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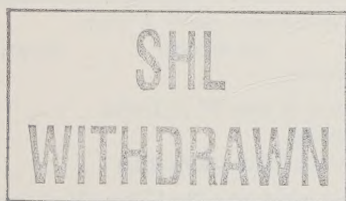


ANARCHISTS AND COMMUNISTS IN BRAZIL, 1900-1935



# ANARCHISTS AND COMMUNISTS IN BRAZIL, 1900-1935

*by John W. F. Dulles*



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, AUSTIN & LONDON



6/15/66  
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Frontispiece picture:

Praça Mauá, Rio de Janeiro, May 1, 1927.  
(Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*)

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Dulles, John W                    F  
    Anarchists and Communists in Brazil, 1900-1935.

    Bibliography: p.

    1. Communism—Brazil. 2. Anarchism and anarchists  
—Brazil. 3. Trade-unions—Brazil. I. Title.

HX192.D85                    331.88'0981                    73-4913

ISBN 0-292-70302-2

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Printed in the United States of America


Composition and printing by The University of Texas  
    Printing Division

Binding by Universal Bookbindery, Inc., San Antonio



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## PREFACE

On several occasions in 1969 and 1970 I had the opportunity of visiting in São Paulo with Germinal Leuenroth. Very kindly he let me see the proletarian newspaper collection accumulated over many years by his father, Edgard Leuenroth (1881-1968), a leading participant in the Brazilian anarchist movement. More than to anything else, this narrative of the 1900-1935 period owes its existence to that collection of anarchist, Communist, and labor union organs.

Supplementing information gathered from the Leuenroth collection and the regular daily newspapers are the recollections provided by people who participated in the events. Two of these individuals, Leôncio Basbaum and Otávio Brandão, supplied considerable information and must be mentioned here.

Basbaum's contribution to this manuscript was chiefly in the form of unpublished memoirs, made available to me by his widow. They give a picture of the Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCB—Communist Party of Brazil) in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Basbaum (1907-1969) organized the Brazilian Communist Youth movement in 1927 and remained an influential figure in the Party until early 1933, when he was dropped from its Central Committee by the adepts of *obreirismo*, or extreme anti-intellectualism, a concept that reigned supreme in the Party in 1932 and 1933.

It is difficult to think of the PCB in what Basbaum has called its "romantic period" of the 1920's without visualizing Otávio Brandão and his wife, the poetess Laura Brandão, addressing the workers in antigovernment rallies in Rio de Janeiro's Praça Mauá (Mauá Square). Brandão (1896-), who supplied me with information in verbal and typewritten

form, was the theoretician of the PCB and the founder, in 1925, of its organ, *A Classe Operaria*.<sup>1</sup>

Brandão writes that "without considering the struggle of the workers and the people, it will be impossible to write the history of Brazil and Latin America in the twentieth century."<sup>2</sup> In an effort to reconstruct the struggles to which Brandão refers—struggles often sustained against an alliance of company owners, state and federal troops, and state and federal governments—I have chosen to open with some background material and then move to what Brandão calls "the first important wave of labor strikes and popular movements, 1917–1920."<sup>3</sup>

The strikes, anarchist-led, met with some success in 1917 and in part of 1919, but were followed by reverses in 1920 and 1921. The reverses were cited by Astrogildo Pereira and other Brazilian admirers of Bolshevism as reasons why the proletariat should forsake the antipolitical, decentralized principles of anarchism and adhere to the disciplined, iron-willed "Communist Party of Brazil, Section of the Communist International." Some anarchists agreed with this view, but others, such as Fábio Luz, José Oiticica, and Edgard Leuenroth, condemned the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The ensuing contest between anarchists and Communists disrupted labor unions.

In July 1924, when the contest was entering its third year, an uprising against the Brazilian government was undertaken by military rebels under the slogan of Justice and Representation. Communists and anarchists supported this "small-bourgeois" uprising and some of them were victims during the state of siege (1924–1926) that prevailed while forces loyal to President Artur Bernardes (1922–1926) harried the rebels. The PCB suffered less repression than the anarchist movement during the state of siege and gained the advantage in Rio de Janeiro. If the anarchists had a slight advantage in São Paulo it was because the PCB was exceedingly weak there in the 1920's: João da Costa Pimenta, the PCB's man in São Paulo from 1922 until 1926, was a great labor organizer who put labor organization ahead of Communist politics and theory.

Early in the administration of Washington Luís, who succeeded Bernardes as president of Brazil, the PCB enjoyed a period of legality. But an end to this situation could be foreseen in June 1927, when Rio news-

<sup>1</sup> Octavio Brandão, "A Política de Quadros," *Imprensa Popular*, October 26, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> Octavio Brandão, "As Lutas Operárias e Populares."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

papers published familiar stories of how the Rio police had uncovered "a terrible Bolshevik plot." Two months later the Aníbal de Toledo Law, aimed at the anarchists and Communists, was promulgated, but it did not prevent the PCB from forging ahead in 1928 and 1929. The Party's two candidates (Otávio Brandão and Minervino de Oliveira) were elected to the Rio Municipal Council, the Communist-led Brazilian General Confederation of Labor was launched, PCB membership climbed to approximately one thousand, and circulation of the weekly *A Classe Operaria* reached fifteen thousand.

In 1930 everything went wrong for the Party and those who had led it in the 1920's. The Party suffered from severe governmental repression and from an increase in the activities of the Trotskyite dissidents. More seriously, workers, Party members, and not a few Party leaders defied the PCB by ignoring its warning against the Aliança Liberal, an oppositionist political movement that included labor legislation among the reforms it proposed for Brazil; they flocked to support the Aliança Liberal in its successful revolution against the administration of Washington Luís. While the exciting political upheaval captured the imagination of urban masses, representatives of Moscow's Communist International imposed an extremely sectarian policy on the PCB and forced the retirement of its former leaders on the grounds that they held small-bourgeois ideas.

If in 1931 some workers and soldiers became disillusioned with the government that resulted from the Aliança Liberal revolution, they seemed inclined to turn not to the PCB, but to Luís Carlos Prestes, the "Cavalier of Hope," who was considered the hero of the 1924-1926 military rebellion against Bernardes. It is true that in 1931 Prestes, in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, was issuing manifestoes recommending Communism and repudiating *prestismo* (allegiance to Prestes). But the PCB leaders feared the "small-bourgeois, Bonapartist" influence of Prestes and believed that he was using his manifestoes and the PCB's name to attract followers to himself.<sup>4</sup> Finally, in the latter half of 1931, Arthur Ernst Ewert, an agent of the Communist International, concluded arrangements in Montevideo that sent Prestes on a three-year visit to Russia, "to save Prestes and at the same time liquidate *prestismo*."<sup>5</sup>

A low point for the PCB was reached in 1932-1933, largely the result of the situation that developed within Brazil and within the Party in 1930.

<sup>4</sup> "O Prestismo e os Golpes Feudais-burgueses que Se Preparam," *A Classe Operaria*, May 1, 1933.

<sup>5</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 144.

By 1933 the stage was clear of the men who had played the leading roles in building up the Party in the 1920's. Astrogildo Pereira, PCB secretary-general from 1922 through most of 1930, was expelled from the Party in 1932. Brandão saved himself from expulsion from the Party by engaging in "fifty self-criticisms";<sup>6</sup> however, in Moscow, where he went in 1931 following his deportation from Brazil, he found himself ostracized.<sup>7</sup>

The PCB's new leaders, priding themselves on their uneducated ways, blamed the Party's weakness on the steps taken in the 1920's by the intellectuals, particularly by Astrogildo Pereira and Otávio Brandão. Describing those steps, examining the workers' struggles against capitalism, and studying the anarchist-Communist conflict are three purposes of this book.

The recovery of the PCB in 1934 corresponded to the days in which José Caetano Machado, the foremost anti-intellectualist, and the unsectarian Miranda (Antônio Maciel Bonfim) were influential in the Party. After Miranda became PCB secretary-general in 1934, these leaders were carried away by their success. In Moscow in the latter part of that year they recommended the disastrous uprising that was undertaken in Brazil late in 1935.

The prices of coffee (indicative of the Brazilian economic situation) and the prices of foods often had a bearing on the events and are therefore tabulated in the appendix.

For financial assistance when I made some trips to Brazil during the period of 1966–1969, I am grateful to the University of Texas at Austin, the Brown-Lupton Foundation of Fort Worth, the Graduate School of International Studies of the University of Denver, and the late Edward Larocque Tinker.

For typing and secretarial work in Austin I am deeply grateful to Eleanor MacMillan. For research assistance I am very much indebted to Daphne F. Rodger, who gave me invaluable help during my visits to Brazil in 1967 and 1968, and to César Parreiras Horta, who helped me chiefly in Austin throughout 1971. In addition to doing research work, Parreiras Horta carefully studied the manuscript. His suggestions eliminated many errors and in other ways improved the book.

Sheldon Maram kindly read over Book I (Background) and submit-

<sup>6</sup> Octavio Brandão, "A Política de Quadros."

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

ted helpful ideas. My daughter Ellen T. Dulles labored for long hours in the Biblioteca Nacional in Rio de Janeiro to fill notebooks with commodity prices, some of which are shown in the appendix. My other daughter, Edith Dulles Lawlis, obtained most of the photographs that have been reproduced in this volume. Gaspar da Cruz, of Rio de Janeiro, also cooperated well, sending me information that I had asked him to find in the newspaper collection at the Biblioteca Nacional during intervals when I was in Tucson and Austin.

J.W.F.D.



## NOTES ABOUT SPELLING AND CURRENCY

In this manuscript the names of vessels and periodicals are spelled as they appeared at the time. Thus, *A Classe Operaria* is given no accent.

In the footnotes and the bibliographical list, authors' names and the titles of articles and books are spelled as they appeared on the actual copies of the works cited. Furthermore, efforts were made to keep name spelling in reference notes the same as that in the Sources of Material. This accounts for spelling in notes different from that in the text.

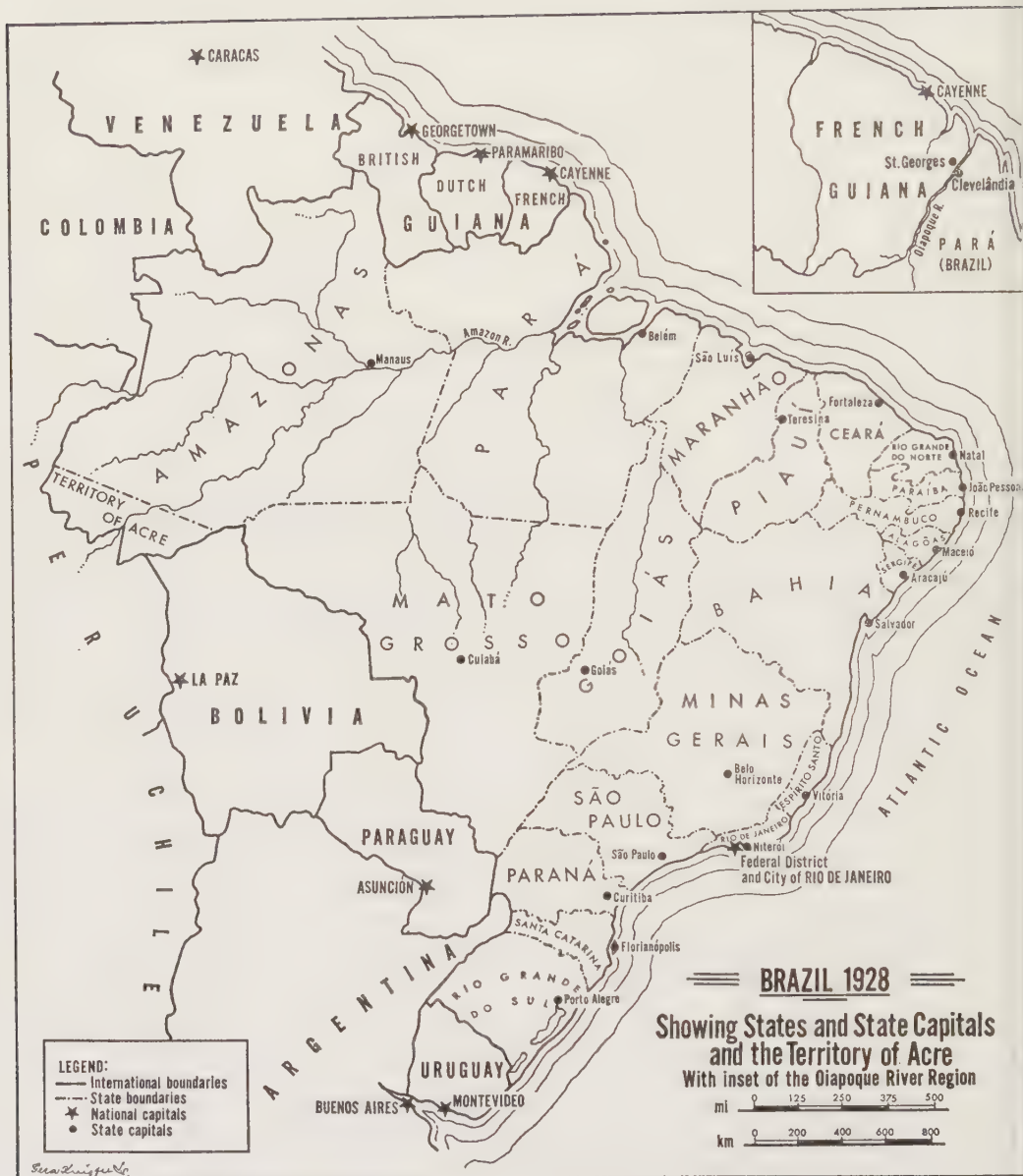
When expressed in figures, one mil-réis (one thousand réis) is written 1\$000. One conto (one thousand mil-réis) is written 1:000\$000. When expressed in figures, United States currency is indicated as follows: U.S.\$1,000. For conversion of mil-réis and contos to United States currency, see mil-réis entry in the glossary.





BOOK I: *Background*, 1900–1917

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★ CARACAS

VENEZUELA

COLOMBIA

★ GEORGETOWN

BRITISH

★ PARAMARIBO

DUTCH

★ CAYENNE

FRENCH

FRENCH

St. Georges

CAYENNE

Clevelândia

PARÁ (BRAZIL)

Manaus

Amazon R.

Belém

São Luís

Fortaleza

Teresiça

RIO GRANDE DO NORTE

Natal

PARAIBA

João Pessoa

PERNAMBUCO

Recife

ALAGOAS

Maceió

SERGIPE

Aracaju

BAHIA

Salvador

MINAS GERAIS

Belo Horizonte

SÃO PAULO

São Paulo

ESPÍRITO SANTO

Vitoria

RIO DE JANEIRO

Waterloo

Federal District and City of RIO DE JANEIRO

PARANÁ

Curitiba

SANTA CATARINA

Florianópolis

RIO GRANDE DO SUL

Porto Alegre

MATTO GROSSO

Culabá

Goiás

BOLIVIA

★ LA PAZ

PARAGUAY

★ ASUNCION

ARGENTINA

★ BUENOS AIRES

URUGUAY

★ MONTEVIDEO

ATLANTIC OCEAN

TERRITORY OF ACRE

ACRE

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## 1. Immigration: Largely Italian

In the second half of the nineteenth century, influential Brazilians resolved that the immigration of workers from Europe would benefit the national economy. None extolled the virtues of a liberal immigration policy more than those who began to develop coffee plantations on a large scale in the 1870's in São Paulo State. Elsewhere Negro slaves were being used on coffee plantations, but they had become scarce and were less productive than immigrants. When the last of the slaves were freed in 1888, they were, Celso Furtado writes, "altogether unfit to respond to economic incentives."<sup>1</sup> Some Brazilian intellectuals joined in the cry for immigrants, pointing out that they would have a beneficial "whitening" effect on the country's population.<sup>2</sup>

Europeans, their imaginations sometimes stirred by Brazilian government propaganda about "the land of opportunity," poured into Brazil between 1870 and the start of World War I. They included Germans, Austrians, and Poles, but the large majority came from Italy, Portugal, and Spain.

<sup>1</sup> Celso Furtado, *The Economic Growth of Brazil: A Survey from Colonial to Modern Times*, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas E. Skidmore, *Brazilian Intellectuals and the Problem of Race, 1870-1930*, p. 4.

From Italy, where economic conditions were poor in the rural south, workers flocked to the New World in especially large numbers. Between 1884 and 1903 Brazil received over one million Italians, more than the combined inflow of immigrants to Brazil from all other countries in those years. São Paulo State, eager for farm hands, paid the Italian shipping companies for the ocean passages of immigrants, and in Italy shipping companies rewarded agents for persuading Italians to undertake the "voyage to Canaan." This practice ended in March 1902, when the Italian government, alleging mistreatment on the Brazilian plantations, prohibited further free emigration.<sup>3</sup>

To work in the tiny "industrial centers" springing up at points where railroads maintained mechanical shops, foreigners were preferred to the indigenous proletariat, which was overwhelmingly illiterate and hardly seemed enterprising. In the textile mills in the cities, immigrants, many of them women and children, toiled long hours. Some came from wretched experiences on the coffee plantations, where the "land of opportunity" had proved utterly disappointing to them. Others came to the cities directly from their homelands, for the early industrialists—and these included foreigners who had arrived in Brazil with good resources and connections<sup>4</sup>—were as interested as the coffee producers in having a large pool of available immigrant labor.

In 1900 approximately 90 percent of São Paulo's industrial work force, still small, was foreign.<sup>5</sup> In 1912, after the first group of electric generators helped provide an industrial spurt in São Paulo, thirty-one textile plants in that state employed 10,184 workers, of whom 8,341 were foreign-born (6,044 born in Italy).<sup>6</sup> One may assume that by then many of the 1,843 Brazilian-born workers were the children of immigrants.

<sup>3</sup> See Rollie E. Poppino, *Brazil: The Land and People*, chap. 5. Dr. Poppino writes (p. 191) that the Italians and Spanish "were prone to return home or migrate to another country if they were disappointed in Brazil." Discussing immigration to Brazil in general, Dr. Poppino goes on to say that "over-all, the return rate appears to have been under 30 percent. Thus, net immigration for the eighty years ending in 1963 was probably about 3,500,000." For some Italian views, and information about the "Prinetti Decree" of 1902 (whereby Italy prohibited the free transportation of immigrants), see letters of Antônio Piccarolo and Preziosi, reprinted in *Jornal do Commercio*, January 16, 1913.

<sup>4</sup> Warren Dean, *The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1880-1945*, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Antonio Francisco Bandeira Junior, *A Industria no Estado de São Paulo em 1901*, p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup> Azis Simão, *Sindicato e Estado*, p. 34. See also Leôncio Rodrigues, *Conflito Industrial e Sindicalismo no Brasil*, p. 109.

In the inevitable social struggle, the capitalists, belonging to the elite group that furnished Brazil with federal and state officials, could count on state police forces to uphold law and order favorable to the company managements. Workers who would oppose these forces would lack no opportunity to hear about anarchist and socialist ideas, often presented by writers and fellow laborers who had become devoted to them before leaving southern Europe. These were ideas that had persuaded southern European governments to encourage the exodus of "radicals" from their countries—particularly after some of the European anarchists, inspired by the idea of "propaganda by the deed," had played roles in insurrections and bombings, giving particular attention to the assassination of members of the royalty.

