural life and the urbanized generation was often tempted to abandon traditional values.<sup>27</sup>

As we have seen, it is difficult to set firm boundaries between urban and rural sectors, for while certain urban elements came from the land-owning class, many members of the urban middle classes “ruralized” themselves as soon as they accumulated capital, buying plantations, marrying into plantation families, and becoming slaveowners. But even if frequent crossovers make rigid classification impossible, it would be a mistake to overlook the growth of an urban population whose behavior and values did not completely coincide with those of the seigneurial group. The response of new urban groups to abolition, to direct elections, and finally to the republic reveal the novelty of their position in Brazilian society.

As one might imagine, the economic changes of the late nineteenth century also affected the traditional elite. While landowners in the frontier areas adopted new techniques on their plantations and gradually substituted free labor for slave labor, those in the older zones,

threatened with ultimate ruin due to declining productivity, were forced to cling to outmoded systems of production and to slave labor.

Coffee planters in the Paraíba Valley, in dramatic decline during the 1870s,<sup>28</sup> were unable to compete for immigrant labor in the 1880s and therefore could not replace their slave labor force.<sup>29</sup> Coffee plantations that had once yielded two hundred or more *arrobas* per thousand trees were yielding a maximum of fifty. In 1883 the total debt of Brazil's coffee plantations was calculated at 300,000 *contos*, most of it owed by the Paraíba Valley planters. Fifty percent of the landowners of that area were operating at a loss, with little hope of recovery.<sup>30</sup> At the level of provincial politics, there were violent conflicts between the Paraíba planters and those of the frontier areas of the Paulista West. The *fazendeiros* of the Paulista West advocated subsidies for immigration programs and for the construction of railroads in their region, while those of the Paraíba Valley argued that such projects would put an unnecessary burden on provincial coffers.<sup>31</sup>

Although a general crisis in the sugar economy during the nineteenth century made modernization of sugar production quite difficult, a milder version of the same battle was fought between more productive and less productive sectors in the sugar cane areas. The owners of mills close to the railroad lines managed to improve their processing system, thereby expanding their productive capacity. Their new prosperity contrasted sharply with the decline and ruin of the *banguês*. And the same contrast between old and new created conflict in the cattle ranching areas of Rio Grande do Sul, where the *xariguada*s (producers of jerked beef) were superseded by modern beef producers.<sup>32</sup>

Conflicts between the various elite groups became intensified as the contrast between the more and less capitalized sectors grew ever more apparent. The weakening of traditional sectors, the groups that had formed the monarchy's strongest base of support, eroded the foundations of the throne. Abolition was a cruel blow for these groups and vitiated whatever strength the monarchy had continued to draw from them. Economic and social transformations not only weakened the groups who had once monopolized political power in the empire, they also brought to the political arena the aspirations of new groups. Industrial interests fought for protectionist policies. Planters in the Paulista West demanded policies favorable to immigration. And very often those interested in furthering immigration argued for the separation of Church and State, since this seemed to be a precondition for attracting immigrants from Protestant countries. Urban groups committed to the destruction of the slave system campaigned for abolition

and called for greater political representation, demanding that the system of indirect elections, which insured disproportionate representation to the traditional agrarian elites, be replaced by direct elections, which would presumably favor the urban populations. The growth of the urban population created demands for urban utilities such as water, gas, and electricity, as well as transportation and sewage systems.<sup>33</sup>

These demands could not easily be satisfied, and very often they led to conflict between the new groups and the power elite and to confrontations in the parliament and in the press. Contradictory interests sometimes took the form of conflicts between provincial and central governments since different provinces were affected in different ways by economic growth. In time, many people began to see federation as the only solution to political bottlenecks. The excessive centralization of the imperial system, which allowed an oligarchy to interfere in every aspect of the country's life, was often identified as an obstacle to the development of the nation and to the solution of the country's most urgent problems.