As in southern Europe, in Brazil anarchism became a stronger force than socialism. Dreaming about the "peaceful happiness" of primitive societies, where authority was considered to have been at a minimum, anarchists called for the fullest development of individual autonomy, and they assailed governments, the Church, political parties, and the concept of property. They delighted in words that flowed from the pen of Peter Kropotkin, the heavily bearded former Russian prince who finally settled in England in 1886. Kropotkin optimistically predicted that man's fundamental goodness would be revealed in a society without property or authority, and he insisted that individuals should supply their needs (from a "common storehouse") and engage in work to the extent suggested by their own free will.<sup>7</sup>

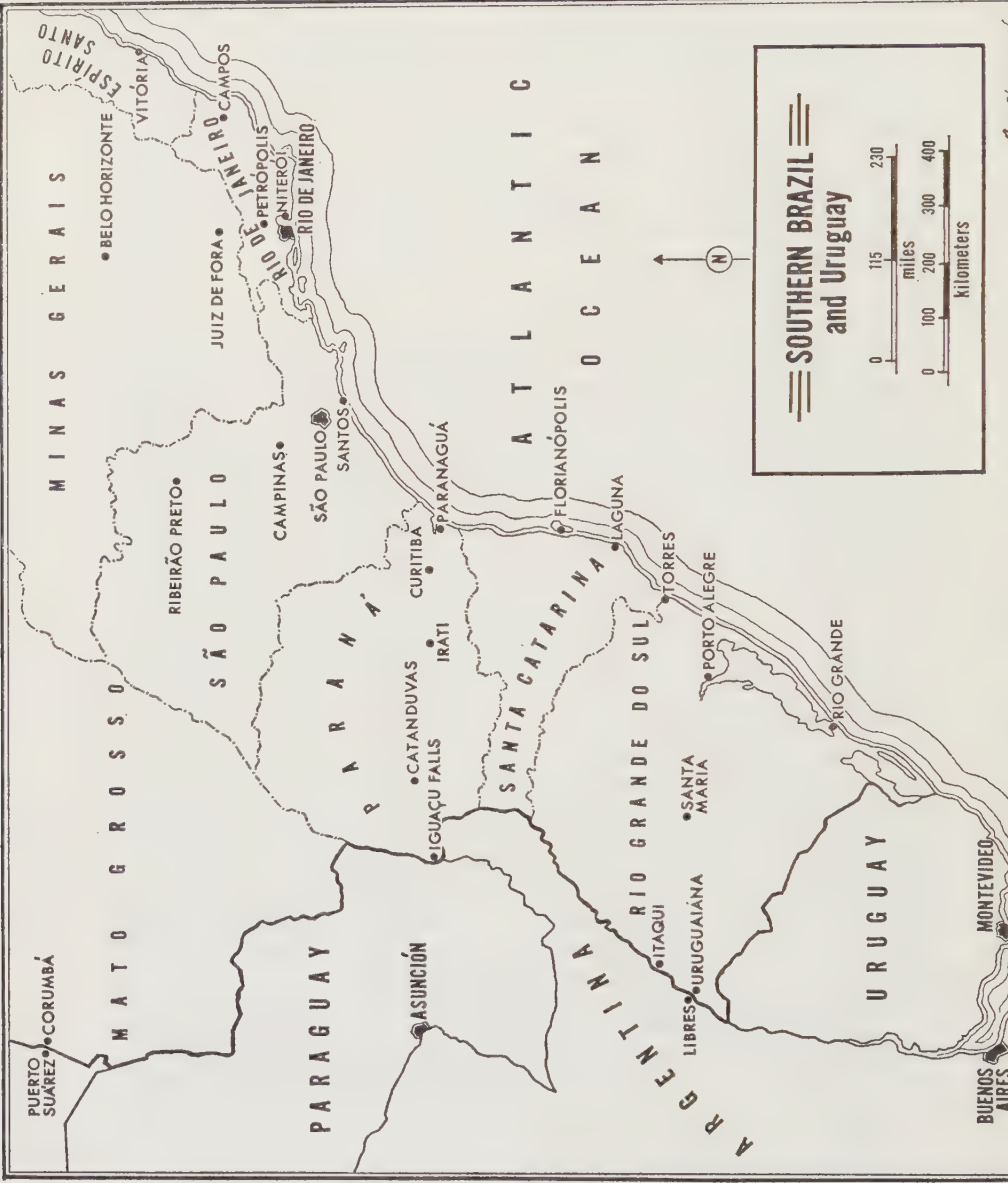
The anarchist movement that came to Brazil owed the most to a Russian of a generation before Kropotkin: Michael Bakunin, "the Apostle Paul of anarchism." Bakunin, organizer of the movement in Italy, relied less on writing than Kropotkin. A huge man, he liked to plot the overthrow of governments and participate in such plots.<sup>8</sup>

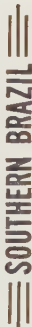
Bakunin, speaking in Switzerland in 1868, rejected Karl Marx's brand of communism because of its "negation of liberty."<sup>9</sup> The anarchists, calling politics a bourgeois invention, could not accept Marx's resolution of 1871 urging the workers to form their own political party. In 1872, when the break between Marx and Bakunin was complete, it was clear that Bakunin's influence, insignificant in England and Germany, was vast in

<sup>7</sup> Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> George Woodcock, *Anarchism*, pp. 145-183.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Bakunin quoted in James Joll, *The Anarchists*, p. 107.




**SOUTHERN BRAZIL**  
 and  
**Uruguay**

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 miles

0 100 200 300 400  
 kilometers

Bea Schuster 6

Spain, Italy, and Portugal. Barcelona, the largest industrial city of Spain, was described as the capital, or "hotbed," of anarchism.

## 2. Agitators from Europe

Bomb throwing and insurrections by disciples of Bakunin in Italy in the late 1870's provoked imprisonments and expulsions. Thus for Errico Malatesta years of exile began in 1878. Four of them (1885-1889) were spent in Argentina, where he ran a small machine-repairing shop and published a newspaper (in Italian and Spanish) to help promote anarchist ideas.

Like Malatesta, Oreste Ristori went from Italy to the La Plata region. It is said that when Ristori was about to be deported from Argentina, he jumped off a ship into a small boat, breaking his legs, and that his powers of persuasion were such that by the time his doctor, Lélío Zeno, had finished treating the fractures, Zeno had become an anarchist.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly before the turn of the century, Ristori came from Uruguay to São Paulo, and there in 1904 he founded the Italian-language weekly newspaper, *La Battaglia*. Everardo Dias, who shared imprisonments with Ristori, declares that Ristori "was the greatest agitator to have appeared in Brazil, a fluent and caustic orator, always in favor of action. He made hundreds of speeches all over the interior, stirring up the working masses of the cities, villages, and plantations."<sup>2</sup>

In *La Battaglia* in 1911 Ristori compared the Brazilian situation with that in Europe: "The workday here, as in any other country, goes from ten to thirteen or fourteen hours; wages are no better than those in Europe when it is considered that consumer goods and house rent are more expensive here. The horrendous, infernal life of the plantations is not known in Europe. Here the worker in the fields toils fourteen and fifteen hours a day and lives in filthy, squalid mud hovels."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eduardo Maffei, interview, November 11, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 246. Ristori, after his second and final expulsion from Brazil in 1936, joined the International Brigade in Spain. In 1944 he was shot by Nazis in Italy as an act of reprisal (see *Umanità Nova*, May 30, 1948).

<sup>3</sup> Ristori quoted in Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo no Brasil*, p. 306.

In publishing *La Battaglia* Ristori was assisted for years by Gigi Damiani, who had suffered jail sentences and "forced domiciles" in Italy.<sup>4</sup> As soon as Damiani reached Brazil in 1899, he was jailed for anarchist ideas he had expressed in Italy. Upon his release he spent six years in the state of Paraná, to the south of São Paulo. There he learned a trade, painting,<sup>5</sup> and with the help of Portuguese-speaking associates, he founded a newspaper, *O Direito*, in the hope of influencing the local workers, largely Germans and Poles. Later, in São Paulo, he industriously painted stage backdrops for theaters throughout the state while working on *La Battaglia* and other anarchist newspapers. Not much of a talker, he became known for his "ironic smile."<sup>6</sup>

Late in the nineteenth century Spain also provided immigrants who would contribute to the early battles of Brazilian anarchists against the bourgeoisie. Two of them were Everardo Dias and Florentino de Carvalho. Both were young when they first reached Brazil. Like Ristori and Damiani, both came to be expelled from Brazil as "dangerous anarchists." But both returned to their adopted homeland.

Everardo Dias was two years old in 1887 when he was brought to Brazil. As a young man he joined the Masonic Order and became a leader in the anticlerical movement in São Paulo. With Oreste Ristori and Benjamin Mota, an anarchist lawyer, he stirred up interest in the Associação de Livre Pensamento<sup>7</sup> (Association of Free Thought), and he directed the publication of *O Livre Pensador*, "The Free Tribune of Contemporary Ideas." This fortnightly journal, first published in 1902, praised Lamarck, Darwin, Haeckel, and Spencer. It bitterly attacked the Catholic Church, the "tyranny of tobacco," and alcohol—"the most evil drink ever invented by man."<sup>8</sup>

Florentino de Carvalho (pseudonym of Primitivo Raimundo Soares) was converted to anarchism when he read Kropotkin's *The Conquest of*

<sup>4</sup> Ugo Fedeli, *Gigi Damiani: Note biografiche: Il suo posto nell'anarchismo*, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Emma Ballerini, "Em Defesa do Companheiro Gigi Damiani," *A Plebe*, October 30, 1919.

<sup>6</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "Dados Históricos sobre o Anarquismo no Brasil," p. 23. After Damiani was expelled from Brazil in 1919, he became well known in European anarchist circles for his work in Italy with Malatesta and with the daily *Umanità Nova*.

<sup>7</sup> "Associação de Livre Pensamento," *O Livre Pensador* 7, no. 5 (São Paulo, August 1, 1909).

<sup>8</sup> *O Livre Pensador*, November 15, 1909.



*Bread*, a copy of which he chanced upon in a São Paulo bookshop in 1902.<sup>9</sup> Forthwith he resigned as a soldier in the state police to take up work as a dockhand and printer in Santos, the port city of São Paulo State. He became a union leader much sought by the police. He also found time for self-education, writing, and teaching. An admirer has described him as "a flamboyant and sometimes dramatic orator" whose "head of thick hair, and flaming eyes when he was at the pinnacle of eloquence" made one think of Nietzsche.<sup>10</sup>

Portugal also supplied many anarchists to Brazil. During the first decade of the twentieth century the foremost anarchist writer from Portugal was Neno Vasco (Gregório Nazianzeno Moreira de Queirós Vasconcelos). Immediately after reaching São Paulo in 1901 he joined a group of Italian anarchists. In 1902 he directed a second phase in the life of *O Amigo do Povo*, which was principally written in Portuguese but had a page in Italian to which Gigi Damiani sent contributions from Paraná.

Neno Vasco was unusual in that he had earned a law degree (from Coimbra University) and was the son of a wealthy father; moreover, he was so retiring that he could not face an audience. His magazine *Aurora*, his articles in *O Amigo do Povo* and *A Terra Livre*, and the plays he wrote<sup>11</sup> gained him the reputation of being the most cultured anarchist in Brazil. A linguist and orthographer, he used, in *A Terra Livre*, a spelling reform that contained many changes adopted later by the Brazilian Academy of Letters.<sup>12</sup> *A Terra Livre*, founded and directed by Neno Vasco, Manuel Moscoso, and Edgard Leuenroth, was published between 1905 and 1910, first in São Paulo, then in Rio de Janeiro, and then again in São Paulo. Its demise has been attributed to Neno Vasco's return to Portugal in 1910.

In 1907, when *A Terra Livre* was being published in Rio de Janeiro, Neno Vasco gained a well-traveled collaborator who came from Paris: Paulo Berthelot. Berthelot was a young linguist, and his great interest, like that of many anarchists, was to get the world to speak Esperanto, "the international language." After publishing a few articles in the Rio proletarian press, Berthelot left for the Brazilian interior to learn what primi-

<sup>9</sup> Liberto L. Reis, "Florentino de Carvalho," *A Plebe* 33, no. 26 (March 10, 1950).

<sup>10</sup> José Oiticica, "Florentino de Carvalho," *Ação Direta* 2, no. 34 (May 1, 1947).

<sup>11</sup> "Figuras do Anarchismo: Neno Vasco," *Ação Direta* 2, no. 46 (April 17, 1948).

<sup>12</sup> Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo no Brasil*, p. 211.

tive Indians could teach about colonies in which people could be free from oppressive regimes.<sup>13</sup> His last letters, written when he was dying in the interior in 1910, were addressed to Neno Vasco.

<sup>13</sup> "Figuras do Anarchismo: Paulo Berthelot," *Ação Direta* 4, no. 58 (August 26, 1949).

### 3. Socialists Help Organize Workers

Among the socialists who reached Brazil were Italians who felt so strongly that Italy should never have been set up as a kingdom that they had shared imprisonments with anarchists in their homeland.<sup>1</sup>

Joining with Brazilian intellectual admirers of socialism, the foreign socialists participated in numerous attempts to organize workers into a political party. They were handicapped by the small size of the urban proletariat and by the anarchists' severe condemnation of politics. They also found that Brazilians had little interest in the ideas of Karl Marx.

It is said that the first article on Marxism in the Brazilian press appeared in 1871 in Recife, a northeastern city known for its eminent law school and its long tradition of close ties to Europe. This article, the translation of a study published in Spain, appeared in two installments in *Seis de Março*, a newspaper supporting the Brazilian republican cause.<sup>2</sup> In 1883 Tobias Barreto, a professor at the Recife Law School who assiduously absorbed ideas developed in Germany, delivered a speech that is cited as the first in which a Brazilian made references to Marx and *Das Kapital*.<sup>3</sup> Four years later Barreto, writing in *Estudos Alemães*, called Marx "the most valiant thinker of the nineteenth century in the field of economic science."<sup>4</sup>

In Santos, far from Recife, Silvério Fontes, a Brazilian physician who had formed a socialist circle in 1889, wrote in praise of Marx in 1895.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fúlvio Abramo, interview, November 13, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Paulo Cavalcânti, interview, October 12, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> Vamireh Chacon, *História das Idéias Socialistas no Brasil*, p. 265.

<sup>4</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Combates da Classe Operária," *Revista Brasileira*, no. 46 (March–April 1963), p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, "Silvério Fontes, Pioneiro do Marxismo no Brasil," *Estudos Sociais*, no. 12 (April 1962), pp. 404–419. (This article also appeared in Special Supplement of *Novos Rumos* of March 23–29, 1962.)

The article appeared at the time Fontes helped organize the Centro Socialista de Santos to commemorate May Day and to issue *A Questão Social*, a magazine that lasted for about a year. Fontes expressed satisfaction that the Centro Socialista de Santos "initiated propaganda of the reformist doctrine, based on the Marxist trilogy: materialist interpretation of history, economic determinism, and class struggle."<sup>6</sup>

The observance of May Day by the small group in Santos in 1895 was considered a great achievement and has been described as the first such observance in Brazil. Over a year earlier—on April 15, 1894—a group of anarchist and socialist workers, mostly Italian, had met in São Paulo City to plan a commemoration for May 1, 1894. But the police, alerted by the Italian consul in São Paulo, had broken up this meeting, arresting nine Italians and a few Brazilians. The Brazilians had been punished by beatings and a few days in jail in São Paulo. The Italians had been sent to the Casa de Detenção in Rio de Janeiro and held there for eight months.<sup>7</sup>

In Rio de Janeiro, the federal capital, the First Brazilian Socialist Congress was held on August 1, 1892. Its contribution to history was to cause the next such congress, held in São Paulo in May 1902, to be called the Second Brazilian Socialist Congress. This Second Socialist Congress was attended by Silvério Fontes and forty-three others (mostly Paulistas of Italian origin). It established a Partido Socialista Brasileiro. But the party promptly disappeared, as happened to other socialist parties of this period: the Partido Socialista Operário, founded in Rio in 1895, and the Partido Socialista Coletivista, founded in Rio in August 1902.<sup>8</sup>

The Partido Socialista Brasileiro, during its brief appearance at the Second Socialist Congress in São Paulo in 1902, issued a manifesto whose conciliatory features were contrary to the "direct action" preached by an-

<sup>6</sup> Silvério Fontes, in one of the last numbers of *A Questão Social*, quoted in Astrojildo Pereira, "Silvério Fontes," p. 408. Astrojildo Pereira uses such evidence to conclude that Fontes was "the first Brazilian socialist of Marxist tendency." However, Otávio Brandão, calling attention to references to "reformism" in Fontes's writings, states that Fontes was not a Marxist (see Octavio Brandão, "Combates da Classe Operária," p. 75).

<sup>7</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 243. (See also p. 48, where the year is given as 1893.)

<sup>8</sup> Hermínio Linhares, *Contribuição à História das Lutas Operárias no Brasil*, p. 39 (quoted in Astrojildo Pereira, "Silvério Fontes," p. 406), mentions the Partido Socialista Operário. Everardo Dias (*História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 245) and Nelson Werneck Sodré (*A História da Imprensa no Brasil*, p. 356) mention the Partido Socialista Coletivista, whose organizers included Gustavo de Lacerda, the founder (in 1908) of the Brazilian Press Association (ABI).

archists; it said that the exploiters and the exploited should work together for social "readjustment." The Second Socialist Congress also drew up a thirty-six-point program that called for an eight-hour day, labor arbitration courts, a progressive inheritance tax, the adoption of divorce, the suppression of the Army, free light and power for the people, and free and obligatory education for all under fourteen.<sup>9</sup>

Socialists and anarchists, although devoting attention to their differences, worked alike on the principal task: persuading workers to join trade unions.<sup>10</sup> For the Brazilian anarchists felt that the attack on powerful, existing organizations—the government, political parties, and the Catholic Church—would best be served by the organization of workers in unions. This, of course, was the view of anarchists who were influenced by European syndicalists and anarcho-syndicalists and who therefore gave emphasis to the industrial proletariat and to the role that labor unions would play in the ideal new society. But the need for worker organization was also stressed by the followers of Malatesta and Kropotkin, who had a broader view of the future libertarian society and who did not see labor unions as the sole means of achieving their goals.

Starting before 1900, militants pushed for the formation of trade unions, often called *ligas operárias*, *uniões profissionais*, or *associações de resistência*. Already there were some worker beneficent societies, which, in the words of a laborer of those days, "gave the *beneficiados* the right to a funeral and bereavement."<sup>11</sup> Part of the work of militants was to transform these beneficent societies into more aggressive organizations,<sup>12</sup> with other objectives, among which better pay and the eight-hour day were of immediate concern to the workers.

<sup>9</sup> Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 150.

<sup>11</sup> An unnamed worker quoted in Cristiano Cordeiro, "Respostas do Dr. Cristiano Cordeiro ao Prof. Gadiel Perruci," p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

#### 4. Proletarian Publications

Some of the early militants attended picnics of workers and their families in order to gain new acquaintances and spread the word of the need for strong unions. But the work went slowly. The militants found "the indigenous proletariat working ten and twelve hours a day, receiving scurrilous treatment, and in no condition to take a position; it did not even perceive its own state of subjugation and misery."<sup>1</sup>

Of help in convincing workers was the proletarian press—the vast array of sheets usually embellished with the motto "Workers of the World, Unite!"<sup>2</sup> They were especially plentiful in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the cities making the most industrial progress. Financial difficulties and police activities assured short lives for most of these periodicals and caused the more successful to suffer gaps in publication.

In Rio de Janeiro in 1899 a twenty-one-year-old anarchist streetcar conductor, J. Mota Assunção, founded *O Protesto*. It came to an end eleven numbers later (in July 1900). But J. Mota Assunção, who became a linotypist, stubbornly spent the next ten years helping to establish, or collaborating with, new anarchist publications in Rio. Others who helped the Rio anarchist press were Manuel Moscoso, a shoemaker, and Carlos Dias, a typographical worker; in 1904 they published *O Libertario*. When *A Terra Livre*, which Moscoso had helped found in São Paulo in 1905, moved to Rio in 1907, J. Mota Assunção joined its staff.<sup>3</sup>

The proletarian press of São Paulo had a few socialist newspapers such as *O Socialista* ("organ of the Centro Socialista de São Paulo"), which appeared in 1896 with articles in Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, and German. In 1899 *O Grito do Povo* ("socialist revolutionary weekly") initiated a campaign in São Paulo for a shorter workday.

Of much greater importance to the socialist movement in São Paulo was *Avanti!*, the "socialist and proletarian organ." This newspaper

<sup>1</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> Often groups of illiterates gathered to hear proletarian newspapers read aloud (Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970).

<sup>3</sup> José Romero, "O 10º Aniversário de 'Ação Direta' e os Congêneres que A Precederam no Rio de Janeiro," *Ação Direta* 11, no. 106 (May 1956).

started up in 1900 at the headquarters of the Liga Democrática Italiana.<sup>4</sup> It was the organ of Italian and Brazilian socialists (such as Silvério Fontes) who were to organize the Second Brazilian Socialist Congress in 1902. Containing articles in Italian and Portuguese, it lasted many years. A leading Italian-born contributor to *Avanti!* was Antônio Piccarolo, professor of Greek, Latin, and philosophy.

*Avanti!* complained that anarchists were exercising a "tyranny" over the labor unions. This statement led Neno Vasco to reply in *A Terra Livre* that "precisely" the difference between the anarchists and socialists was that the latter were interested in conquering political power. Neno Vasco added that if *Avanti!* could "prove" the existence of "anarchist tyranny" in unions it would be rendering a useful service, for such a condition should be corrected. "We hope and desire that the unions will proceed to an anarchist end," but this should come about through education and example and not from "an absurd and impossible anarchist dictatorship."<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding his differences with the anarchists, socialist Professor Piccarolo often worked at their side. Thus in 1904 *Avanti!* and Oreste Ristori's *La Battaglia* published, in Italian and Portuguese, the manifesto of the Comissão Pró-Mártires da Rússia, denouncing "the cruelty of autocratic Russia against her sons, guilty of the single crime of having loved liberty and the good of their own brothers."<sup>6</sup> After the Russian uprising of 1905 had been suppressed, Piccarolo joined Ristori, Neno Vasco, and Ricardo Gonçalves, a young anarchist poet, calling for a rally to express solidarity with "the Russian martyrs." When the rally took place the proletarian press was represented by the quiet Neno Vasco and by such speakers as Piccarolo, Ristori, Everardo Dias, Valentim Diego (of the syndicalist *Grito del Pueblo*), and Benjamim Mota, who had directed the first phase of *A Lanterna*.

*A Lanterna* was the organ of the Anticlerical League. Its long life began impressively on March 7, 1901. The then-enormous number of ten thousand copies was printed with the announcement that the issue was free of charge. Handsomely produced in four large pages, with an ef-

<sup>4</sup> "Notas Historicas, 1896-1923," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 30 (São Paulo, March 13, 1923).

<sup>5</sup> Neno Vasco quoted in Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo no Brasil*, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, pp. 22-23.

fective front-page anticlerical drawing, it bore an editorial that said: "We are only a few men. Are we ten? Are we twenty? What does it matter? We shall be a legion tomorrow, when everyone, knowing how clericalism is deleterious, how Jesuitism is malign, how religious hypocrisy brutalizes the people, will decide to join our ranks."<sup>7</sup>

The first phase of *A Lanterna* ended in 1904 after 60 numbers. It was revived in 1909 under the direction of Edgard Leuenroth and during this second phase, which lasted until 1916, 293 numbers were published. In a third phase, between 1933 and 1935, Leuenroth issued 45 more numbers.

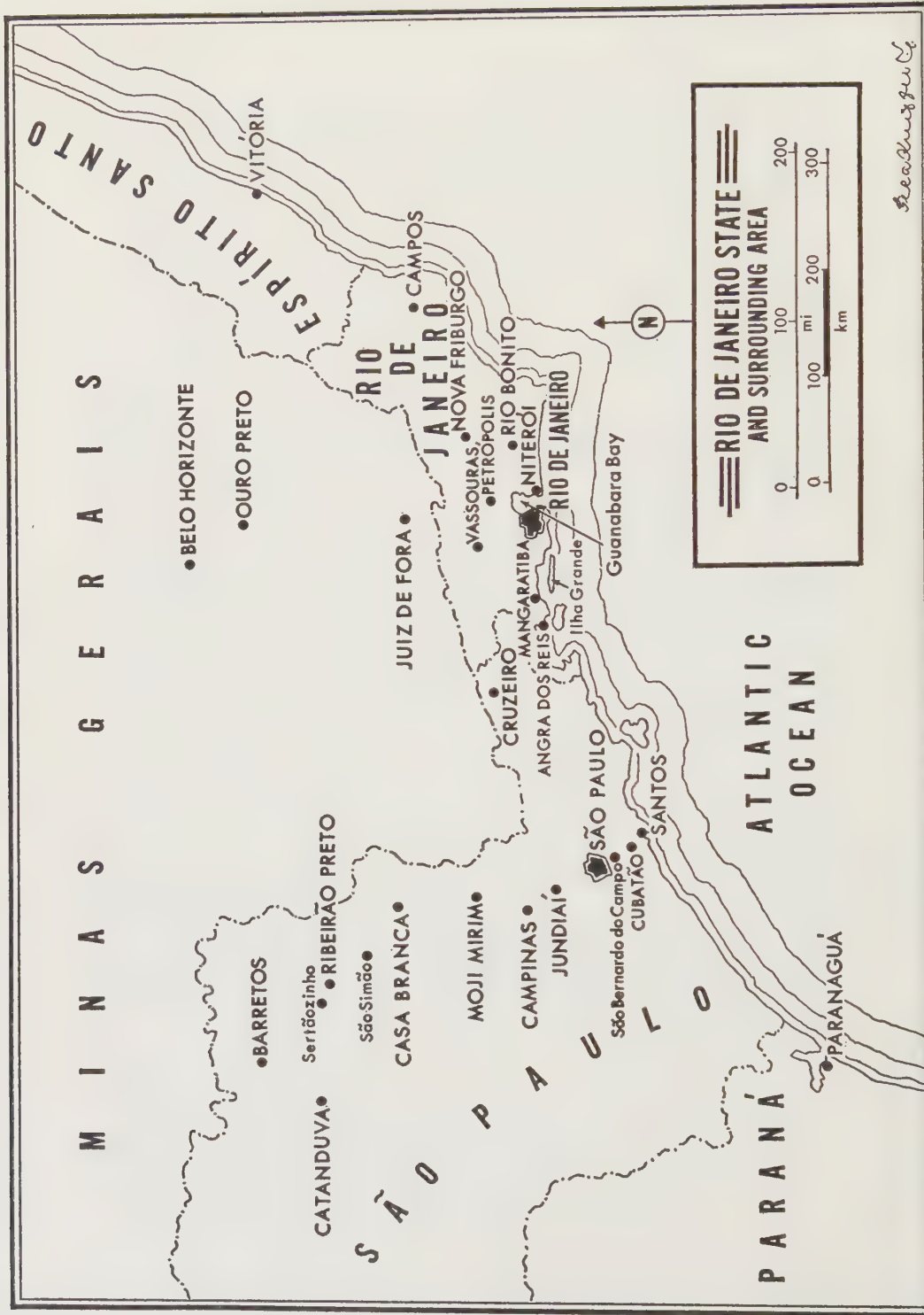
Edgard Leuenroth, a man of saintly character who was to become São Paulo's leading anarchist, was born in Brazil in 1881, the son of a pharmacist who had immigrated from Germany. Edgard's formal schooling ended at the age of ten, when he took a job as an office boy. At fourteen he became a typographical worker, and after that he was connected with numerous periodicals.

In 1903 Leuenroth participated in a *círculo socialista*. But in 1904 Ricardo Gonçalves, then a law student, converted him to the anarchist cause.<sup>8</sup> The União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos had just come into existence at an enthusiastic meeting in São Paulo, the result of a merger of two labor groups in the printing field. Leuenroth, starting to play a role in the labor movement, served as librarian of the new União,<sup>9</sup> and helped publish its organ, *O Trabalhador*. In 1905 he joined Neno Vasco and Manuel Moscoso in launching *A Terra Livre*.

<sup>7</sup> *A Lanterna* 1, no. 1 (São Paulo, March 7, 1901). A testimonial to *A Lanterna's* effectiveness is given in "Carta Aberta," *O Sindicalista* 7, no. 12 (Porto Alegre, February 13, 1926); a woman describes how, years earlier, *A Lanterna* converted her to its viewpoint.

<sup>8</sup> Germinal Leuenroth, interview, November 6, 1968; Germinal Leuenroth showed notes by Edgard Leuenroth, which serve as an outline for the story of Edgard's life. Incidents in that life are given in Toledo Machado, "Edgard Leuenroth: Um Homem que Aceitou Todos os Desafios," *Última Hora*, São Paulo, January 14, 1953.

<sup>9</sup> "Notas Historicas, 1896-1923," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 30 (March 13, 1923).



MINAS GERAIS

ESPÍRITO SANTO

• BELO HORIZONTE

• OURO PRETO

RIO DE JANEIRO

• CAMPOS

• VASSOURAS

• NOVA FRIBURGO

• PETROPOLIS

• RIO BONITO

• NITERÓI

• MANGARATIBA

• ANGRA DOS REIS

• CRUZEIRO

• Ilha Grande

Guanabara Bay

• BARRETOS

Seriãozinho

• RIBEIRÃO PRETO

• São Simão

• CASA BRANCA

• MOJI MIRIM

• CAMPINAS

• JUNDIAÍ

• SÃO PAULO

• SÃO BERNARDO DO CAMPO

• CUBATÃO

• SANTOS


• CATANDUVA

SÃO PAULO

ATLANTIC OCEAN

PARANÁ

• PARANAGUÁ


**RIO DE JANEIRO STATE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

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## 5. Early Strikes and the 1906 Labor Congress

In São Paulo in May 1902 the Second Brazilian Socialist Congress predicted that "strikes will become more general, more and more frequent, responding to the ever-increasing oppression of capitalism."<sup>1</sup> In 1901 labor unrest had already contrasted sharply to the peace of the preceding years. A successful strike by Rio masons had reduced their workday from twelve to ten hours.<sup>2</sup> Less successful had been the experience of a group of São Paulo workers who had struck in 1901 to persuade their employer to pay wages more promptly; some of the workers, preferring tardy payments to none, had deserted their companions.<sup>3</sup>

The socialists predicted correctly in 1902. However, the strike wave that began in 1901 subsided after 1908 due to an economic recession. Employers, seeking to avoid bankruptcy and assisted by growing unemployment, went back on agreements, and so most of the workers' gains were lost.

The prerecession gains did not come easily. In Rio in 1903 the police helped to bring an end to two strikes: a "poorly organized" strike by coachmen,<sup>4</sup> and a twenty-day strike, carried out largely by thousands of textile workers, which has been described as "the most important strike movement in Brazil up to that time."<sup>5</sup> However, strikes in São Paulo in 1903 and 1904, stimulated and encouraged by *Avanti!*, included some "partial successes."

Hermínio Linhares, writing about these early efforts, asserts that the failures were caused

principally by the violent action of the police. The plant owners replied to strikes by appealing to the police, by firing strikers en masse, or by showing them how they would find themselves in the immediate future: unemployed, imprisoned, persecuted, with their families in misery. If the workers did not

<sup>1</sup> Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Hermínio Linhares, "As Greves Operárias no Brasil durante o Primeiro Quartel do Século XX," *Estudos Sociais*, no. 2 (July–August 1958), p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215–216.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>5</sup> José Romero, "O 10º Aniversário de 'Ação Direta' e os Congêneres que A Precederam no Rio de Janeiro," *Ação Direta* 11, no. 106 (May 1956).

give in they were, in fact, fired, imprisoned, and beaten barbarously by the police. The persecution was so great that in order to survive they had to move to other cities or change their trades, for they were marked men in the area and would be accepted by no employer. As the number seeking work exceeded the number of jobs, the employers, taking advantage of the hunger of the unemployed, hired them at starvation wages and insisted on an exhausting workday: in the shops from 7:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; in the textile plants, from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.; in retail trade, from 7:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. . . . The system intimidated the workers, who sometimes feared to back the movement.<sup>6</sup>

To make matters worse for most of the strike leaders, the federal Congress studied a law project to expel troublesome foreigners. Given the make-up of Congress and the interest of the executive branch of the government in the proposed bill, its passage was assured. It was one of several pieces of legislation introduced over the years by Adolfo Gordo, the São Paulo businessman who was described by labor leaders as Brazil's "most despicable" legislator.

Labor leaders believed that the many unsuccessful strikes demonstrated the need for greater organization, and they spent 1904 and 1905 pressing for the formation of new unions and educating workers by speaking at meetings. The results were mixed. A "general strike" at the Santos port in 1905 was crushed by the police with the help of sailors.<sup>7</sup> In February 1906 hatmakers in São Paulo achieved a shorter workday. Textile workers in São Bernardo, S.P., required to work from 5:30 A.M. until 6:30 P.M., engaged in an unsuccessful thirty-five-day strike after the management reduced wages and declared that all workers producing less than forty meters of cloth daily would be fired.<sup>8</sup> The instigators of this strike were beaten, jailed, and dismissed from their jobs.

Early in 1906 while the federal Congress studied the Adolfo Gordo project and another project that would regulate the *sindicatos* (unions), labor leaders accepted the invitation of Rio's three-year-old Federação das Associações de Classe to gather to decide on policy and overall organization.<sup>9</sup> As a result, forty-three delegates assembled for the Primeiro

<sup>6</sup> Hermínio Linhares, "As Greves Operárias," pp. 216-217.

<sup>7</sup> Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo no Brasil*, p. 99.

<sup>8</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 252.

<sup>9</sup> At this time the Federação das Associações de Classe, which had been established in Rio in 1903 to coordinate the work of local labor organizations, changed its name to the Federação Operária Regional do Rio de Janeiro. On September 3, 1906, it became the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro (José Romero in *Ação Direta*, August-September 1957; Astrojildo Pereira, "Alguns Reparos," *Novos Rumos*, May 4-10, 1962).

Congresso Operário Brasileiro (First Brazilian Labor Congress) at Rio's Centro Galego (Spanish Club) during the third week in April 1906. Thirty of the delegates represented fifteen Rio organizations and ten represented the Federação Operária de São Paulo, which had been established in 1905. Other delegates came from the interior of São Paulo and from Rio de Janeiro State; three came from the Brazilian northeast, where labor unrest was practically unknown and where the worker associations were mere beneficent societies.<sup>10</sup>

The socialists failed to persuade the First Brazilian Labor Congress to found a socialist party. Because anarchist ideas prevailed, the congress resolved to use a "federative system" to bring the labor organizations into a confederation that it hoped would be like the French syndicalist CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail). This "federative system" was to guarantee the greatest possible autonomy to individuals in their *sindicatos* (or "societies of resistance"), to *sindicatos* in their *federações*, and to the *federações* within the new, loose overall organization, which was to be called the Confederação Operária Brasileira (COB—Brazilian Labor Confederation).<sup>11</sup>

The congress resolved that the workers were so "divided with respect to political and religious opinions" that "the only solid base for agreement and action" lay in economic interests common to all the working class. The congress declared that "only if the proletariat is economically organized and independent of political parties can it grasp the means of action belonging to it": strikes, boycotts, sabotage, and public manifestations. Faced with the question of whether it was better to use these means to achieve higher wages or shorter hours, the congress expressed its preference for the latter. Brazilian workers were urged to follow the example of their "French companions," campaigning and striking for the eight-hour day. It was argued that the reduction of the workday would decrease unemployment and send wages up, that it would provide the workers with opportunities for study, and that it would reduce alcoholism, "the fruit of excessive, exhausting work." (Thus the delegates disagreed with industrialists who were fond of arguing that workers, if given more leisure, would spend more time in saloons.) At the same time the congress

<sup>10</sup> José Francisco de Oliveira, "O Surgimento do Partido Comunista em Pernambuco e as Lutas da Classe Operária," *Novos Rumos* (Suplemento Especial), March 23-29, 1962.

<sup>11</sup> "Documentos do Movimento Operário: Resoluções do Primeiro Congresso Operário Brasileiro," *Estudos Sociais*, no. 16 (March 1963), pp. 387-398.

recommended launching a "strong campaign against alcoholism, one of the vices most deeply rooted in the working classes and an obstacle to labor organization."<sup>12</sup>

Another resolution urged workers to observe May Day in a fitting manner. Instead of partaking in picnics and dances, turning the day into a sort of "labor day holiday," characterized by "buffoonery" blessed by the government, workers were to remind themselves that they were engaged in a bitter class struggle, forced on them by the authorities.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## 6. The Last Years of the 1901–1908 Strike Wave

On May 1, 1906, workers attended public meetings at which the eight-hour day was demanded, and they heard orators praise the thousands of Russian revolutionaries who were the victims of the tsarist government. A theater was used in São Paulo, whereas Cariocas<sup>1</sup> observed the occasion in a public square for the first time. Ristori orated in Santos. Everardo Dias spoke in Campinas, S.P. In Jundiaí, S.P., Edgard Leuenroth told about the First Brazilian Labor Congress, which he had attended.<sup>2</sup>

Later in May, Jundiaí and, to a lesser extent, Campinas were the scenes of serious conflicts. Both were served by the Companhia Paulista de Estradas de Ferro (Paulista Railway Company), whose workers struck on May 15, complaining that the management had reduced the work week to five days with a corresponding wage reduction, and complaining also that the management acted against the workers' Liga Operária and made wage deductions to support a company-run *sociedade beneficente*.<sup>3</sup> On May 17 at Jundiaí six hundred textile workers, with jobs requiring thirteen hours a day, joined the strike.

Near the end of the month, after workers on other rail lines threatened to strike rather than operate trains of the Companhia Paulista, the Força Pública (state police) was successful in crushing the railroad and textile

<sup>1</sup> Residents of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>2</sup> Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo no Brasil*, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 143. See also Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, pp. 257–258.

strikes. But one policeman and several workers lost their lives when the police battled a crowd in Jundiaí. In São Paulo City, Ricardo Gonçalves, the anarchist poet, received a bullet in the arm when he participated in a student demonstration of protest. The police broke up a meeting at the headquarters of the Federação Operária de São Paulo and invaded the offices of *Avanti!* and *La Battaglia*, forcing these newspapers to be withheld from circulation.

Finally, in January 1907 the executive branch of the federal government promulgated the two decrees that Congress had enacted in order to deal with organized labor. Decree 1637 required *sindicatos* to register up-to-date statutes and lists of officers, all of whom had to be native Brazilians or else naturalized Brazilians with at least five years' residence in Brazil. As long as these *sindicatos* were formed "with a spirit of harmony between company owners and workers," they were to be recognized as legal representatives of the workers. As such they could own property and set up funds to assist their members. As civil entities, they were to be subject to the judgments of the courts.<sup>4</sup>

Decree 1641 (the "Adolfo Gordo Law") called for the expulsion (from part or all of Brazil) of foreigners who "endanger the national security or public peace." Although this decree was not to apply to foreigners who had married Brazilians, to widowers with Brazilian children, or to foreigners with at least two years of continuous residence in Brazil,<sup>5</sup> its promulgation aroused bitter reaction in the proletarian press.

The First Brazilian Labor Congress of 1906 had specifically called on the workers to do their utmost to "impose" the eight-hour day "on May 1, 1907."<sup>6</sup> Seeking to carry out this resolution, workers in São Paulo City provided the 1901-1908 strike movement with a great show of strength in May and June 1907. One group after another went on strike. Worried industrialists resolved that the police should "nullify the subversive maneuvers," and that the press should cover the strike movement in a way that would prevent workers from being carried away by the ideas of "fanatics and crazy people."<sup>7</sup> The São Paulo police chief, in a reference to the

<sup>4</sup> Decree 1637 of January 5, 1907, in *Collecção das Leis da Republica dos Estados Unidos do Brazil de 1907*, I, 17-19.