Federalism was not a new idea in Brazil. At the time of independence, several groups were convinced that a federal system was better than a centralized one. Though during the colonial period each region was theoretically subordinate to the viceroy, the provinces had always established direct contact with the Portuguese Crown. After independence nothing seemed more natural than to follow this tradition and to respect the autonomy of the different provinces, particularly in view of the extreme regional variety and diversity of interests. Nevertheless, unitarian tendencies prevailed in 1822. The example of other South American states, which had been unable to maintain their territorial unity after independence and were constantly menaced by agitation and internal struggles, served to buttress the argument of Brazilians who considered a centralized state the best form of government.

In the years that followed independence, the issue of federalism cropped up whenever the policies of the central government came into conflict with regional interests.<sup>34</sup> But from 1848, when the last rebellion against the central government was repressed, until the beginning of the seventies, Brazilian politicians appear to have forgotten federalism. For twenty years the congruence between political and economic power, and the absence of fundamental conflict within the elite, made it possible for a centralized state to survive unchallenged. In the last decades of the century, however, conflicts and contradictions generated by structural change and the growing disequilibrium between economic power and political power brought the efficacy of the system into question once again. In 1870, the newly created Republican party

presented itself to the nation with a manifesto supporting a federal system. "We adopt the principle of a federalist regime," said the manifesto, "based on the reciprocal independence of the various provinces, elevating them to the level of independent states linked only by their common nationality and their common interest in representation and national defense."<sup>35</sup>

From then on, the federalist ideal gained increasing support. In 1885, in a famous speech to the Chamber of Deputies, Joaquim Nabuco urged the monarchy to put into practice an ideal that had existed since independence. He argued that federalism was necessitated by the great distances between regions in Brazil, which made it impossible for the center to administer the provinces effectively. Vast regional differences were another argument in favor of the idea: the problems of the Northeast differed greatly from those of the central provinces, and the important issues in the South were so far removed from those in the rest of the country that a single, centralized administration could not hope to cope with them all. Moreover, he continued, since regional diversity dictated diverse interests, a centralized government, far away and unable to solve local problems, could not hope to remain legitimate. The urgent need for greater local autonomy was obvious. The tight control of the provinces by the central government did not contribute to the prosperity of the country. In fact the national debt grew each year, placing an unnecessary burden on the provinces. Nabuco expressed his concern that such trends would give rise to secessionist feelings, concluding that only federalism could save the country from this "ultimate disaster."

The occasion for Nabuco's speech was the presentation in the Chamber of Deputies of a proposition signed by 39 Liberal representatives. This proposition suggested that the electorate decide whether the constitution should be amended to give the country a federalist system. The proposed constitutional amendment read: "The government of Brazil shall be a federalist monarchy. The provincial governments shall be completely independent of the central government insofar as this does not interfere with the internal and external defense of the Empire, its representation abroad, the collection of general taxes, and the institutions needed to guarantee national unity and protect the constitutional rights of Brazilian citizens." During the empire, however, the proposed amendment never became law, and only with the republic was a federal system adopted.

Nabuco's apprehensions about secessionist tendencies were not totally unfounded. When he made his statement, he was most probably thinking about declarations made in São Paulo by prestigious poli-

ticians who had publicized their resentment of the central government and their dreams of secession. Separatist ideas were born of the profound imbalance between political and economic power that existed at the end of the empire. This imbalance, generating so much discontent among new groups who felt they were insufficiently represented in the government, derived primarily from the organization of the political system. Since appointments to the Senate and the Council of State, two important political organs, were for life, the traditional groups continued to wield political power long after they had lost their economic power. Moreover, the number of representatives that each province could send to the chamber and the Senate had not been adjusted to adequately reflect demographic and economic changes.

An examination of the empire's political rolls<sup>56</sup> shows that, in 1889, only 4 out of 59 senators came from São Paulo, the richest province in the country—the Baron of Souza Queiroz, appointed in 1848; Joaquim Floriano de Godói, named in 1872; and Antonio da Silva Prado, who became a senator in 1887, two years before the fall of the empire; the fourth place was vacant. Pará, the main center of the booming rubber economy, also had 3 senators, while Sergipe, Alagoas, and Paraíba, three small and rather poor provinces, each had 2; Bahia, 6; Minas Gerais, 10; Pernambuco, 6; and Rio de Janeiro, 5. São Paulo had only 9 representatives in the Chamber of Deputies while Ceará, one of the poorest provinces in the country, had 8; Pernambuco had 13; Bahia, 14; the Province of Rio de Janeiro and the capital city (Côrre), 12; and Minas Gerais, 20. It was rare to see a Paulista from the West—the most progressive area in the country after 1870—in the ministry or as a member of the Council of State, which was dominated by men from Minas Gerais, Bahia, Pernambuco, and Rio de Janeiro. With a few exceptions, most of the Paulistas who gained such positions represented the Paraíba Valley, where coffee plantations had been steadily declining since 1870, rather than the new thriving areas of the São Paulo West. To aggravate the situation the provincial presidents, appointed by the government, were most often from outside the province. Thus Paulistas often had politicians from Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, or other areas presiding over their provincial government. Faced with these realities Paulistas of the West became increasingly sympathetic to federalism as well as republicanism. They were proud of their achievements, their plantations, their railroads, their banks. Yet they felt that their interests were neglected and their initiatives thwarted by excessive centralization. It is not surprising, then, that the Republican movement found many followers among them. Although the more extreme voices called

for secession, the majority considered a federal republic an ideal solution to their problem.

The total number of separatists was small during this period, but the mere fact that they existed indicated the level of tension during the last years of the empire. In 1877, on the opening of the railroad line from São Paulo to Rio, Ferreira de Menezes commented in the *Gazeta de Notícias* that:

The Paulista . . . is a poet, a poet of progress, a practical poet. His verses are: good roads, machines, agriculture, improvements. He loves himself and is therefore more chauvinist [regionalist] than other people. In his eyes, the greatest grace that God can give a man is to make him a Paulista. . . . The Paulista's self-esteem has grown enough to make him dream of independence. . . . Every year, the Paulistas sum up what they have received from the central government and compare it to what they have given. And since they are giving more than they are receiving, being positive men, practical poets, they already murmur: Why should we not be independent?<sup>57</sup>

This was an early expression of the "Paulista mystique" and of the separatist tendencies of the Paulistas, tendencies that would become more visible in the following years. One of the principal advocates of separatism was Martin Francisco, who in a speech to the Provincial Assembly in 1879 lamented the fate of São Paulo. "So much wealth is wasted in a province which alone could constitute a State," he said, "and which in less than ten years of peace and work would be the first power in South America," but which instead, because of bad government, could look forward to nothing but "discredit and bankruptcy." Two years later, in a circular to the Paulista electorate, Martin Francisco boasted that he was prouder to be a Paulista than to be a Brazilian. And in 1884 he complained that the needs of his province were never considered by the national government. "When we want to progress," he remarked bitterly, "the centralization web envelops us; our political offices are filled with people alien to our way of life, to our interests, and to our customs." On that occasion, Lourenço de Albuquerque asked him to what he attributed the unhappiness of São Paulo. Martin Francisco was quick to answer: to our insufficient representation. Every Paulista representative stood for at least 1,500 voters, he said, while the number represented by those from the northern provinces was at most 800. Martin Francisco's figures were slightly exaggerated. In fact, if we believe Santana Nery's figures, São Paulo representatives in the Chamber of Deputies represented about 1300 voters

while the representative for Sergipe, Alagoas, Ceará, Paraíba represented between 700 and 900 voters. In spite of his lack of precision Martin Francisco was right in pointing to the fact that São Paulo was underrepresented in the Chamber of Deputies.

Years later in an article entitled "Bitter Truths," Martin Francisco returned to the same theme, commenting that each of São Paulo's nine representatives stood for more than 166,000 people. This was almost double the entire population of Espírito Santo, a province that elected two representatives, and nearly three times the population of Amazonas, which also elected two. Moreover, calculating representation by electoral districts, each Paulista senator represented 375,000 inhabitants, more than any other senator in the country.