<sup>5</sup> Decree 1641 of January 7, 1907, in *ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>6</sup> "Documentos do Movimento Operário: Resoluções do Primeiro Congresso Operário Brasileiro," *Estudos Sociais*, no. 16 (March 1963), p. 394.

<sup>7</sup> Hermínio Linhares, "As Greves Operárias no Brasil Durante o Primeiro Quartel do Século XX," *Estudos Sociais*, no. 2 (July-August 1928), p. 221. See also Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais*, p. 266.

large number of jailed workers, declared that "the strike was provoked by some anarchists, agitators by trade, who are paid by foreign governments to kill our industry."<sup>8</sup>

In spite of all the arrests, often made with the accurate charge that the strikers were molesting those who wished to remain at their jobs, the São Paulo movement of May 1907 was fairly successful. Masons and carpenters were among those who achieved the eight-hour day, and in many other cases the workday was shortened. In Rio in June loaders of coal won a wage increase as well as some reduction in their long workday.

Such successes stimulated many other strikes during the remainder of 1907 and during much of 1908. But almost all of them were unsuccessful. The Santos dock workers' strike of 1908, to get their workday shortened to ten hours, was a repetition of their failure in 1905. In the northeast, the workers of the English-owned Great Western Railway finally struck for a shorter workday;<sup>9</sup> but the Pernambuco state cavalry, controlled by the dominant Rosa e Silva family, came to the rescue of the railroad management.

The police worked hard, making arrests and sometimes closing *sindicatos*, and soon they were assisted by the economic recession and unemployment that followed the financial panic of 1907. Industrialists who had made concessions in 1907 were able to insist on a return to former conditions.

Wide use was made of the decree of January 1907 to expel foreigners. This was especially true during its first year, when, according to official statistics, 132 expulsion orders were issued.<sup>10</sup> In July 1908 the decree was

<sup>8</sup> Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais*, p. 266.

<sup>9</sup> José Francisco de Oliveira, "O Surgimento do Partido Comunista em Pernambuco e as Lutas da Classe Operária," *Novos Rumos* (Suplemento Especial), March 23-29, 1962. Officially the Great Western was named The Great Western of Brazil Railway Company, Limited.

<sup>10</sup> Official figures show that, of the 132 "expelled" from Brazil in 1907, 47 were Portuguese, 27 were Spanish, and 25 were Italian. Sheldon Maram has pointed out (letter, September 21, 1971) that some reported to have been expelled (in the following tabulation) were saved by habeas corpus decrees.

*Expulsions from Brazil, 1907-1915*

1907	132	1912	44
1908	24	1913	64
1909	25	1914	26
1910	10	1915	9
1911	8		

(From Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, Conselho Nacional de Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico do Brasil, Ano V, 1939-40*, p. 1428.)

applied to Vincenzo Vacirca, who had been in charge of *Avanti!* Back in Italy—where Vacirca was elected congressman on the Socialist party ticket—the Italian arrivals from Brazil discouraged their countrymen from seeking work in Brazil, and they often made sensational denouncements of the manner in which immigrants were treated there.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Nelson Werneck Sodré, *A História da Imprensa do Brasil*, p. 359.

## 7. Revival of the Labor Movement, 1911-1912

The COB (Confederação Operária Brasileira) was finally set up in Rio in March 1908<sup>1</sup>—almost two years after it had been planned at the First Brazilian Labor Congress. It claimed to represent some fifty labor associations: about fourteen of them in the Federal District (through the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro) and about twelve in the city of São Paulo (through the Federação Operária de São Paulo).<sup>2</sup> At this time Brazil had approximately 150,000 workers in industrial plants. Most of them were in the Federal District and São Paulo, which furnished 33 percent and 16 percent, respectively, of the nation's industrial production.<sup>3</sup>

In accordance with its constitution, the COB published a newspaper in Rio, *A Voz do Trabalhador*, whose first issue appeared on July 1, 1908.<sup>4</sup> The experienced staff included Manuel Moscoso as editor, José Romero as administrator, and J. Mota Assunção and Carlos Dias.

The first phase of the COB lasted only until December 1909, when *A Voz do Trabalhador* published its twenty-first number and then closed

<sup>1</sup> The COB's first secretary-general was Ramiro Moreira Lobo.

<sup>2</sup> For a list (which includes the organizations represented by the federations) see Confederação Operária Brasileira (COB), "Relatório Apresentado ao Segundo Congresso," in "Documentos do Movimento Operário: Um Relatório Dado de 1913," *Estudos Sociais*, no. 18 (November 1963), p. 196.

<sup>3</sup> Caio Prado Júnior, *História Econômica do Brasil*, p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> José Romero, "O 10º Aniversário de 'Ação Direta' e os Congêneres que A Precederam no Rio de Janeiro," *Ação Direta* 11, no. 106 (May 1956).

down. During this phase the COB's chief activity was the promotion of antiwar demonstrations.<sup>5</sup> Like similar organizations in other parts of the world, the COB also sponsored meetings to protest the Spanish government's reprehensible execution of Francisco Ferrer, the atheist who had advocated new educational methods.<sup>6</sup> Throughout 1910, 1911, and part of 1912 the COB and the labor *federações* were inactive.

In August 1911 some of the *sindicatos* began a new strike wave, which lasted until the economic recession of 1914. During its first months, workers won some clear-cut victories, as when Rio shoemakers gained a wage increase. Often strikers returned to work after employers agreed to meet their demands part way. However, the workers in Santos only added to their record of persistence and failure. They were being organized by João Perdígão Gutierrez, an anarchist immigrant from the Canary Islands, and by Florentino de Carvalho, until he was deported in 1911 by authorities who seldom concerned themselves with the protection that Decree 1641 provided those with at least two years of continuous residence in Brazil. Florentino de Carvalho made the first of a series of clandestine returns to Santos in time to participate in the unsuccessful dock strike of July 1912. He was jailed and again deported.<sup>7</sup>

The Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro, inactive since 1910, was rejuvenated at a meeting of several *sindicato* leaders in May 1912.<sup>8</sup> The Federação promptly called a rally to protest "police atrocities" in São Paulo State and early in October held a meeting of Rio labor leaders to reactivate the COB and lay plans for a second Brazilian labor congress.

These plans were stimulated by a well-publicized competitive step taken by the administration of Marshal Hermes da Fonseca, the president of Brazil (1910-1914). Army lieutenants Palmiro Serra Pulquério and Mário Hermes da Fonseca—the latter a federal congressman and son of the president—sponsored a labor congress that was to form a political party. As arranged by the president's son, the government provided the accredited delegates with free transportation to Rio on ships of Lloyd Brasileiro, and made Monroe Palace—built to house the Pan American Conference of 1906—available for the labor meetings.

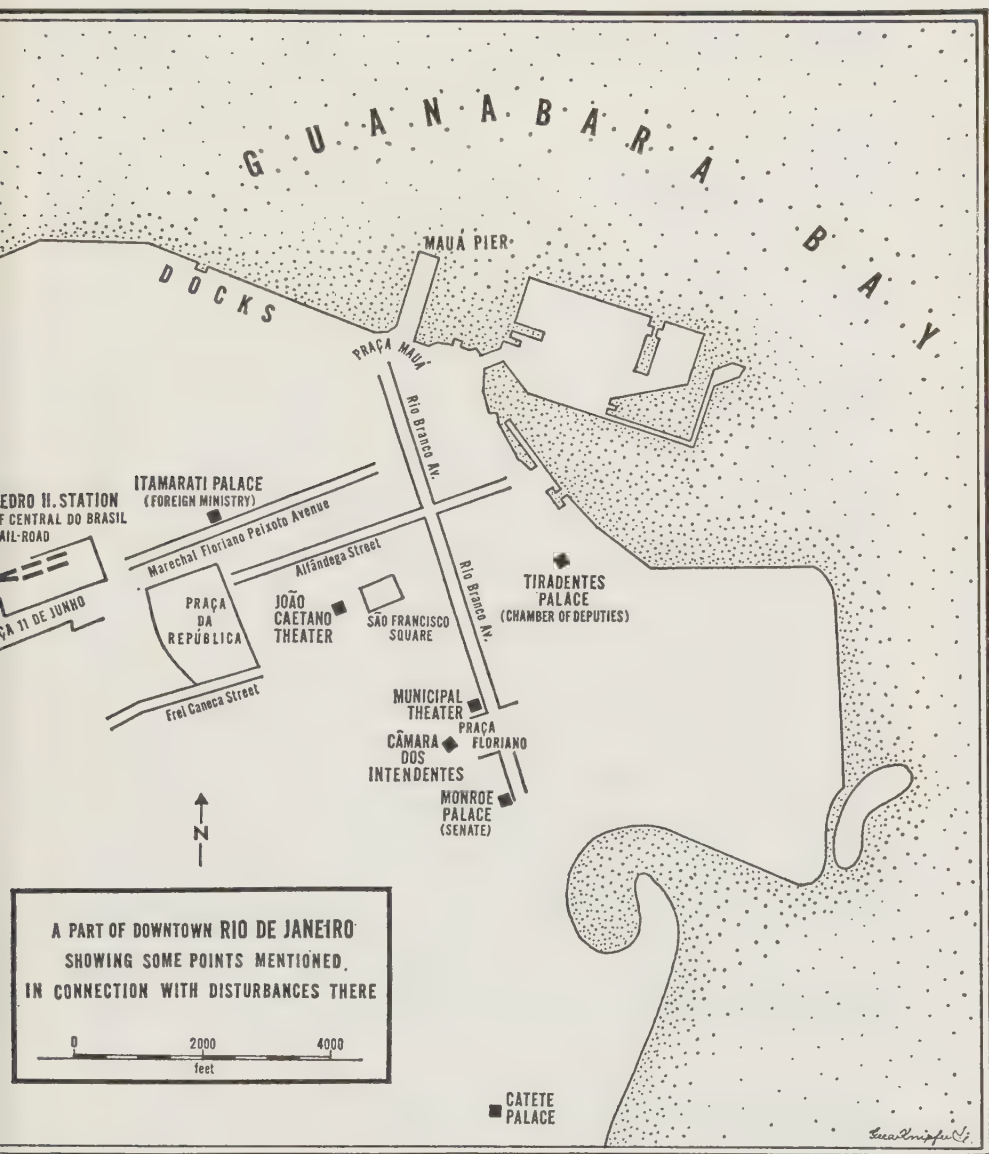
<sup>5</sup> "Documentos do Movimento Operário," p. 197.

<sup>6</sup> José Romero, "A Memória de Ferrer: Recordando o Protesto Feito pelos Homens Livres do Rio de Janeiro e do Brasil, contra o Nefando Fuzilamento," *Ação Direta* 10, no. 104, and 11, no. 106 (March, May 1956).

<sup>7</sup> Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo no Brasil*, pp. 267, 309.

<sup>8</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 274. The leaders were of the *sindicatos* of graphic workers, plasterers, cabinetmakers, stonemasons, marble workers, and tailors.





Thus 187 delegates, said to represent sixty-eight worker organizations throughout Brazil, met between November 7 and 15, 1912. They called their gathering the Fourth Brazilian Labor Congress, thus assuming, to the annoyance of the anarchists, that the socialist congresses of 1892 and 1902 had been "labor congresses" and making the First Brazilian Labor Congress of 1906 the third.

Under the chairmanship of Antônio Augusto Pinto Machado, president of the Liga do Operariado do Distrito Federal, the delegates in Monroe Palace decided to consider the economic, social, intellectual, and moral betterment of the proletariat, "disregarding the religious question and internationalist, antimilitarist, and antistate doctrines, and leaving to the future the solutions of the problem of the organization of property."<sup>9</sup> Donato Donati, who wrote up the resolutions, was an Italian worker, and his immigrant status is said to account for "the mistakes in the wording, and the appearance of some terms foreign to the Portuguese language."<sup>10</sup>

The principal resolution was to establish a Confederação Brasileira do Trabalho (CBT). This Brazilian Confederation of Workers was to use "all the most efficient means" to achieve a long list of worker benefits: the eight-hour day, the six-day week, the construction of worker housing ("initiated with such noble energy by the illustrious president of the Republic, Marshal Hermes da Fonseca"), indemnification for on-the-job accidents, the limitation of work by women and children and the prohibition of work by those under fourteen, collective contracts instead of individual contracts, pensions for the ill and aged, maximum and minimum wages, tax reform, and education for the proletariat.<sup>11</sup>

The delegates agreed unanimously on the program and on the establishment of the Confederação Brasileira do Trabalho as a political party.<sup>12</sup> By acclamation Mário Hermes da Fonseca was named honorary president of the CBT because he had sponsored the "Fourth Brazilian Labor Congress" and arranged for free transportation and the use of Monroe Palace.

This "ignoble clowning" by a "spurious congress" in Monroe Palace was ridiculed by the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro and by the COB Reorganizing Committee, which the Federação set up.

<sup>9</sup> "Documentos do Movimento Operário: Congresso Operário de 1912," *Estudos Sociais*, no. 17 (June 1963), pp. 71-72.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71 n.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73 ff.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

## 8. The 1913 Labor Congress

Late in 1912 the COB Reorganizing Committee sent circulars to worker associations asking that, if they agreed with the principles adopted by the First Brazilian Labor Congress in 1906, they name delegates to a proposed Second Labor Congress to be held in Rio.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1913 the committee declared that the COB had been "re-constituted" with an executive committee that included Rosendo dos Santos as secretary-general and João Leuenroth, brother of Edgard, as treasurer. *A Voz do Trabalhador* was revived by the printing of three thousand copies of its twenty-second number. Soon the number of copies of this fortnightly was increased to four thousand.

Before devoting the bulk of their attention to the forthcoming labor congress, the Rio labor leaders set out to make 1913 a year of rallies of protest. The cost of living increase, evident in the early months of 1913, became the theme of fifteen COB-sponsored rallies in Rio.<sup>2</sup> To abate the food price increase, Agriculture Minister Pedro de Toledo proposed the creation of consumer cooperatives and the elimination of middlemen—a scheme that the business community labeled subversive, anarchist, socialist, and anticommerce.<sup>3</sup> Anarchist leaders also attacked the scheme, warning against the "vast propaganda for *cooperativismo*, which the present government has made precisely to divert the workers from methods based on direct action."<sup>4</sup>

The COB and the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro, together with *A Voz do Trabalhador*, engaged in campaigns to protest the imprisonments and deportations of Santos dock worker leaders, and to protest the new legislation that affected labor leaders born overseas. In January 1913 President Hermes da Fonseca had signed a decree canceling the protection that the 1907 deportation law had provided to foreign-

<sup>1</sup> The first of these circulars (October 5, 1912) is given in Confederação Operária Brasileira (COB), "Relatório Apresentado ao Segundo Congresso," in "Documentos do Movimento Operário: Um Relatório Datado de 1913," *Estudos Sociais*, no. 18 (November 1963), pp. 198–200.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, March 4, 1913.

<sup>4</sup> Edgard Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo no Brasil*, p. 325.

ers who had married Brazilians, to widowers with Brazilian children, and to foreigners with at least two years of continuous residence in Brazil.<sup>5</sup>

Complaining of "acts of savagery" carried out against "companions" in Santos, the COB sent messages to Europe in an effort to nullify the Brazilian campaign to attract immigrants. The COB further named some of the deported labor leaders to be its "delegates"; they were to tell of "the disgraceful practices carried out by the Brazilian authorities."<sup>6</sup>

May Day orators lashed out against expulsions and the new legislation. Trying to keep workers active and indignant, the COB promoted rallies all over Brazil—on May 20 to denounce deportations, and on June 1 to oppose "the new Adolfo Gordo Law." The June 1 rally in Santos was dissolved by the police, and the speakers were arrested.<sup>7</sup>

The Second Brazilian Labor Congress took place during the second week of September at Rio's Centro Cosmopolita (headquarters of the Union of Workers in Hotels, Cafés, and Restaurants). One hundred seventeen delegates represented two state federations, five local federations, fifty-two *sindicatos* or *ligas*, and four newspapers.<sup>8</sup>

Considerable attention was given to organizational matters. The congress decided that beneficent associations that did not believe in "direct action" should be excluded from the COB's federative set-up.<sup>9</sup> Within the set-up, *sindicatos* were to be organized either by industry or by trade. The minimum membership of a *sindicato* was to be twenty-five. *Sindicatos de ofícios vários* (from hand laborers to intellectuals) were to be formed to take care of those who found themselves in places that lacked *sindicatos* in their particular trade or industry.<sup>10</sup> As for the internal organization of *sindicatos*, the Second Brazilian Labor Congress "strongly advised" the workers to remove anything "bureaucratic or coercive" from their statutes and to reject "any resolution that takes individual autonomy away from the associates or concedes attributes of authority to any of them."<sup>11</sup>

The secretary-general of the Second Brazilian Labor Congress was

<sup>5</sup> Decree 2741 of January 8, 1913 (revoking Articles 3, 4, and 8 of Decree 1641 of January 7, 1907). See also Anor Butler Maciel, *Expulsão de Estrangeiros*, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup> *Estudos Sociais*, no. 18 (November 1963), p. 204.

<sup>7</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 283.

<sup>8</sup> Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo*, p. 323.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

<sup>10</sup> José Romero, "José Oiticica: Recordando Alguma Coisa de Sua Trajetória no Movimento Libertário," *Ação Direta* 11, no. 121 (October 1957).

<sup>11</sup> Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo*, p. 326.

Rosendo dos Santos.<sup>12</sup> He was ably assisted by twenty-three-year-old Astrogildo Pereira, a quiet-spoken, middle-class intellectual with a good sense of organization. Astrogildo, born in the town of Rio Bonito in the sugar zone of the state of Rio de Janeiro, received some schooling at the Jesuit Colégio Anchieta in Nova Friburgo (where he considered becoming a monk) and at the Colégio Abílio in Niterói.<sup>13</sup> He became an admirer of Machado de Assis at an early age and, still a boy, was at the bedside of the dying author.<sup>14</sup> An equally great influence on his life was Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread*. It is said that he, like Florentino de Carvalho, was converted by it to anarchism.<sup>15</sup>

Another young man who attracted notice for his work at the Second Brazilian Labor Congress was José Elias da Silva, a modest, self-educated Pernambucano.<sup>16</sup> It is hard to picture him in the high collar, necktie, and formal coat in which the labor congress delegates were attired. His career included work in a northeastern textile mill and a stint at sea, until he was put ashore for spreading anarcho-syndicalist ideas among sailors.<sup>17</sup> After that he learned to make women's shoes.

As a result of the Second Brazilian Labor Congress, the COB sent delegates to states where labor organization seemed to have fallen below expectations. José Elias, a man "whose words were hot, persuasive, and with a northern stamp,"<sup>18</sup> was sent to Pernambuco, his home state. There his sincerity, abnegation, speaking ability, and vast knowledge made a great impression on the workers. He was able to convert almost all of the beneficent societies into *sindicatos* to struggle for better pay and the eight-hour day.<sup>19</sup> He also established the Federação dos Trabalhadores de Pernambuco. But when coachmen and others struck in Pernambuco in 1914, their activities were not viewed with sympathy by Governor Emílio Dantas Ribeiro, although he had come to office in 1911 with labor's

<sup>12</sup> Manuel de Souza Barros, letter, August 9, 1971.

<sup>13</sup> The unsatisfying formal education of Astrogildo (whose full name was Astrogildo Pereira Duarte da Silva) is discussed in Gilberto Freyre, *Order and Progress*, pp. 110-111, 351-352.