Martin Francisco did not stop there in his condemnation of the political system. He complained that São Paulo contributed 20:000,000\$000 to the national treasury each year but received a mere 3:000,000\$000. The customs duties collected during three months in Santos (the principal port for coffee exports) were equivalent to the sum paid annually to the Paulistas by the central government. São Paulo contributed one-sixth of the entire national revenue. Furthermore, the levies gathered by the municipal councils in São Paulo, taken together, were greater than the average revenue of almost any one of the northern provinces. The income of the *município* (county) of São Paulo alone was greater than the total revenue for the whole province of Piauí.

These facts—right or wrong—seemed to Martin Francisco sufficient justification for the separatist language he began to use in 1887. Both under the pseudonym of Nemo and under his own name, he wrote articles insisting that São Paulo was the victim of grave injustice. "I sometimes believe," he once wrote, "that my fellow Paulistas and I descend in a straight line from Jesus Christ. He paid the price for all the sins of humanity, whereas we pay for all the North's embezzlements and all the consequences of the imperial minister's incompetence." His ironic style reached its peak in a comedy he published later that year. In this dramatic parable, São Paulo is the rich brother, exploited by his siblings. Exasperated and exhausted, he finally decides to leave his family, to the dismay and protest of all. Used to living at São Paulo's expense, they cannot accept the decision of the "Breadwinner of the Empire" to abandon them and live his own life.<sup>38</sup>

Martin Francisco's feelings were not unfounded. In fact, the province of Minas Gerais, which in 1883 had 20 representatives and 10 senators, had a budget of 1:932\$828; while São Paulo, which had only 9 representatives and 4 senators, had a budget of 9:164\$577, five times

greater. This imbalance would be accentuated toward the end of the empire because of the rapid growth of the Paulista population and its increasing prosperity. And with this increasing political disequilibrium the Paulista's dissatisfaction grew.

Martin Francisco was not the only one to feel bitter about the situation and to harbor separatist ideas. Other Paulistas started writing books and newspaper articles expressing the same point of view. The Republican newspaper *Provincia de São Paulo* began a series of separatist articles in February 1887, and several books were published that year under the suggestive title *The Paulista Nation (Patria Paulista)*. In one of them, Alberto Salles,<sup>39</sup> a positivist and a Republican journalist, wrote that "secession had become a deep Paulista aspiration." In another, J. F. de Barros wrote: "As to my nationality, I am a Paulista; as to my politics, I am a militant Republican and separatist at all costs." Under the title "Carras a Feps" (letters to Feps, the pseudonym of Pacheco e Silva), Fernando de Barros published several articles in the *Provincia de São Paulo* advocating secession. On one occasion he commented:

It will be marvellous when São Paulo is able to announce in the *Times* or the *New York Herald*, and in other newspapers in the Old and New World, the following: "The province of São Paulo, having finished off its business relationship with the old firm BRAZIL BRAGANTINO CORRUPTIONS AND CO., declares that it is now a FREE NATION with its own private firm. It promises to maintain its business relations with other nations, and to substitute integrity, pride and dignity for the duplicity, deceit, and cowardice of the old firm."<sup>40</sup>

In an article published in the *Diário Popular*, Pacheco e Silva, a man of property and standing and a member of the Republican party since its formation, wrote that São Paulo would progress enormously if it were able to apply its revenue to material improvements and practical education, thus raising the intellectual and moral level of its inhabitants instead of subsidizing the central government. Similar thoughts were expressed in Campinas by Ubaldino do Amaral.

Yet the separatist ideal was ultimately rejected at the Republican party congress. Although several politicians spoke in favor of secession, most notably Horácio de Carvalho, Campos Salles, Alberto Salles, and Jesuino Cardoso, other equally important members of the party, such as Glicério and Júlio de Mesquita, the owner of the newspaper *Provincia de São Paulo*, opposed the idea.<sup>41</sup> Separation or federation, the latter understood as complete political and economic autonomy

for the provinces, became the dilemma facing the Paulista Republicans, a dilemma that not even the proclamation of the republic could resolve completely.

Visiting Brazil shortly after the republic was proclaimed, Max Leclerc,<sup>42</sup> a French journalist, noted that the inhabitants of São Paulo still claimed to prefer secession to participation in a centralized government. During the first republican presidency, Campo Salles, a Paulista who was minister of justice, dissolved the commission appointed to draw up the civil code because he considered this a function of the state rather than the federal government. The strong desire for autonomy that had prompted some Paulistas to suggest secession continued into the early years of the republic, during the period when Paulistas were securing for themselves a greater control over the nation's government. Once they were in control, they seemed to have forgotten the issue. Separation would be resurrected in 1932, when they thought they had lost their political control.

In 1889, the call for secession was clearly not so strong as the Republican party's federalist leanings. On the eve of the proclamation of the republic, the majority of the Paulistas chose a federalist republican solution because they hoped it would resolve the major problems of political imbalance without endangering national unity. Thus the idea of overthrowing the monarchy and organizing a republican regime prevailed in the end.

As we have seen, the republican ideal was not new in Brazil but had a long history in the country's political life. At the end of the colonial period Brazilian colonists in rebellion against the mother country intended to create an independent republic. After independence those who conspired and rose against the government continued to assert their commitment to republican ideals. But it was only in 1870 that a Republican party with a program of its own was organized in Brazil.

From 1870 to 1889 the Republican party broadened its influence. Republican clubs were created in many areas, and Republican newspapers appeared all over the country. But these Republican organizations tended to be concentrated in the South. As Oliveira Vianna has demonstrated, 79 percent of the newspapers and 89 percent of the clubs existing in 1889 were located in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>43</sup>

The Republican party in São Paulo was somewhat different from the party in other parts of the country, where it recruited most of its supporters among the urban population. In São Paulo, in addition to members of urban groups such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, journalists, and merchants, the Republican party also recruited many land-

owners, mostly from the Paulista West. Of the 133 delegates to the 1873 Republican convention in Itu, 76 declared agriculture their profession, not to mention those who identified themselves as lawyers or businessmen who had invested in plantations.<sup>44</sup> The same can be said of the subscribers to *Provincia de São Paulo*, the most important organ of the Paulista Republican party: they were mainly landowners from Campinas and Itu.

The preponderance of planters in the Paulista Republican party helps to explain its reticence to deal with the abolition of slavery.<sup>45</sup> Although the party included among its members such renowned abolitionists as the practitioner-lawyer Luiz Gama, Republican leaders in São Paulo made it clear from the beginning that they did not want to discuss abolition. By avoiding the issue the party leadership hoped to maintain the support of the rural sectors, which despite some experiments with free labor continued to depend mainly on slaves.

It is also interesting to note the almost complete absence of Paraíba Valley planters in the Republican party and the predominance of those from the West.<sup>46</sup> This seems to confirm the hypothesis raised earlier that the landowners from the São Paulo West joined the Republican party because they resented lack of representation in the political system and hoped that in a republican system they could have more political control. Planters in the Paraíba Valley who already had sufficient representation in the government did not become Republicans.

It should be emphasized, however, that the landowners of the Paulista West were in many ways a unique group. They were planters in a frontier zone that had recently become the country's wealthiest region, a region where the almost unlimited possibilities stimulated experimentation. The western planter distinguished himself by his capacity to be innovative. He perfected the methods of coffee processing and tried to replace slave labor with immigrant labor. He also invested his capital in railroads and banks. The Paulista of the West was an active and enterprising pioneer.<sup>47</sup> This was not merely a question of mentality, but of means. Located in virgin lands his plantation was more productive and he had capital enough to be experimental. Besides, in the West, the great social mobility typical of frontier areas blurred the distinction between rural and urban men. The Paulista West attracted people from extremely diverse origins and professions, often with no previous agricultural experience. Among these planters were men who had begun their careers as merchants, doctors, and lawyers—men of the city who brought with them their urban experiences and perceptions. After the railroads made it easier to travel, the planters spent a good part of each year in the city. All these factors made the Paulista



planter of the West more susceptible to the new ideas and more willing to join the Republican party than other planters, and helps to explain why in São Paulo the majority of the Republicans came from rural areas, while in Rio de Janeiro and other provinces they came mainly from urban groups.