<sup>14</sup> Francisco de Assis Barbosa, "Episódio," *Diário de São Paulo*, December 13, 1964.

<sup>15</sup> Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo*, p. 238.

<sup>16</sup> Cristiano C. Cordeiro, interview, Recife, October 11, 1968.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*; see also, Afonso Schmidt, *Bom Tempo*, Chap. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Schmidt, *Bom Tempo*, Chap. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Cristiano C. Cordeiro, "Respostas do Dr. Cristiano Cordeiro ao Prof. Gadiel Perruci," pp. 1-2.

support. The state cavalry dissolved meetings of workers and broke into *sindicatos*, destroying furniture and files and arresting some of the labor leaders.<sup>20</sup> After this setback the labor movement in Pernambuco subsided for three years.

The war, which broke out in Europe in August 1914, was disastrous to Brazil's international commerce and intensified an economic recession that had been evident in 1913. São Paulo's acting governor found that in the preceding years the manufacturing plants, especially the textile mills, had expanded their capacity far beyond the ability of consumers to buy.<sup>21</sup> Workers were laid off in large numbers.

<sup>20</sup> José Francisco de Oliveira, "O Surgimento do Partido Comunista em Pernambuco e as Lutas da Classe Operária," *Novos Rumos* (Suplemento Especial), March 23-29, 1962.

<sup>21</sup> Azis Simão, *Sindicato e Estado*, pp. 18-19, n. 27.

## 9. José Oiticica Joins the Movement

On October 13, 1912, *A Lanterna*, the São Paulo anticlerical weekly of Edgard Leuenroth, published a special number in observance of the third anniversary of the shooting of Francisco Ferrer. It contained an article in which José Rodrigues Leite e Oiticica declared himself, for the first time, to be an anarchist.

Oiticica, a thirty-year-old literary critic, poet, and philosopher, was the son of a senator who had property in the northeastern state of Alagoas. After receiving a good education, some of it in law and medicine, Oiticica founded a school in Rio that went bankrupt within two years.<sup>1</sup> He was then appointed to direct a municipal school in Laguna, Santa Catarina.

Oiticica came to anarchism not through reading anarchist literature, but by developing, in Laguna, his own ideas about society and the state. When he returned to Rio after two years in Laguna, he discovered to his surprise that the anarchists, whom he had considered to be simple bomb

<sup>1</sup> Roberto das Neves, "José Oiticica: Um Anarquista Exemplar e uma Figura Ímpar na História do Brasil," introduction in *Ação Direta*, by José Oiticica, p. 10. (Oiticica was born in the state of Minas Gerais.)

throwers, were advancing identical ideas.<sup>2</sup> Oiticica, an energetic worker on behalf of causes that aroused his enthusiasm, began in 1912 to play a leading role in the Liga Anticlerical do Rio de Janeiro<sup>3</sup> and to deliver lectures denouncing the use of alcohol and tobacco. He had already become a vegetarian.

Oiticica's first contact with the anarchist labor movement was made in 1913. "With his inseparable briefcase" he is described as climbing the stairs to drop in at the modest headquarters of the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro at the time when the Federação, having just reconstituted the COB, was particularly busy. He asked to speak with the president or the directors and was pleased when a worker explained that the Federação had no president or directors, "only administrative commissions which execute the decisions of the assemblies."<sup>4</sup>

Soon Oiticica became a frequent speaker at labor union meetings. Thirty years later, looking back on successful activities during the period that largely coincided with World War I, he wrote that "so intense was the campaign that it was a rare night when we did not speak at some *sindicato*."<sup>5</sup> He also described the situation before the campaign for membership began, observing that "when I became an anarchist in 1912, there were about three small *sindicatos* in Rio where the anarchists predominated; these *sindicatos* embraced some three to four thousand workers and their movement for demands was insignificant."

When anarchists met to discuss tactics, propaganda, and doctrine, Oiticica had much to say. An indefatigable scholar, he was inclined to present lengthy expositions on the philosophy of anarchism. Oiticica sought to educate and uplift the workers. Soon they found that, when they gathered to watch monthly theatrical performances staged by a group of amateurs associated with the Federação, they could expect to hear talks on "social matters, hygiene, or art" before the plays began.<sup>6</sup> In this work Oiticica became associated with Fábio Luz, a benign, forty-nine-year-old novelist who had been preaching the anarchist, or libertarian, doctrine for over

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> José Romero, "José Oiticica," *Ação Direta* 11, nos. 120, 121 (August-September, October 1957). See especially, no. 120.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., no. 120.

<sup>5</sup> José Oiticica, "Atuação Anarquista nos Sindicatos," *Ação Direta* 1, no. 4 (May 7, 1946).

<sup>6</sup> Romero, "José Oiticica," 11, no. 121.

ten years. Luz, a graduate in medicine, held the post of school inspector in the Federal District.<sup>7</sup>

The Centro de Estudos Sociais, founded in Rio in 1914, gave men like Oiticica and Luz frequent opportunities to hold forth. The Centro's lively Friday evening sessions were largely devoted to arguments between anarchists and socialists. At one of the meetings, José Elias da Silva, the common worker seemingly out of place among intellectuals, effectively took on the learned socialist, Pedro do Couto. With a Spanish-born anarchist stevedore, Manuel Campos, presiding over the debate, José Elias was warmly applauded when he declared that whereas "in other times patriotism corresponded to a need of defending collectivities," he believed that it had now become "an arm managed by governments to hold the governed always in passive obedience."<sup>8</sup>

Unlike José Elias, Oiticica filled the proletarian press with articles. Late in 1914 some of these articles appeared in *A Vida*, a monthly published by Orlando Correia Lopes, a Gaúcho engineer who belonged to the Centro de Estudos Sociais.<sup>9</sup> A more important forum was *Na Barricada*, a weekly that Correia Lopes and João Gonçalves da Silva launched in 1915. It attracted a wide range of sympathizers of labor's cause: anarchists Fábio Luz and Oiticica, socialists Pedro do Couto and Silva Marques, Congressman Maurício de Lacerda, and labor organizer Sarandi Raposo.<sup>10</sup>

Each Friday in *Na Barricada* (published in time for discussion that evening at the Centro de Estudos Sociais) Oiticica exchanged arguments with Silva Marques, and Fábio Luz exchanged arguments with Pedro do Couto. Pedro do Couto criticized the anarchists for believing that society's "moral crisis" would be resolved by the elimination of all social

<sup>7</sup> Fábio Luz has been described by Eduardo Frieiro as one of the early Brazilian writers of "novels with a socializing purpose." Another "forerunner," to use Frieiro's expression, was Antônio Avelino Fóscolo (1864-1944), a journalist and novelist of Minas Gerais. Fóscolo, orphaned at the age of eleven, worked as a youth, apparently without much pleasure, in the deep Morro Velho gold mine. He came to feel that anarchist ideas would bring about a "more perfect society" (see Eduardo Frieiro, *O Romancista Avelino Fóscolo*, pp. 1-16; Avelino Fóscolo, *Vulcões*, pp. 11, 145).

<sup>8</sup> *Na Barricada* 1, no. 14 (Rio de Janeiro, September 9, 1915).

<sup>9</sup> Nelson Werneck Sodré, *A História da Imprensa no Brasil*, p. 362. José Romero states in *Ação Direta* (11, no. 120) that Oiticica and Francisco Viotti published the first number of *A Vida* on November 30, 1914. (Gaúcho refers to a resident or native of the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul.)

<sup>10</sup> *Na Barricada* 1, no. 16 (September 23, 1915).



institutions.<sup>11</sup> But Fábio Luz could not agree with the statements of his "dear friend"—"due certainly to deficiencies of my intelligence, not on account of stubbornness."<sup>12</sup>

In a series of open letters to Silva Marques, Oiticica described the socialists as divided into two large groups, state socialists and collective socialists. Both, Oiticica wrote, favored private property and authority and therefore had to be opposed by the anarchists.<sup>13</sup> Silva Marques felt, however, that to condemn all forms of government and private property was to take an impractical position.<sup>14</sup>

Oiticica's participation in the campaigns of the Federação Operária and in the anarchist movement made it difficult for him to find employment. Finally in 1917 Rio's distinguished Pedro II School took the bold step of naming him professor of Portuguese.<sup>15</sup> There his forceful and erudite lectures, sometimes dramatic, and his unanarchist-like insistence on discipline brought him both the admiration and the awe of students.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Pedro do Coutto, "O Que Penso," *Na Barricada* 1, no. 16 (September 23, 1915).

<sup>12</sup> Fábio Luz, "Nota á Margem," *Na Barricada* 1, no. 16 (September 23, 1915).

<sup>13</sup> José Oiticica, "Terceira Carta ao Dr. Silva Marques," *Na Barricada* 1, no. 16 (September 23, 1915).

<sup>14</sup> Silva Marques, "Ao Dr. José Oiticica," *Na Barricada* 1, no. 17 (September 30, 1915).

<sup>15</sup> Roberto das Neves in José Oiticica, *Ação Direta*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> Alberto da Costa e Silva, interviews, June 16, June 17, 1969.

## 10. Anarchist Conferences, 1914-1915

The birth of the Centro de Estudos Sociais in Rio in 1914 coincided with what Edgard Leuenroth has called "encouraging anarchist activity."<sup>1</sup> "Various libertarian groups," he has written, "carried on in the principal cities of the nation, and one of them was the Centro Libertário de São Paulo."

<sup>1</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "Dados Históricos sobre o Anarchismo no Brasil: Contribuição do Autor Apresentada ao Congresso da Federação Libertária Argentina (FLA) a Realizar-se nos Dias 8, 9 e 10 de Dezembro de 1961 em Buenos Aires, República Argentina," typewritten, p. 29. The term libertarian is used to refer to anarchists.

On May 1, 1914, a small São Paulo anarchist weekly, *A Rebelião*, began publication. Two of its contributors were Florentino de Carvalho and João Penteado, practitioners of Francisco Ferrer's teaching methods.

In June and July 1914 the Centro Libertário de São Paulo held a series of meetings attended by representatives from similar organizations in the state. The purpose of this Conferência Libertária was to arrange for Brazilian participation in the International Anarchist Congress, to be held in London in August 1914. As Rio anarchists shared this hope, a nationwide drive to finance the trip was launched. The conference also formed a Commission of Relations of Anarchist Groups and resolved that Brazilian anarchists should participate in labor organizations "not as leaders or directors, but as militants."<sup>2</sup>

The outbreak of the European war ended the plans for the London congress. And it led the Brazilian anarchists to stress, more than ever, the antiwar issue. In March 1915 the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro formed a Popular Commission for Agitation against the War. In São Paulo labor leaders and proletarian newspaper directors then organized an International Commission against the War. Both organizations, expressing *vivas* for the Workers' International,<sup>3</sup> helped turn the May Day rallies of 1915 into antiwar rallies.

A Pro-Peace Congress had been scheduled to take place in Spain in April 1915, and the Brazilian anarchists had hoped that Brazil could have two representatives, one of whom had been deported from Brazil and was living in Portugal.<sup>4</sup> After this congress was canceled, the Brazilian anarchists headed a movement that organized the International Peace Congress in Rio in mid-October 1915; immediately after the peace congress, the anarchists planned a South American anarchist congress, also in Rio. In a manifesto signed by Antônio F. Vieites and Astrogildo Pereira, the COB called on socialists, syndicalists, and labor organizations of the world to attend the Rio International Peace Congress and discuss "the most effective ways of bringing an end to the European war."<sup>5</sup>

The International Peace Congress was attended by two delegates from libertarian organizations in Argentina as well as by delegates from five Brazilian states and the Federal District.<sup>6</sup> As these men gathered, the COB

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 23. Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 289.

<sup>4</sup> Leuenroth, "Dados Históricos," p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais*, p. 289.

<sup>6</sup> Leuenroth, "Dados Históricos," p. 30. According to Astrogildo Pereira (*For-*

issued a manifesto calling the proletariat of Europe and America to rise and overthrow "the gangs of potentates and assassins who maintain the people in slavery and suffering."<sup>7</sup>

The peace congress decided that "a decisive action against war could be made only by the proletariat, as it furnishes the elements necessary for wars—manufacturing all the instruments of destruction and death, and furnishing the human element to serve as cannon fodder."<sup>8</sup> The proletariat was advised to declare a "general revolutionary strike," in adherence to "the human precepts proclaimed by the International Workers' Association." Also recommended were sabotage and boycotts against all who cooperated with the war and propaganda against nationalism, militarism, and capitalism, "whose regime is the principal cause of wars."<sup>9</sup>

José Elias da Silva, who had expressed his antipatriotism sentiments at the Rio May Day rally of 1915, was secretary of the Commission to Organize the South American Anarchist Congress.<sup>10</sup> Apparently the presence of the two Argentines at this congress,<sup>11</sup> which followed the International Peace Congress, was not enough to make it South American and it became known as the National Anarchist Congress of 1915. The delegates discussed principles of anarchism, the propeace movement, action against repressive laws, propaganda about the "true significance of May 1," and the anarchist press.<sup>12</sup> They noted that not a single truly anarchist publication was appearing on a regular basis and urged all groups and comrades to help in the formation of at least one anarchist weekly.<sup>13</sup>

Accordingly, early in November 1915 it was announced that comrades Orlando Correia Lopes and João Gonçalves da Silva were turning *Na Barricada* over to an editorial group that would make it fully anarchist. This group, which proclaimed that the weekly was thus becoming the "collec-

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*mação do PCB*, p. 24) the congress had delegates from Argentina, Portugal, and Spain, as well as from six Brazilian states and the Federal District. The list of thirty-eight delegates given in Edgar Rodrigues, *Nacionalismo & Cultura Social, 1913-1922*, pp. 105-106, includes two Argentines; it shows a Portuguese organization to have been represented by "M. Campos." (Manuel Campos, deported to Europe in 1914, had returned to Brazil in 1915.)

<sup>7</sup> Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Leuenroth, "Dados Históricos," p. 30.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> *Na Barricada* 1, no. 16 (September 23, 1915).

<sup>11</sup> Leuenroth, "Dados Históricos," p. 30.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Na Barricada* 1, no. 22 (November 4, 1915).

tive property of all the anarchists," included Astrogildo Pereira, José Alves Diniz, João da Costa Pimenta, José Elias da Silva, and Manuel Campos.<sup>14</sup> Manuel Campos became *Na Barricada's* new administrator. When it appeared in 1916, with the new subtitle "periódico anarquista," its format was smaller than when it had presented the views of a wider circle.

<sup>14</sup> Circular from *Na Barricada's* new Grupo Editor to the subscribers, reprinted in *Na Barricada* 1, no. 22 (November 4, 1915). The circular is signed by twenty-four.

## 11. Prelude to 1917

Workers complained about living cost increases in 1913. Their complaint during the 1914 recession was unemployment. But as the prolongation of the European war stimulated Allied demands for materials and foodstuffs, prices rose again in 1915, 1916, and 1917. Table 1 shows these 1914 food cost decreases and 1915 increases.

In Rio in July 1915 bakery workers and workers in cafés and hotels prepared to strike. The cab drivers offered to join the movement, in order, they said, to strengthen it and at the same time "to settle pending accounts with the police." The offer was accepted and it was agreed that none of

TABLE 1

São Paulo Wholesale Quotations (Mil-réis), 1914-1915

Commodity	January 5,	October 31,	January 2,	July 1,	January 5,
	1914	1914	1915	1915	1916
60 kgs. sugar ( <i>crystal</i> )	19.5	21.5	22.0	27.0	39.8
58 kgs. 2d grade rice	24.0	23.0	22.0	32.0	30.0
100 lbs. <i>feijão</i> ( <i>mulatinho</i> beans)	29.5	23.0	19.5	14.5	14.5
100 lbs. <i>feijão</i> ( <i>novo, bom</i> )	33.0	21.0	20.0	14.0	16.0
1 sack manioc meal	9.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	13.0
100 lbs. yellow corn	8.5	5.9	6.7	7.6	10.2

SOURCE: *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 6, 1914, November 1, 1914, January 3, 1915, July 2, 1915, January 6, 1916.

the three striking classes would return to work until all the strikes had been settled.<sup>1</sup>

The cab drivers' strike was a general one, whereas only partial strikes were carried out by bakery workers and employees in hotels and cafés. However, according to *Na Barricada's* account, the "active minority of the bakers entered into a campaign with an energy perhaps never before seen in Rio. . . . Bullets flew, bombs exploded."<sup>2</sup>

Soon the striking bakery workers and the minority of hotel and bar employees were blaming the cab drivers for leaving them in "an untenable position" because the drivers reached a friendly agreement with the authorities and, in spite of the recent understanding, went back to work. Less than four months later the Rio drivers, disappointed with the agreement that had ended their strike of July 1915, went on strike again. But this time they failed. *Na Barricada* concluded: "A peaceful strike is a lost strike, an absurd strike. The striker is a man outside the law and consequently he should act outside the law."<sup>3</sup>

Increases occurred in 1916 in the wholesale prices of some important food items, such as beans (*feijão*) and manioc meal. Wheat became scarce and costly.<sup>4</sup> Although exceptions to the rising trend were to be found in rice, sugar, and corn, these items had increased steeply in 1915 (see Tables 1 and 2).

Almost everything cost much more than it had in 1914. Foreign demand for Brazilian leather was said to have doubled the price of footwear.<sup>5</sup> "If I want to buy a meter of cloth to make clothing for my children," a poor widow said, "I have to spend 900 or 1,000 réis instead of the 300 réis I used to pay."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aurelino Corvo, "A Lição da Grêve," *Na Barricada* 1, no. 22 (November 4, 1915).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> "Em Torno da Carestia do Pão," *Correio da Manhã*, November 12, 1916. This article mentions the suspension of wheat exports from the United States and large purchases from Argentina by France.

<sup>5</sup> "Carestia do Calçado," *Correio da Manhã*, December 15, 1916, and "O Alastrar da Miseria," in *ibid.*, December 27, 1916. See also "Carestia da Vida," in *ibid.*, December 20, 1916.

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, December 27, 1916. At this time the labor movement was suffering from one of the quarrels that occasionally broke out between anarchists and syndicalists. In September 1916 anarchists José Elias da Silva, Manuel Campos, and Antônio Moutinho issued a twenty-three-page declaration blaming syndicalists for the fact that labor organizations almost invariably disappeared as fast as they were formed, and accusing syndicalists of thinking only about wage in-

TABLE 2

Wholesale Quotations (Mil-réis), 1916-1917

Commodity	Price		
	February 10, 1916	July 23, 1916	February 12, 1917
<i>Rio de Janeiro</i>			
100 kgs. rice ( <i>regular</i> )	46.8	30.0	36.7
60 kgs. lard (from Rio Grande do Sul)	84.3	82.2	88.2
100 kgs. manioc meal ( <i>fina</i> )	30.7	30.4	36.1
100 kgs. black beans (from Santa Catarina)	22.1	16.7	24.2
<i>São Paulo</i>			
	January 5, 1916	July 4, 1916	January 4, 1917
60 kgs. sugar ( <i>crystal</i> )	39.8	39.5	35.5
58 kgs. 2d grade rice	30.0	20.5	23.0
1 arrôba salt pork	11.0	14.0	14.0
1 kg. fresh butter	2.3	2.8	2.8
100 lts. <i>feijão</i> ( <i>mulatinho</i> beans)	14.5	9.5	22.0
100 lts. yellow corn	10.2	8.0	8.8

SOURCE: *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 6, 1916, February 11, 1916, July 5, 1916, July 24, 1916, January 5, 1917, February 13, 1917.

The proletariat, although bitter, was quiet. The possibility of the European war spreading to the Americas meant that everyone was supposed to put national defense ahead of everything else. Prominent citizens formed a National Defense League, and at one ceremony after another the national hymn was sung and allegiance was given to the Brazilian flag.