In the 1880s the party intensified its campaign, trying to enlarge its base and define new strategies. The leadership was divided. One group recommended the adoption of a revolutionary strategy and called for popular revolution; the other was convinced that the republic could be achieved through the electoral process. Silva Jardim and Quintino Bocayuva represented these two positions, respectively.<sup>48</sup>

At a congress held in São Paulo in May 1888, the "evolutionist" strategy was officially sanctioned through the appointment of Quintino Bocayuva as national leader of the party. This event generated a crisis within the party. Silva Jardim published a manifesto on 28 May violently attacking the moderate faction, but his protest had little effect. In the end the pacific wing prevailed. One year later, however, the monarchy would be overthrown by a military coup.<sup>49</sup>

In fact, by 1887 the leadership of the Republican party had already begun to consider the possibility of asking the military for help. That year a series of incidents involving military men and civilian politicians created increasing hostility toward the regime within the army. Rangel Pestana, a member of the Republican party in São Paulo, suggested to the permanent committee of the party that it come to terms with the military in order to carry out a revolution. When he attended the national party congress in Rio, he continued to express this point of view and, despite the disapproval of the committee, approached certain individuals in the military, including Sena Madureira, Serzedelo Correia, and the viscount of Pelotas. This tactic was favored by Glicério, another Republican leader from São Paulo, who in March 1888 wrote to Bocayuva and insisted that he make contact with the military. Américo Werneck, a leader of the party in Rio de Janeiro, also argued that the triumph of the republican revolution would come about only through the use of military force. And the republican hierarchy in Rio Grande do Sul came out at the same time in favor of a militarist solution.

Once they agreed on the importance of obtaining military support, the Republicans started courting the army in several different ways. Republican leaders made contact with sympathetic officers. And the Republican press gave widespread coverage to the conflict between the army and the government, never missing an opportunity to turn the military against the monarchy, while assuring them of Republican support.

The first attempt at conspiracy took place two years before the proclamation of the republic. It failed, apparently because of the intervention of Tomás Coelho, minister of war and a personal friend of the Republican leader Quintino Bocayuva. In 1888 there was a second attempt, when Silva Jardim contracted the military officer Sena Madureira—the pivot in the conflict between the army and the imperial government—to plan an uprising. As we have seen, Silva Jardim had difficulty in finding support for his project among some of the principal Republican leaders, who were still reluctant to resort to a military coup. Yet all events seemed to point in this direction. The sharpening of the conflict between the military and the government and the impatience of the Republican leaders led to new meetings between the two groups.

Republicans found great receptivity in the army, where dissatisfaction had been growing since the Paraguayan War.<sup>50</sup> The increasing professionalization of the army had aggravated rather than reduced its conflict with the government. Military men had acquired a keen sense of their importance; they complained that they were badly paid and that the government did not treat them with the consideration they deserved. Most of all they resented the fact that politicians were constantly interfering in matters of military interest and the army was often subordinated to civilian ministers who did not understand the needs of the military. All these feelings tended to encourage insubordination and even rebellion. Pelotas, one of the military's most prestigious leaders, confessed in 1886 that out of 13,500 men in the army, 7,526 had been imprisoned for disobedience.

In spite of this lack of discipline the military was a cohesive body. When military men became involved in social or political issues, they never lost their esprit de corps. As a result, what would be a minor incident if it involved two civilians could become a grave menace to national security when it involved an officer and a civilian, since other officers would leap to the defense of their comrade. This is not to say that all military men shared the same opinions on politics. On the contrary, there were deep disagreements within the army; but whenever military men felt offended by civilians, they reacted as one.

What facilitated the alliance between the Republicans and the military was the military's conviction that it was their duty to improve their country's social and political organization. The belief that men in uniform were pure and patriotic while civilians or *casacas*—as they were called by the military—were venal, corrupt, and unpatriotic was then widespread in the army. From this conviction derived a missionary spirit that is clearly manifested in a famous letter to General Neiva

on 10 July 1887 from Floriano Peixoto, an important leader in the army, and later president of the republic. Commenting on the conflict between military and civilians Peixoto wrote:

I have seen the solution given to our class problem, which has most certainly surpassed the expectations of all. This very fact proves conclusively that our poor country is in an advanced state of moral corruption, and needs a military dictatorship to cleanse it. As a liberal, I cannot wish for my country a dictatorship by the sword, yet everyone knows—and examples abound—that only this type of government knows how to purify the blood of a social organism, such as ours, which is in such a corrupt state.<sup>51</sup>

It was this state of mind that made the military available to those conspiring against the regime.

When civilians approached these dissatisfied officers with the intention of planning a coup, they were extremely well received, since both groups shared a desire to change existing institutions. From the moment they were approached by the Republicans, groups within the army started plotting the overthrow of the monarchy. Military clubs became the main organs of the conspiracy.

The agitation created by military protests, the abolitionist propaganda, and the republican campaign generated strong apprehensions among monarchists about the future of the Brazilian monarchy. The feeling became widespread that the empire was undergoing a dangerous crisis and that the republic would soon be proclaimed if something was not done. In December 1888, Silva Jardim met the baron of Cotegipe, an influential supporter of the monarchy, in the Paineiras Hotel and attempted to sound him out. Cotegipe, an old and experienced politician who was a senator, a member of the council of state, and had been several times a minister, uttered prophetic words:

Do not run hurriedly toward her [the Republic] for she is running toward us. My ministry fell because of a palace conspiracy, and my successor will leave at the point of a bayonet, and perhaps with him, the monarchy. Our ministries do not last long now, and therefore you do not have long to wait.<sup>52</sup>

Ouro Preto, a Liberal, assumed the position of prime minister on 7 June 1889, perfectly conscious of the risks he confronted. When the emperor appointed him, Ouro Preto had told him most clearly:

Your majesty has certainly noticed that in some of the provinces there is agitated and active propaganda for a change in the form

of government. This propaganda bodes no good for the future, for it wishes to expose the country to institutions for which the country is not prepared, institutions that do not fit existing conditions and cannot bring happiness.

In my humble opinion, it is important not to underestimate this torrent of false and imprudent ideas, but instead to weaken and incapacitate it, not allowing its strength to increase. The way to achieve this is not through violence and repression, but rather by demonstrating practically that the present system of government has sufficient elasticity to recognize the most progressive principles, satisfy all the demands of enlightened public opinion, consolidate liberty, and realize the prosperity and greatness of our nation, without disturbing the internal peace in which we have lived for so many years.

We will reach this goal, Sir, by initiating, with strength and courage, wide political, social, and economic reforms, inspired by democratic ideals. These reforms should not be postponed, for otherwise they may become futile. That which today is enough may perhaps be too little by tomorrow.<sup>53</sup>

Ouro Preto was proposing a program of reforms designed to neutralize criticism and realize the frustrated aspirations of the opposition.

At the parliamentary session of 11 June, he presented his program—actually a version of the Liberal program of 1869. It contained suggestions for political, economic, and social reforms: limitation of the senate term; reduction of the Council of State to a mere administrative body with no political power; election of municipal administrators and nomination of provincial presidents and vice presidents from a list selected by the electorate; and extension of representation to all male citizens who were literate, engaged in legitimate professions, and in possession of their civil and political rights. Ouro Preto suggested that freedom of worship be granted to all as well as freedom of education. He also proposed that the existing system of education be reformed. In regard to economic questions he recommended the reduction of export duties; the enactment of a law facilitating acquisition of land; the reduction of freight rates and the development of rapid means of communication; the conversion of the foreign debt and amortization of the paper currency; the achievement of a balanced federal budget; and the creation of credit institutions to issue paper currency. He did not, however, include any provision for adopting a federal system.<sup>54</sup>

In sum, Ouro Preto proposed a program which he expected would please those who seemed most dissatisfied with the regime and who were drifting toward a republican system. When the cabinet president presented these proposals, Pedro Luiz Soares de Souza, a represen-

tative from Rio de Janeiro, could not repress an exclamation that certainly expressed the feeling of most of those present. "It is the beginning of the Republic," he said—to which Ouro Preto responded, "No, it is the defeat of the Republic."