The government appealed for volunteers to spend their spare time in training, either as members of target practice groups, or as members of the Naval or Army Reserve. Women's organizations proudly presented flags to the new volunteer units. Sailors of the merchant marine, such as those working for Lloyd Brasileiro, were given military training by Navy Captain Protógenes Guimarães.<sup>7</sup>

President Venceslau Brás and War Minister Caetano de Faria presided

creases and of ignoring the task of "human emancipation." The declaration's authors described the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro as a "syndicalist fiction" and refused to continue to be associated with it. Sixteen other anarchists, including José Alves Diniz, signed a statement agreeing with these thoughts (Edgar Rodrigues, *Nacionalismo & Cultura Social*, 1913-1922, pp. 120-126).

<sup>7</sup> *Correrio da Manhã*, November 26, 1916.

over the series of ceremonies at which hundreds of young Army reservists, some of them brought by boat from the state of Espírito Santo, swore allegiance to the flag. One of these events, attended by a particularly large throng of dignitaries (including the American ambassador) was described as having "aroused the patriotic enthusiasm of a large part of our population."<sup>8</sup>

Any unpatriotic note was condemned. *A Noite* complained bitterly because it detected "a new rhythm given to the national hymn by the Italian choral director," when school children sang at a Flag Day performance (November 19).<sup>9</sup> One journalist was physically attacked by saber-carrying volunteers after he wrote about their military maneuvers in a manner they considered insulting.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, October 16, 1916.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, November 25, 1916. (The "Italian" replied that he had been editing the *Correio da Manhã's* musical section for fifteen years.)

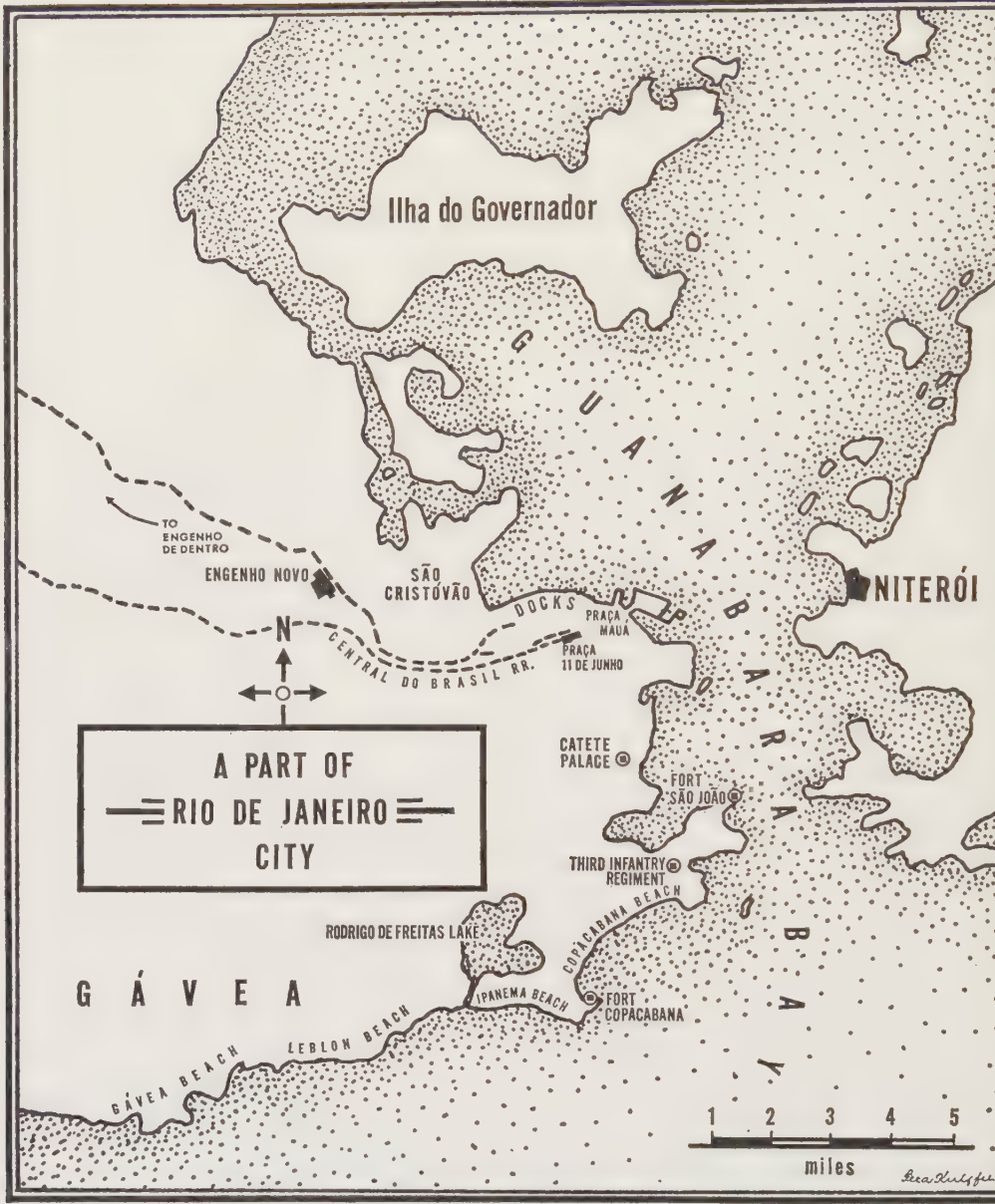
<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, November 2, 1916.





BOOK II: *The Anarchist Strike Movement,*  
1917-1919

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Ilha do Governador

GUANABARA BAY

NITERÓI

ENGENHO NOVO

SÃO CRISTÓVÃO

DOCKS

PRAÇA MAUÁ

PRAÇA 11 DE JUNHO

CENTRAL DO BRASIL RR.



A PART OF  
RIO DE JANEIRO  
CITY

CATETE PALACE

FORT SÃO JOÃO

THIRD INFANTRY REGIMENT

COPACABANA BEACH

FORT COPACABANA

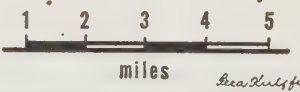
RODRIGO DE FREITAS LAKE

IPANEMA BEACH

GÁVEA

GÁVEA BEACH

LEBLON BEACH



Geo. H. K. P. 1892

## 1. Antônio Carlos Condemns the Anarchists (May 1917)

Food prices continued upward during the first six months of 1917. Important items were apt to be between 20 and 150 percent more expensive than they had been a year earlier (see Table 3). The cost of living increase

TABLE 3

São Paulo Wholesale Quotations (Mil-réis), 1916-1917

Commodity	July 4, 1916	January 4, 1917	July 2, 1917	Percentage Change
58 kgs. 1st grade rice	24.0	27.0	31.0	+ 29
58 kgs. 2d grade rice	20.5	23.0	29.0	+ 41
100 lts. <i>feijão (novo, bom)</i>	10.0	21.5	26.0	+160
60 kgs. sugar ( <i>crystal</i> )	39.5	35.5	40.5	+ 3
12 eggs	0.8	1.0	1.0	+ 25
1 kg. fresh butter	2.8	2.8	3.3	+ 18
65 kgs. small potatoes	14.0	9.0	17.0	+ 21
1 arrôba salt pork	14.0	14.0	14.0	—
1 sack manioc meal	13.0	13.0	13.0	—
60 kgs. white corn	4.9	—	6.5	+ 33

SOURCE: *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 5, 1916, January 5, 1917, July 3, 1917.

was the subject of the May Day speeches in 1917. One orator in Rio shouted that "hunger knocks at the doors of the workers' homes and therefore the people must act with energy, going to the warehouses, where the provisions, lacking in the workers' homes, pile up and accumulate."<sup>1</sup>

Among those who heard these words were fifty soldiers (thirty of them on horseback); also present were thirty civil guardsmen and many secret police agents under able Major Bandeira de Melo, inspector of the Security Corps. The final speaker asked Bandeira de Melo to withdraw the secret police agents lest they disturb the parade that was about to start. But the major replied that the workers had nothing to fear because "order will be maintained."<sup>2</sup>

During the first half of May 1917 order was maintained in Rio only with difficulty. Strikes broke out in the textile plants following some threatened dismissals.<sup>3</sup> Police Chief Aurelino de Araújo Leal, informed that speakers at meetings were recommending depredations and attacks on the police, prohibited further public meetings of workers. Twenty-five hundred workers defied this order on May 11, and some of them hurled stones at the police. The cavalry broke up the meeting, but only after several soldiers and many workers had been wounded. The police *delegado* of the Twenty-first District was struck on the head by a large stone. About ten arrests were made.<sup>4</sup>

The Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro chose João Gonçalves da Silva to lead a delegation of three to speak with Venceslau Brás, the president of Brazil. But in Catete Palace the delegation was advised that the president, while always willing to see even "the most humble," could not receive this delegation because its leader was "an agitator dominated by anarchist influences."<sup>5</sup> After this refusal, both João Gonçalves and the Federação Operária, which was meeting in "permanent session," declared that the workers did not consider themselves humble.

In the Chamber of Deputies, Maurício de Lacerda commented unfavorably on the president's attitude toward the workers' delegation.<sup>6</sup> In reply, Majority Leader Antônio Carlos de Andrada of Minas Gerais defended

<sup>1</sup> "O Dia do Trabalho e a Carestia da Vida," *Correio da Manhã*, May 2, 1917, leading headline, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "A Gréve dos Operarios da Corcovado," *Correio da Manhã*, May 12, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> "O Que se Passou no Palacio do Cattete com a Comissão Operaria," *Correio da Manhã*, May 15, 1917.

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 20, 1917.

the president and attacked the anarchists in what *Correio da Manhã* described as an *eloqüentíssimo* speech.

Ignoring many interruptions by Maurício de Lacerda, Antônio Carlos spoke of the "seductive pretext of the high cost of living," which had been used to draw people to meetings up through May 1. The May Day meeting, he added, had been called by the Federação Operária, an organization with so few members that it was of little importance. He went on to explain that the Federação's leaders were "confessed anarchists, some of them expelled from their native countries and others highly dangerous to public order."<sup>7</sup>

According to Antônio Carlos, it was "thanks to the uninterrupted tolerance maintained by the present government" that these anarchists were able to carry on their propaganda against the principles that were "fundamental to social organization." They had, he said, hoped to upset public order on May 1, and, having failed then, now sought to do so by "the disorganization of service in the textile plants." They had received the police "with revolver bullets and stones," and, he added, as no government administrator could tolerate "this manifestly criminal agitation," the police chief had prohibited the meetings.

The police, Antônio Carlos revealed, constantly observed the anarchists and their meetings. Orators at a Federação Operária meeting, he explained, had spoken so disrespectfully of President Venceslau Brás that the president had been forced to refuse to see its delegation. "The opinion of the great majority of the workers of Rio de Janeiro regarding the president's attitude is very different from that of Maurício de Lacerda,

TABLE 4

Prices for 60 Kilograms of Rice

Commodity	May 19	June 9
First class, sparkling	41\$000	45\$500
Second class, sparkling	37\$000	40\$500
Superior	29\$000	34\$000
Good	26\$000	31\$000
Regular	22\$000	28\$000

SOURCE: *Correio da Manhã*, June 20, 1917.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, May 22, 1917.



because the working class of Rio is a long way from identifying itself with that group of anarchists of the Federação Operária."<sup>8</sup>

On June 12 Maurício de Lacerda introduced a law project to create a Labor Department that would "take care of proletarian questions."<sup>9</sup> However, by that time one matter could not wait for any law project: the cost of living increase, terrible for the workers by May 1917, became unbearable in June (see Table 4).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., May 22, 1917.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., June 13, 1917.

## 2. The São Paulo Strike, June-July 1917

On June 10, 1917, textile workers at the Cotonifício Créspi (Rodolfo Crespi's cotton mills) in the Moóca industrial district of São Paulo City asked for a 25 percent wage increase. Although Brazilian business was thriving, the request was denied. Then the Créspi workers started what turned into the most famous strike in São Paulo's history.

During the rest of June the movement gained the support of other workers in the Moóca, Brás, and Cambuci districts.<sup>1</sup> Police Chief Tirso Martins tried to be fair to the strikers, but he had his men break up mobs when they apparently sought to prevent nonstrikers from going to work. Few of the soldiers of the Força Pública (state police), or of the municipal Guarda Civil, or of the federal Army, were moved by an appeal distributed throughout the city in bulletin form. Written by Everardo Dias and signed by "a group of women strikers," this appeal "TO THE SOLDIERS!" stated that "You should not persecute your brethren in misery. You too belong to the great popular mass. . . . Hunger reigns in our homes, and our children ask us for bread! The plant owners, to stifle our protests, count on the arms you carry. . . . Soldiers! Refuse to be executioners!"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These industrial districts lie to the east of well-known central points of the city, with Brás north of Moóca, and Moóca north of Cambuci.

<sup>2</sup> The "Apello aos Soldados," dated June 1917, was distributed throughout the city "at the start of the movement" (see *A Plebe* 1, no. 6 [July 21, 1917]).

A break in the stalemate occurred early in July, when the workers at the Nami Jafet textile plant in the Cambuci district agreed to return to their jobs after getting wage increases of 20 percent for day work and 25 percent for night work.

However, on July 8 an incident dashed the hopes for peace that had been raised by the Jafet settlement and four weeks of calm. Strikers in front of the Créspi plant cried "Death to the Police!" and then hurled stones at members of the Força Pública and Guarda Civil when they sought to make arrests. After two soldiers had been injured, others, firing into the air, dispersed the crowd.

The struggle was renewed on the next day in front of the Companhia Antarctica Paulista bottling works, also in the Moóca district.<sup>3</sup> A mob seized a horse-drawn Antarctica truck from the driver and a soldier who accompanied him and smashed the beer cases on the ground. Then, bearing signs calling for a boycott of products from the Cotonifício Créspi, the mob went to the Mariangela Textile Works in Brás and tried to prevent nonstrikers from entering the plant. Shooting by a few strikers wounded an assistant police chief.

Police Chief Tirso Martins rushed to the scene and was greeted with jeers. Deciding that more troops were needed, he conferred with State President (Governor) Altino Arantes. Then a Força Pública battalion commander led thirty cavalrymen and fifty rifle-bearing soldiers to Brás. When they tried to make arrests near the Mariangela and adjoining plants, they became involved in a skirmish in which several soldiers and workers were wounded. One striker, Antônio Ineguez Martinez was seriously wounded when a bullet tipped his stomach.

By nightfall the city was described as "in perfect calm—perhaps due to the large number of troops."<sup>4</sup> Tirso Martins ordered the Liga Operária de Moóca closed and the arrest of some of its directors. Learning that new strikes had been declared, he vowed to protect all who wanted to continue working. These included most of the carpenters at the furniture plant of Blumenchein and Company, where wages had been decreased in 1916; now the workers were seeking a 20 percent increase, but only twenty of the sixty carpenters went on strike.

<sup>3</sup> Anarchists were provoked by the "official protection" given to Antarctica and complained that members of the Fire Department sometimes took the place of striking workers, driving trucks "to deliver beer to taverns and bars . . . , where vice is nourished" (see *A Plebe* 1, no. 7 [July 28, 1917]).

<sup>4</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 10, 1917.



On July 10 the city learned of the death of Antônio Ineguez Martinez. Labor leaders called on the workers to form a funeral procession to start at 8:00 A.M. the next day at the Martinez residence in Brás, and to go westward, through the main sector of the city, to the Araçá Municipal Cemetery.

By 7:00 A.M. on July 11 a crowd of two thousand, mostly women, had gathered in front of the Martinez residence. Describing the "human ocean" that made its way down Rangel Pestana Avenue to the city "under an impressive silence that assumed the aspect of a warning," Edgard Leuenroth has called the procession "one of the most stirring popular demonstrations to occur until then in São Paulo."<sup>5</sup>

When the growing number of mourners reached the center of the city, the police forced them to use streets that would avoid the government palace square and the police headquarters. The multitude, pausing on one of these streets, called for the liberty of arrested workers. Loud shouts of "Free Nalepinski!" referred to Antônio Nalepinski, a Polish-born shoemaker recently jailed for making a vehement speech against "the massacre." While the funeral procession waited, a delegation called on Tirso Martins, and he agreed to release the shoemaker- orator after Martinez's body had been buried. With this news the "human ocean" moved on, reaching the cemetery shortly before noon. The graveside orations included one by a young woman in a state of convulsive weeping.

After the burial some of the mourners went to the Praça da Sé adjoining the cathedral and remained there until 4:00 P.M., listening to speakers decry the pitiful condition of the working class. The crowd resolved that a delegation should ask Tirso Martins to allow the Liga Operária de Moóca to reopen.

Other strikers, less orderly and estimated in the thousands, returned from the funeral to the Brás, Moóca, and Cambuci districts. Sometimes using force and sometimes persuading fellow workers to join them, they closed down plants that had been in operation, including the Nami Jafet plant, where the wage increase had been accepted.<sup>6</sup> Some strikers spied a cart of bread and made off with its contents; others assaulted markets, stores, and warehouses.<sup>7</sup> Three members of the state cavalry were wounded by firearms while unsuccessfully trying to protect a ware-

<sup>5</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "A Greve de 1917," letter published in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 27, 1966.

<sup>6</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 12, 1917.

<sup>7</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "A Greve de 1917."

house from which six hundred sacks of flour were taken. Tirso Martins then issued orders to "disperse energetically all groups of assailant strikers."

Elói Chaves, state secretary of justice and public security, spent the afternoon with industrial leaders. When the industrialists agreed "to examine in a conciliatory spirit the demands of their workers," Chaves called on the workers to submit their demands.

### 3. São Paulo Disorders, July 12-13, 1917

By July 12 the number of strikers in São Paulo City was estimated to have grown from fifteen thousand to twenty thousand "with the adherence of the cab drivers and the workers of the light and gas companies and all of the city's plants and workshops."<sup>1</sup> Assaults on streetcars persuaded the Light and Power Company<sup>2</sup> to suspend public transportation. Depredations forced a great many commercial houses to close.

Troops spent the evening of July 12 dispersing crowds. Police Chief Tirso Martins, who went to Brás to take charge in person, found the Concórdia and North Station squares crowded with troops and excited civilians. After nightfall, when the squares became dark because street-lamps had been broken, soldiers tried to enter a café on the North Station Square—a scene of disorderly conduct. They were fired on from the café and from windows and roofs of nearby buildings. During the ensuing exchange of shots, an ambulance bringing a doctor was stoned. Only after five minutes of fighting was order imposed in the square. Fortunately no one was killed. Most of the wounded went to their homes, but a local first aid post treated about a dozen, evenly split between workers and soldiers.

On July 13 Tirso Martins issued two bulletins. The first prohibited meetings in the streets or squares. The second, ordering people to stay at home at night, made it known that "the police are acting with full

<sup>1</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 13, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> São Paulo Tramway, Light and Power Company, Limited, subsidiary of the Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Company (Canadian).

energy against the obstinate disorderly persons and the anarchists who for several days have been trying to assail public order."<sup>3</sup>

In Brás cavalry and infantry roamed the streets, breaking up gatherings and investigating "suspicious persons." Some, found carrying pistols or knives, were arrested.

Although Brás continued without streetcar service on July 13, elsewhere this service was resumed, for the Light and Power Company found that many of its employees wanted to work if they could have protection. Strikers, furious to see streetcars operating with policemen on the front and back platforms, launched attacks. One of these led to an exchange of shots in which a stray bullet killed a twelve-year-old girl. Another death occurred when some bricklayers, after forcing all the passengers to get off a streetcar, threatened a soldier on the front platform. He fired, killing the leader of the assailants.

These two deaths on July 13 were the only ones reported since Antônio Martinez died on the tenth. However, many were wounded as charging cavalry tried to prevent hungry crowds from breaking into stores and from pillaging carts of bread, vegetables, and milk.

Homes suffered from shortages of bread, meat, and gas. To operate the gas plant, the São Paulo Gas Company was using its office workers and fifty members of the fire brigade, but the output was small. The postmaster announced that, because of the labor agitation, the collection and distribution of mail, to be undertaken twice daily in the center of the city, would be limited to once daily in the suburbs.

Justice Secretary Elói Chaves, presiding over a meeting of industrial leaders on July 12, heard Rodolfo Crespi agree to offer wage increases of 15 percent to some workers and 20 percent to others. Then on July 13 Crespi and other industrialists agreed to offer a general 20 percent increase.

Professor Artur Guarnieri, grand master of the Masonic Order of the state of São Paulo, called for calmness. The professor, sympathizing with the workers, told them that "victory comes to the strong, and you will achieve it fully if you avoid provocations, and if, while still carrying on the defense of your rights, you preserve the calm that is always the highest expression of reason and right."<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere in the state conditions were orderly. Comments in the city

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 14, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> Manifesto of July 13 of Professor Artur Guarnieri, given in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 14, 1917.

of Ribeirão Preto concerned the movement of thirty police soldiers to São Paulo City, leaving behind only twenty-two "who might also be sent."<sup>5</sup> In Campinas, closer to the state capital, the McHard Company agreed to raise wages 20 percent, and workers at other plants prepared to demand similar increases.

In Santos, the União Geral dos Trabalhadores (General Union of Workers) held a meeting on July 13. In an orderly manner about one thousand workers adopted a resolution expressing their determination to give the workers in the state capital "all of our moral and material support, using all possible means, even the general strike."<sup>6</sup>

Saturday, July 14, was a peaceful holiday during which the state legislature heard a routine message from Governor Arantes. Throughout the state capital streetcars operated without disturbances. Those cafés and confectioners' shops that habitually did business on holidays carried on normally. In the industrial districts reinforced contingents of cavalry and infantry patrolled the streets.

<sup>5</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 14, 1917.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4. The 1917 São Paulo Strike Settlement

While carrying out orders against "agitators," Força Pública Captain Miguel Costa had asked strikers why they preferred anarchy to working. Sympathetic to their story about inadequate wages, the captain discussed with Nereu Rangel Pestana, liberal publisher of *O Combate*, the need to bring the conflicting parties together.<sup>1</sup> Rangel Pestana felt that newspapermen might be able to mediate, and therefore, at his suggestion, ten journalists representing nine São Paulo newspapers met at the offices of *O Estado de S. Paulo* on the night of July 13.

On July 14, morning newspapers carried a message, signed by the journalists, asking the strikers' Comitê de Defesa Proletária to send a commission to meet with them that afternoon. The commission was urged to submit minimum demands, which the journalists offered to pass on for consideration by representatives of industrialists and the government.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eduardo Maffei, interview, November 11, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 14, 1917, p. 1.

The Comitê de Defesa Proletária had been formed by labor leaders during the recent agitation, when the police were closing syndical organizations. To coordinate the demands made by different labor groups, the Comitê had been holding clandestine meetings, and by July 14 it had already formulated a list of eleven demands. A throng of workers, meeting in the old Moóca Racetrack, resolved to end the strike only when these demands were met.<sup>3</sup> They included a 35 percent wage increase for those receiving less than five mil-réis daily, otherwise 25 percent; an eight-hour day with time and one-half for overtime; "guaranteed permanent work"; the abolishment of night work by women and by those under eighteen years of age; and the prohibition of work in factories by children under fourteen.

The Comitê de Defesa Proletária's position, published in the morning papers on July 14, was "not to deny" that concessions had been offered by the industrialists, "under pressure from the authorities, on their part impelled by the present movement of the working mass." However, the Comitê said, the continuous cost of living increase made these concessions insufficient. The Comitê also reminded the industrialists that "wage increases benefit commerce."<sup>4</sup>

At noon on July 14 the journalists met at *O Estado de S. Paulo* with Rodolfo Crespi, Ermelino Matarazzo, Jorge Street, and other industrialists. The industrialists repeated their offer to increase wages by 20 percent; they agreed also to respect the rights of workers to associate, to dismiss no one for his part in the strike, and to "improve the moral, material, and economic conditions of the São Paulo working force."<sup>5</sup> The Light and Power Company and the São Paulo Railway, both foreign-owned, were not represented.

Late that afternoon the Comitê de Defesa Proletária sent six men to *O Estado de S. Paulo*: a lithographer, a sawyer, and a worker in commerce; also Gigi Damiani of *La Battaglia*, Teodoro Municéli of *Avanti!*, and Edgard Leuenroth. Leuenroth, secretary of the Comitê, had, on June 8, 1917, started publishing the anarchist weekly *A Plebe* in place of the anticlerical *A Lanterna*. Hearing from the journalists about the industrialists' offer, the Comitê's representatives expressed objections and then left to deliberate. Returning at 9:00 P.M., they accepted the offer on the

<sup>3</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "A Greve de 1917," letter published in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 27, 1966.

<sup>4</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 14, 1917.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, July 16, 1917.

understanding that certain "indispensable" points be accepted by the government.

Accordingly on the following day, Sunday, July 15, thirteen journalists called on Altino Arantes. The governor agreed to release those arrested due to the strike and to respect laws guaranteeing the right to assemble. The executive, he said, would "redouble" its efforts to enforce legislation covering child labor in factories and would seek the enactment of legislation covering night work by women and by children under eighteen; it would seek to guarantee "reasonable" prices for prime consumer needs and would prevent the adulteration and false labeling of foodstuffs.<sup>6</sup>

Three journalists called on the mayor. He seemed most interested in stressing the gravity of the municipality's financial situation, but agreed to increase the number of "free markets" (where producers sold directly to consumers).

Streetcars that Sunday were back on regular schedules. At noon gas company workers returned to their jobs, explaining that they had absented themselves only to avoid being attacked by strikers.

At *O Estado de S. Paulo* that evening the representatives of the Comitê de Defesa Proletária learned of the assurances given by Arantes and the mayor. They accepted the offers of the industrialists and the government and agreed to recommend them to the workers at meetings on Monday, July 16.

The largest of these Monday meetings was held at Concórdia Square. *O Estado de S. Paulo* described it as attracting "over five thousand." Recalling this meeting years later, Everardo Dias called it a victory celebration attended by "over eighty thousand," and he added that "never had the city seen such a large gathering."<sup>7</sup> The well-behaved crowd heard speeches by Leuenroth, Municéli, and Antônio Candeias Duarte, the commercial worker who had participated in the negotiations. It was resolved that workers would return to all plants whose directors accepted the agreement made by the Comitê de Defesa Proletária. Furthermore, the assembled workers committed themselves "on the first call of the Comitê to repeat and intensify the agitation if, within the shortest possible time, the authorities do not keep their word, or if just settlements are not reached in the case of workers who find themselves forced to continue on strike." This "order of the day" ended with a note explaining that the

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 303.

assembled workers were assuming the task of organizing the entire proletarian mass.<sup>8</sup>

After this resolution had been voted on by the workers in Concórdia Square, it was adopted at meetings held in theaters in the Lapa and Ipiranga districts. All three meetings ended with the singing of "The International."

Life in the city became normal on July 17. In the following days the press published a growing list of firms said to have subscribed to the settlement.

Most of the local newspapers defended the strikers.<sup>9</sup> Thus *O Estado de S. Paulo* published an article that took issue with São Paulo's federal congressional leader, Alvano de Carvalho, who had blamed the trouble on "foreign agitators and anarchists, who, thanks to the tolerance of our laws and customs, carry on here their criminal work of hate and destruction." "Above all," this article explained, "the reason for the strike was the terribly high cost of living. No one knows for a fact whether there are dangerous anarchists in São Paulo. Even if there are, they could not have caused forty thousand workers to rise up from one day to the next."<sup>10</sup>

Not all returning workers received wage increases of 20 percent. The document signed by the Companhia Antarctica provided: a 10 percent increase for drivers, a 15 percent increase for those paid on a monthly basis, an increase of one hundred réis per hour for those not paid on a monthly basis, and a 20 percent increase for those under sixteen years of age.<sup>11</sup> This agreement called for a minimum of nine hours of work per day with an overtime bonus of one hundred réis per hour. In some cases, including that of the Companhia Antarctica, workers would later complain that after calm was restored, agreements were not kept by employers.<sup>12</sup>

On July 16—following the settlement in the state capital—the União Geral dos Trabalhadores of Santos declared a strike. It was a complete

<sup>8</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 17, 1917.

<sup>9</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> "A Verdade e a Greve," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 21, 1917.

<sup>11</sup> *A Plebe* 3, no. 4 (September 11, 1919).

<sup>12</sup> *A Plebe*, a strong campaigner against Companhia Antarctica Paulista, maintained that, shortly after one month after Antarctica made its settlement with its workers, it "mocked" the agreement, "thus initiating the period of reaction that immediately spread to other industries" (*A Plebe* 2, no. 17 [June 14, 1919]).

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failure. The Companhia Paulista, its Santos warehouses well guarded by troops, hired new workers to replace those who struck against it in the port city. By July 23 the strike in Santos was limited to civil construction workers and workers handling coffee in the general warehouses. But on the twenty-fourth so many returned to their jobs—some of them complaining that the União Geral had done nothing helpful—that the União announced the end of the strike.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 25, 1917.

## 5. Outbreak of the 1917 Strike in Rio

On July 18 a Rio furniture worker, Flávio dos Santos, walked off the job to demonstrate, he said, "support for the São Paulo strikers." He persuaded only 3 of his 180 fellow workers to leave with him. However, at another furniture plant 150 workers struck. The unusual owner of this plant immediately raised wages 20 percent, said that he shared his workers' feelings, and told them to go off and demonstrate as they saw fit—but not to engage in depredations.<sup>1</sup>

The strike spread to five other plants, and the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro met to decide that the furniture workers would return to their jobs only if managements would institute the eight-hour day and a daily minimum wage of eight mil-réis, end piece-work and the hiring of children, and assume the responsibility for on-the-job accidents.<sup>2</sup> On the nineteenth the Federação distributed bulletins in the furniture plants, proclaiming that "the decisive moment has come for us to end the criminal apathy in which we are suffering the most shameful exploitations."<sup>3</sup>

While the Federação worked on plans to issue a general strike call on July 22, the União da Construção Civil (Union of Civil Construction) prepared to draw up its demands. However, a large commission representing the União dos Trabalhadores em Estivas (Union of Stevedores)

<sup>1</sup> "Os Acontecimentos de S. Paulo e a Repercussão nesta Capital," *Correio da Manhã*, July 19, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "O Movimento Operário de São Paulo e a Sua Repercussão nesta Capital," *Correio da Manhã*, July 20, 1917.



assured Police Chief Aurelino Leal that the stevedores would in no way support a general strike.<sup>4</sup>

*Correio da Manhã*, alarmed, editorialized on July 21 that "for the first time since the abolition of slavery," Brazil was "profoundly agitated by the impetus of unknown forces that seek to overcome the existing inertia." The newspaper saw two possible paths. The government could continue inert and watch the social question turn into the "implacable class struggle" being successfully proposed in proletarian circles, or, to stave off this "anarchist insanity," the government could abandon its "old individualistic superstitions" and intervene to ensure that "the entire collectivity" benefit from the wealth produced. Such an intervention, the liberal *Correio da Manhã* believed, could more usefully channel "the energies that the Brazilian proletariat now devotes to its adventures keyed to mirages and utopias."<sup>5</sup>

On Monday morning, July 23, an estimated fifty thousand were striking in Rio. Later in the day about twenty thousand metalworkers left their jobs. In the evening the tailors and bread carriers decided to join the movement.<sup>6</sup> On July 24 shoemakers founded the União dos Cortadores de Calçado and demanded the eight-hour day and a 20 percent wage increase.<sup>7</sup> Strikers at the América Fabril textile company were demanding a 30 percent increase and schools for their children.<sup>8</sup> Workers at another textile company, Fábrica de Tecidos Aliança, wanted a 30 percent increase and an end to corporal punishment.<sup>9</sup>

Bands of strikers roamed through the streets. On July 24, when some of them tried to induce nonstrikers to join the movement, the police rushed in with swords.<sup>10</sup> Mobs, irate at this police "attack," marched on São Francisco Square, bearing a red banner and yelling "Down with Capital." The police and civil guardsmen would allow no meetings in the square. But the strikers were permitted to pass through it and proceed to the Federação Operária. They spent the evening in the street in front of the Federação listening to contradictory speeches: some recommended prudence, and others argued that the police behavior justified reaction.

Meanwhile other bands carried out the first depredations and assaults.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "A Ameaça da Gréve," *Correio da Manhã*, July 21, 1917.

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, July 24, 1917.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., July 25, 1917.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., July 27, 1917.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., July 28, 1917.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., July 25, 1917.

In a clash on Marechal Floriano Peixoto Avenue the chief of the Security Corps was hit on the head by a stone.

On July 25 Police Chief Aurelino Leal announced the abandonment of the policy of "calmly watching." His note called attention to threats made against nonstrikers and asserted that "the authorities cannot remain idle in the face of such events, made worse yesterday by subversive cries and depredations. . . . The police are prohibiting tendentious manifestations in the streets, where a state of panic has been reached."<sup>11</sup>

*Correio da Manhã* stated that "the vulgar and rudimentary processes of repression" would not resolve "a crisis that was the result of just claims of people exhausted by work, exasperated by long suffering inflicted by the parasites of the governing oligarchy, and brought now to the extreme of rebellion by the insulting indifference of their oppressors." It called on the government and Congress "to abandon the secondary matters which absorb them and to try to meet the people, who are desperate with hunger."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "A Policia Diz que Vae Agir Energicamente," *Correio da Manhã*, July 25, 1917.

<sup>12</sup> "Sem Governo," *Correio da Manhã*, July 25, 1917.

## 6. Closing the Rio Federação and Centro Cosmopolita

On July 25 police soldiers dispersed a large crowd in the vicinity of the central police building. To help the soldiers enforce a ruling that strikers were "absolutely" not to pass in front of the building, cavalrymen were called in. They were stoned by the strikers and in the skirmish that followed the lieutenant in charge of the police contingent was wounded in the head.<sup>1</sup> Some strikers were arrested and the others fled.

On the twenty-sixth the authorities announced that the Army was guarding the Light and Power Company<sup>2</sup> and the docks, and reported that twenty workers and eleven members of the police brigade were un-

<sup>1</sup> "O Dia de Hontem Foi Assinalado por Sangrentos Conflictos entre a Policia e os Operarios," *Correio da Manhã*, July 26, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> The Rio de Janeiro Tramway, Light and Power Company, Limited, subsidiary of the Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Company (Canadian).

dergoing treatment in the municipal hospital as a result of the clashes of July 24 and 25.<sup>3</sup>

A bulletin posted at the Federação Operária advised that "all the workers of this capital, without distinction of class, are on strike." But the Federação Marítima Brasileira made public that forty thousand sailors, represented by twelve affiliate organizations, would not strike. It added that the sailors' associations would limit themselves to peaceful means.<sup>4</sup>

Police Chief Aurelino Leal persuaded President Venceslau Brás that the Federação Operária and the Centro Cosmopolita should be closed down because men had fired on policemen from these buildings. Soldiers carried out the necessary orders, and Aurelino Leal issued an explanation to the public. Workers, many of them foreigners, he said, had used the balconies of the "ill-reputed" Centro Cosmopolita to throw stones and fire bullets on the authorities.<sup>5</sup>

"It should not be forgotten that the assassination of the police chief was advocated in the Federação Operária last May; nor that a commission of this Federação stationed itself inconveniently in the presidential palace, saying that it was going to impose a certain measure on the chief of state rather than request it of him. . . .

"The Federação was and is the center of the anarchists of Rio de Janeiro . . . , a dubious organization . . . , where, in the opinion of several honest workers, the good faith of unwary workers is exploited."<sup>6</sup>

On July 26, after Aurelino Leal had made these accusations, some shoemakers and their employers agreed on a daily minimum wage of 8\$500.<sup>7</sup> Many, however, worked at home and were paid on a piece basis. Therefore Aurelino Leal called in representatives of such shoemakers and eight employers, and he emphasized his desire to see a return to normal conditions. A tabulation of rates was agreed upon and the shoemakers went back to work. But the strike gained new adherents, including some street cleaners.<sup>8</sup>

In the last days of July many settlements were reached. Representatives of the textile workers, Rio's largest labor group, were still negotiating on August 1. When they came to an agreement with the Centro

<sup>3</sup> "A Cidade Já Voltou a Tranquilidade," *Correio da Manhã*, July 27, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, July 27, 1917.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, July 26, 1917.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, July 26, 1917.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, July 27, 1917; 8\$500 is eight and one-half mil-réis.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, July 28, 1917.

Industrial do Brasil on August 2, Rio's "general strike" ended. The agreement called for a fifty-six-hour week and a 10 percent increase in wages. It asserted that questions about the eight-hour day, child labor, and employers' responsibility for on-the-job accidents would be resolved by congressional laws. No worker was to be dismissed because of his participation in the strike.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "A Gréve em Franco Declínio," *Correio da Manhã*, August 3, 1917.

## 7. Punishments for São Paulo Strike Leaders

The São Paulo and Rio strike movements of July 1917 occurred when public opinion in Brazil was becoming increasingly anti-German. Already in April 1917, a few days after the United States declared war on Germany, Brazil had suspended diplomatic and commercial relations with Germany in reprisal for the sinking of the *Paraná* and the death of three members of its crew. Then in May, two more Brazilian vessels were torpedoed by the Germans.

"The imperial German government," João Pandiá Calógeras has written, "was secretly but effectively intervening in the internal affairs of Brazil." Listing examples of this "intervention," Calógeras, who was finance minister in 1917, mentioned the "fomenting of strikes."<sup>1</sup> Brazil's labor leaders, associated by the authorities with secret German plots, became further discredited when many of them, true to their anarchist beliefs, expressed opposition to Brazil's entry into the war at a time when patriotic sentiment was rapidly mounting.

In September 1917, over a month before Brazil declared itself at war with Germany, the government of São Paulo took steps to expel about twenty foreign-born labor leaders, and it arrested Edgard Leuenroth. Lawyers Evaristo de Moraes and José Adriano Marrey Júnior worked for over six months before they were able to get Leuenroth out of jail and acquitted of the charge of having been "the psychological-intellectual author of the general strike of 1917."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> João Pandiá Calógeras, *A History of Brazil*, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "A Greve de 1917," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 27, 1966.

Meanwhile the São Paulo authorities, arguing for the expulsion of foreign anarchists, swayed the courts with stories the proletarian press described as ridiculous. Judges heard that Gigi Damiani had "assaulted the honor of a minor" and that the Polish-born shoemaker, Antônio Nalepinski, lived from the earnings of his Brazilian wife. José Sarmento Marques, who had helped negotiate the end of the São Paulo strike of 1917, was reported to have served a sentence in Portugal over twenty years earlier for some "infamous crime." José Sarmento Marques and Damiani were further charged with preaching revolution in Brazil "in the columns of an Italian-language newspaper." Such stories were said to have given the judges the "worst impression" of the defendants.<sup>3</sup>

Evaristo de Moraes argued that the decree of 1907 clearly protected foreigners who had two years of continuous residence in Brazil or who had Brazilian wives and children. While the 1913 modification canceled that protection, a good case could be made for the unconstitutionality of the modification. The Supreme Court, chiefly concerned about national security, found insufficient proof of Brazilian residence in the case of most of the defendants.<sup>4</sup> And so in October 1917, while Evaristo de Moraes prepared a new habeas corpus appeal, and Nereu Rangel Pestana submitted evidence of the defendants' long residence in Brazil, the state government of São Paulo put about a dozen of them aboard the *Curvello*

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Evaristo de Moraes did much legal work before he completed his formal studies for a law degree in 1918 when he was forty-five years old. In the course of defending Leuenroth, Evaristo de Moraes explained that anarchist literature was worthy of study and that anarchism should not be condemned on the basis of police reports. At this time Evaristo de Moraes, who was not an anarchist, campaigned for a legislative seat in the 1918 elections. For this participation in politics he was condemned in articles by José Oiticica (Edgar Rodrigues, *Nacionalismo & Cultura Social*, 1913-1922, pp. 164 and 220).