Ouro Preto's program was based on the assumption that these reforms, if not instituted under the monarchical regime, would be brought about by a republican revolution. From his point of view, the best way to neutralize the effect of republicanism was to satisfy republican demands. But his approach had a serious limitation. He felt that it was impossible under existing conditions to propose a federalist system, one of the crucial Republican goals.

To some, Ouro Preto's reforms were not enough; to others they were far too much. And the latter constituted the majority in the Chamber of Deputies, which recoiled when faced with his suggestions. After the minister had presented his program, the Conservatives proposed a motion of no confidence, which was approved by a vote of seventy-nine to twenty. The vote was preceded by a heated discussion, during which the representatives Cesário Alvim and Father João Manuel stated their commitment to the republican ideal. But the vote made it clear that the dominant elite was incapable of accepting the necessary changes and reforms. To the opposition it seemed that it was impossible to realize progressive goals within the context of the monarchy. A few days later, on 17 June, the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved and the government promoted elections to organize a new one, which would be called for an extraordinary session on 20 November of the same year.

The dominant oligarchy had proven too inflexible to accept the institutional changes necessitated by the new economic and social realities of the 1880s. Their reluctance was understandable, since these reforms—taken to their logical conclusions—meant the destruction of the traditional oligarchy's base of power. But the consequence of their reluctance was a military coup.

After the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved, the situation became increasingly tense. Ouro Preto took measures that displeased the army and provided ammunition for the Republicans.<sup>55</sup> Predictions of the government's retaliation against the military ran wild. Taking advantage of the turbulent atmosphere, segments of the Paulista and Rio de Janeiro Republican parties renewed their efforts to convince the military to lead a movement against the established government. Benjamin Constant, Frederico Solon, Bernardo Vasques, and Lieutenants Antonio Adolfo, Mena Barreto, Carlos de Alencar, Sebastião Barreto, and Joaquim Ignácio, all members of the army, helped to circulate Republican propaganda within their ranks. Major Antonio Bezerra de

Cavalcanti, Celestino Alves Bastros, and Antonio Baitista da Costa, Jr., also became outspoken in the republican cause.<sup>56</sup>

On 11 November, Rui Barbosa, Benjamin Constant, Aristides Lobo, Bocaiuva, Glicério, and Colonel Solon (some Republicans, others military men) met at the house of the Marshall Deodoro da Fonseca to convince him to lead the movement, something he reluctantly agreed to. On 15 November, the monarchy was overthrown by a military coup and the republic was declared.

The movement had resulted from the concerted action of three groups: a military faction, plantation owners from the Paulista West, and members of the urban middle classes. They were indirectly aided in the attainment of their goal by the declining prestige of the monarchy and of the traditional oligarchies which had supported the Crown. Although the revolutionaries were momentarily united around the republican ideal, profound disagreements among them would surface during the first attempts to organize the new regime. In the first years of the republic, latent contradictions exploded into conflict contributing on several occasions to the instability of the new regime.

Ultimately, however, 1889 did not mark a significant break in the Brazilian historical process. The urban middle classes and emerging proletariat were not strong enough to undermine the power of the new rural oligarchies during the First Republic (until 1930).

The system of production and the colonial character of the economy survived unchanged, and the country continued to depend on foreign markets and foreign capital as it always had. The main difference was that the traditional rural oligarchy had been supplanted by a new one: the coffee planters of the West and their allies, who, once in power, promoted only those institutional changes that were necessary to satisfy their own needs. November 15 was thus a *journee des dupes* for all the other social groups who had hoped that the republic would represent a break with tradition.