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 11, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> *A Noite*, October 8, 1917, quoted in [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 67. While the decree of 1913 had revoked articles 3, 4, and 8 of the 1907 decree, the Supreme Court still considered this revocation subject to the verification of residency, and continued to rule inadmissible the expulsion of foreigners with more than two years of continuous residence in Brazil, because of the guarantees extended by article 72 of the Federal Constitution. But in the decision of October 6, 1917, the Supreme Court ruled that the anarchists, opposing "social order" and set to destroy the same by violence, constituted an unsettling, "floating element," who roamed the country to spread their ideals and methods, and could not therefore be considered residents (see Solidonio Leite Filho, *Commentários à Lei de Imprensa*, pp. 90-91).

in Santos. Among the victims were Florentino de Carvalho, Nalepinski, and José Sarmiento Marques, but not Damiani.

When the *Curvello* stopped at Rio de Janeiro, lawyers Evaristo de Moraes and Roberto Feijó went on board. But they were unable to see their clients, shut up in a third-class cabin with no idea of the "phantom ship's" destination, and leaving behind "abandoned and destitute" families.<sup>5</sup> The prisoners were treated with little sympathy. Florentino de Carvalho, commenting on the stop at Bahia, has written that "the crew, and the soldiers and officers of the Bahian regiment, had been informed by the police that those being deported were bandits, pimps, thieves, enemies of Brazil, and foreign anarchists."<sup>6</sup>

One evening, off Recife harbor, the *Curvello* took on a cargo of fish. The maritime police, on board earlier to prevent escapes, had left. Following the last load, Florentino de Carvalho, Nalepinski, and Francisco Aroca jumped into the empty basket that was being hoisted to the barge near the ship. Hanging over "furiously rough waves," the three men reached the barge and rode to port. But the police arrested the suspicious visitors who had "come to say farewell to friends," and marched them off to a police station to be questioned by the *delegado*. Florentino de Carvalho describes the meeting with the man called "doutô"—doctor—by his subordinates:

This example of the Pernambuco police, with a low forehead, monkey-like cranium, the face of a born criminal (according to the Lombroso School), making a fierce and aggressive gesture, spoke to us, without looking straight at us, and said: "So, you thought there were no police in Pernambuco?" At 11:00 P.M. we entered the bastille. For repose there were three wooden bunks full of fleas, lice, and bedbugs—a veritable zoological garden. . . . The food furnished us consisted of a little bit of water dirtied by the residue of unstrained coffee, and three crackers fixed up with some paste of beans, which had the effect of dynamite in one's stomach.<sup>7</sup>

At the end of October, a guard, preparing the three prisoners for the continuation of their journey into exile, gave them some money. He also handed them a copy of Leuenroth's publication, *A Plebe*; this gift from

<sup>5</sup> Florentino de Carvalho, "A Nossa Expulsão, I," *A Plebe* 2, no. 14 (May 24, 1919).

<sup>6</sup> Florentino de Carvalho, "A Nossa Expulsão, II," *A Plebe* 2, no. 15 (May 31, 1919).

<sup>7</sup> Florentino de Carvalho, "A Nossa Expulsão, III," *A Plebe* 2, no. 16 (June 7, 1919).

some comrades in Recife was described by Florentino de Carvalho as "like the sun, giving us new hope."<sup>8</sup> On the next day they were put aboard the *Avaré*. When the *Avaré* stopped at Barbados Island, on its way to New York, the three São Paulo labor leaders were put ashore, thus completing their expulsion from Brazil.

On November 10, 1917, the federal Supreme Court ruled a second time on the case. Among the six judges upholding the expulsion was Sebastião de Lacerda, father of progressive-minded Congressman Maurício de Lacerda. Six judges voted against expulsion. The tie was broken when the court's president voted against expulsion.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Florentino de Carvalho, "A Nossa Expulsão, IV," *A Plebe* 2, no. 17 (June 14, 1919).

<sup>9</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 11, 1917.

## 8. Brazil's War Declaration Thwarts the Strike Movement

On October 26, 1917, upon learning that the Germans had torpedoed a fourth Brazilian ship, the *Macau*, the government of Brazil declared the existence of a state of war with Germany. "Patriotic rallies" and demonstrations against the Germans were held, and some German companies and newspapers were forced to close.

Weavers, on strike in Rio, were moved by an appeal of President Venceslau Brás and returned to their jobs in the name of "extreme patriotism."<sup>1</sup> Some of the labor unions formed "patriotic battalions" and sent their members into the streets to collect funds for the Allies.<sup>2</sup>

The Companhia Docas de Santos (Santos Dock Company) advised President Venceslau Brás that it would provide uniforms to its workers who enlisted in the *linhas de tiro* or in the Naval Reserve, and would guarantee them their jobs when they returned from military service. The formation of the *linhas de tiro*, groups of patriots who engaged in target practice, was announced throughout much of Brazil. From Minas Gerais came the report that "all day in Ouro Preto echoes were heard in the

<sup>1</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

mountains, revealing that our sharpshooters do not rest from their exercises."<sup>3</sup> In the federal legislature a bill was introduced to authorize the government's executive branch to request of the French government a military mission to train the Brazilian Army.

Leaders of the clergy resolved to use their influence over the people to help the government on behalf of the "national cause."<sup>4</sup> From Recife came the voice of Sebastião Leme, archbishop of Olinda: "Each national vessel which disappears in the seas is a piece of the fatherland which goes. United with the legitimately constituted authorities, we shall know how to fulfill our duty."<sup>5</sup>

The bishop of Campinas, João Batista Correia Néri, pointed out the need to instill a "national conscience" in the farm workers. His circular told of "the obligation to help feed our allies abroad by means of an abnormally high exportation of cereals to Europe," which "will inescapably raise the prices of prime necessities at home." Extolling self-sacrifice, the bishop quoted "the significant and eloquent words of the honorable directorship" of the National Society of Agriculture: "Brazilian farm workers! From you, for whom work is a second nature, the nation expects everything, certain of your cooperation and your abnegation."<sup>6</sup>

The strike movement was set back not only by the wave of patriotism, but also by a state of siege, enacted by Congress soon after war was declared. Aurelino Leal closed more labor organizations. He described the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro, which he had already closed in July, as a den of "anarchists" and "international slime," where dissolution of the family, negation of the fatherland, subversion of legal order, and assassination of authority had been preached.<sup>7</sup>

But where labor associations were closed, organizations with new names sometimes sprang up. José Oiticica, in an open letter to Aurelino Leal, wrote that the Federação Operária had been a weak, hesitant association of about five thousand members, whereas the União Geral dos Trabalhadores, which took its place, had thirty thousand. "The arbitrary act of your Excellency in closing the Federação, was the strong bond for uniting the workers."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 14, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, November 12, 1917.

<sup>5</sup> Laura Pessoa Raja Gabaglia, *O Cardeal Leme*, p. 110.

<sup>6</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 1, 1917.

<sup>7</sup> José Oiticica, "Em Defesa da Federação Operária," *A Rua* (Rio de Janeiro), April 19, 1918, reproduced in José Oiticica, *Ação Direta*, pp. 52-57.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.



The authorities closed down publications that continued to oppose Brazil's participation in the war. One such periodical was the anarchist weekly *A Semana Social*, which eighteen-year-old Antônio Bernardo Canelas had recently established in Maceió, Alagoas, after moving there from Rio. Canelas and twenty-one-year-old Otávio Brandão, a native of Alagoas, published an article with the headline, "Down with the Imperialistic War," and then went inland to be away from Maceió when the storm broke against *A Semana Social*. But Canelas returned to Maceió too soon. Thousands, who had stoned the editorial office of the weekly, greeted him with shouts of "Death to Canelas!"<sup>9</sup> He fled to Recife.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, Rio de Janeiro, August 30, 1970.

<sup>10</sup> "O Norte Rebelde," *A Plebe* 2, no. 10 (April 26, 1919).

## 9. Reports about the Bolshevik Revolution

Brazil had hardly declared itself in the war when news came of stirring events in Russia. Brazilian newspaper readers learned about the Maximalistas (Bolsheviks). In *O Estado de S. Paulo*, an article based on a study published in France pointed out that "the terms Maximalistas (Bolshevik) and Minimalistas (Menshevik) . . . no longer signify majority and minority . . . ; on the contrary, those who today call themselves Maximalistas are in reality no more than a small minority, whereas the great majority of Russian Social Democrats are Minimalistas. Today the Minimalistas are those who are satisfied with the 'minimum' realization of the Social Democratic program, whereas the Maximalistas demand the 'maximum' realization of this program." The article further explained that Lenin, the Maximalista, was carrying his tactic to an "absurdity" by sustaining that "the defeat of Russia is a revolutionary necessity." But, it added reassuringly, in Russia he had not had the success he had hoped for.<sup>1</sup>

Reports about developments in Russia reached the Brazilian press via London, Paris, and Amsterdam in the form of cables sent by Havas and other international wire services. Cables dated November 11, 1917, four

<sup>1</sup> "Os Partidos Politicos na Russia," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 23, 1917 (based on J. W. Bienstock's article in the French *Mercur*e).

days after Alexander Kerensky fled from Petrograd, advised that "the collapse of the Bolshevik (Leninist) movement is a matter of days," that the "Cossacks and Minimalistas are ready to dominate Petrograd," and that "Kerensky is at the general barracks with two hundred thousand dedicated men."<sup>2</sup> A month later the cables were still proclaiming the approaching doom of the Bolsheviks at the hands of Kerensky and of Generals Kornilov and Kaledin. Both generals were pictured as "in command of the indomitable Cossacks, who do not submit and will not submit to Lenin." "Leninist corruption," it was supposed, would "not affect the Russian soldiers."<sup>3</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira felt that "the bourgeois press presented the news slanderously, distorting the facts, twisting the meaning of the revolutionary events which unfolded in Russia."<sup>4</sup> He had been publishing comments on Russian developments in *O Debate* of Rio, of which he had been co-director and contributor along with figures such as Fábio Luz, Maurício de Lacerda, Agripino Nazaré, and the novelist Lima Barreto.<sup>5</sup> But with Brazil's entry into the war, *O Debate* had been forced out of existence. Therefore, using a pseudonym, Astrogildo Pereira addressed letters to the press, complaining of falsehoods and lies. Few papers published these letters, but Pereira presented them in a brochure, *A Revolução Russa e a Imprensa*, which appeared in Rio in February 1918 under his pseudonym, Alex Pavel.

This brochure attacked the "anti-Maximalista" phobia of *A Razão*, which had described the Maximalistas as "the scum of the earth" and had charged that, with the assistance of German money, they had managed "by a lucky coup, to seize control of Russia." Astrogildo Pereira, asserting that *A Razão* was directed by a "comic and notorious demon, prophet, and

<sup>2</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 12, 1917.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, December 10, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Afonso Henriques de Lima Barreto expressed his "secret anarchist ideas" in magazines and several proletarian newspapers, "giving the movement the best of his literary talent." In May 1918, admitting that the Russian revolution "inspired" him, he published his "Manifesto Maximalista," calling for an end to private, unused, large landed estates, the "return to communion" of church-owned property, the abolition of financial instruments (securities), and the adoption of divorce (see Astrogildo Pereira, *Interpretações*, p. 144; Francisco de Assis Barbosa, *Vida de Lima Barreto*, p. 241; Lima Barreto, "No Ajuste de Contas," *Revista A.B.C.*, May 11, 1918, reproduced in [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 345).

spiritual pope, half-crazy and little less than illiterate," explained that "the Maximalistas never seized control of Russia. They are the great majority of the Russian people, the only true and natural master of Russia. It is Kerensky and his band who improperly seized control of Russia."<sup>6</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira and the other Brazilian anarchists believed that "the Russian revolution was a libertarian one, opening the way to anarchism."<sup>7</sup> They praised Lenin and Trotsky, and in Rio on May 1, 1918, they hailed "the triumph" of their "brothers in Russia." Because the state of siege outlawed demonstrations in the streets, they had to express their joy at indoor commemorations.

<sup>6</sup> Alex Pavel (Astrogildo Pereira), *A Revolução Russa e a Imprensa* (Rio de Janeiro, 1918), given as the first appendix of Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, pp. 315-316.

<sup>7</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, pp. 27-28.

## 10. The Cantareira Strike (August 1918)

Food prices, which had risen so much before the strikes of June and July 1917, continued to climb steeply during the remainder of 1917. Workers may have felt that they had as much reason to strike in 1918 as they had had in mid-1917.

That wartime conditions could not stifle all labor agitation became clear in August 1918 when a strike broke out at the Companhia Cantareira e Viação Fluminense, operator of streetcars in Niterói and ferries between Niterói and Rio. The living cost increase had persuaded the British owners to grant a wage increase (15 percent for married men and 10 percent for bachelors) to the streetcar workers effective July 1918. Ferry workers, although given an increase as recently as February 1918, were misled by a newspaper article into believing the new increase would apply to them also. They therefore struck after being handed their disappointing pay envelopes at the beginning of August.<sup>1</sup>

Near Rio a brief sympathy strike occurred at shops of the Leopoldina Railway, a property of the British company that owned Companhia Can-

<sup>1</sup> *O Paiz*, August 11, 1918.

TABLE 5  
Wholesale Prices (Mil réis), 1917-1918

Commodity	Price		
	July 2, 1917	February 2, 1918	July 7, 1918
<i>São Paulo</i>			
60 kgs. rice ( <i>agulba</i> , 1st grade)	32.1	29.5	36.5
60 kgs. rice ( <i>agulba</i> , 2d grade)	30.0	23.5	33.5
60 kgs. white beans ( <i>feijão branco</i> )	28.0	33.0	23.3
60 kgs. sugar ( <i>crystal</i> )	40.5	44.5	54.8
60 kgs. white corn	6.5	6.8	9.8
1 kg. papaya (fruit)	0.3	0.6	0.8
1 kg. fresh butter	3.3	3.9	3.9
	December 11, 1917	April 9, 1918	August 2, 1918
<i>Rio de Janeiro</i>			
60 kgs. rice ( <i>bom</i> )	30.0	31.0	40.0
60 kgs. <i>feijão</i> ( <i>mulatinho</i> beans)	24.5	25.5	25.0
60 kgs. <i>feijão</i> ( <i>manteiga</i> )	43.0	33.0	28.0
45 kgs. manioc meal ( <i> fina</i> )	19.8	23.8	24.8
62 kgs. white corn	10.8	9.8	14.8
1 kg. potatoes	0.3	0.2	0.5
1 kg. pork	1.0	0.7	1.6
100 onions	2.9	3.8	8.5
1 tongue (from Rio Grande do Sul)	1.5	1.6	1.8

SOURCE: *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 3, 1917, December 12, 1917, February 3, 1918, April 10, 1918, July 8, 1918, August 3, 1918.

tarefa.<sup>2</sup> More serious was the sympathy strike by the Cantareira streetcar operators and conductors in Niterói. During the first week of the strike, while the Navy and the Federal District police brigade operated the ferries (not always on schedule), conditions deteriorated in Niterói. Streetcar workers were joined by others who wanted wage increases. Disorderly mobs, feared especially at night, clashed with police and used threats to force commerce to close. Twice on the night of August 6, the state cavalry used sabers to disperse mobs.<sup>3</sup>

After Army soldiers of Colonel Estilac Leal's Fifty-eighth Battalion joined a mob and unsuccessfully attacked the automobile of state Police Commander José Ribeiro, the authorities declared that anarchists, foreign

<sup>2</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, August 4, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, August 7, 1918.

to Niterói, were guilty of turning Army soldiers against the Força Militar (state police).

The stage was set for a conflict on the evening of August 7 when a large crowd in Conceição Street, well sprinkled with Fifty-eighth Battalion soldiers, shouted "death" to the police and "constituted governments," and "vivas" for "anarchism" and "internationalism." During a cavalry charge by the state police, shooting broke out. After the cavalry retired, its munitions exhausted, infantry of the Força Militar took its turn at exchanging fire with the Army soldiers.<sup>4</sup> About a dozen state policemen and an unknown number of Army men and civilians were wounded. Two died on the spot: Nestor Pereira da Silva, an Army soldier, and José Oliveira do Amaral, a civilian.

A former Cantareira streetcar conductor gave the police a letter addressed to Astrogildo Pereira, bearing a notation of the phone number of the Centro Cosmopolita. Signed "Alexandre," the letter said: "Things have gone as you could not imagine. The police indiscriminately attacked soldiers of the Fifty-eighth and the people. Tomorrow the police will patrol the streets unaided."<sup>5</sup> In the Federal District, Police Major Bandeira de Melo arrested Astrogildo and several other anarchists. Reportedly Astrogildo replied to questions in "a confused manner."

Despite Alexandre's prediction, the Força Militar of the state of Rio was not left to do its policing alone. Army contingents, among them units of the Third Infantry Regiment quartered in the heart of the Federal District, were sent to Niterói.

On August 8 Niterói was quiet. All stores remained closed "in honor of the dead." During the large funeral procession of Nestor Pereira da Silva, whose corpse lay in a coffin bought by popular subscription, the authorities restrained a worker from orating. The grave site was covered with wreaths; one bore the inscription "from the people of Niterói to the citizen-soldier," and another read, "from the workers of the S. Joaquim Textile Plant to the soldiers of the Fifty-eighth Battalion who fell defending the people." Among those sending wreaths were Nestor's companions in the Fifty-eighth Battalion, boilermakers, carpenters, and artisans of Lloyd Brasileiro, employees of the Central do Brasil Railroad, and the workers at several Niterói firms.<sup>6</sup>

During the funeral, mourners learned of the death of Antônio Lara

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., August 8, 1918.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., August 8, 1918.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., August 9, 1918.

França, a Fifty-eighth Battalion corporal who had been seriously wounded in the conflict of August 7. After another popular subscription made more wreaths and a coffin possible, the body of the corporal was buried while a worker eulogized his memory. But the civilian killed in the clash on August 7 was apparently forgotten: no one spoke at his funeral and no wreaths were placed on his grave.<sup>7</sup>

On August 9—when Niterói stores, well protected by troops, were doing business again—the Cantareira streetcar workers offered to end the strike if the company's maritime workers were given pay increases of between 8 and 10 percent. After the appeal was denied, the strikers decided to return to work anyway.

The progovernment *Jornal do Commercio* insisted that the Cantareira workers had not been involved in the disorders in Niterói.<sup>8</sup> Looking for culprits, Major Bandeira de Melo arrested more anarchists, "on suspicion." Among them was João da Costa Pimenta, who threatened to go on a "hunger strike" in jail by rejecting food being sent by friends.<sup>9</sup> Pimenta, a mulatto graphic worker, was one of the best labor organizers of the day. Once a baker in Campos (in the state of Rio de Janeiro), he had moved in 1904 to the federal capital<sup>10</sup> and had done much there to build up the Centro Cosmopolita.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., August 10, 1918.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., August 10, 1918.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., August 16, 1918.

<sup>10</sup> Hílcar Leite, interview, December 8, 1967.

## 11. Planning to Overthrow the Government (November 1918)

After World War I ended on November 11, 1918, Brazil was shaken by strikes in a second phase of the wave that began in 1917 and would end in 1921. This second phase occasionally revealed a new element because some leaders of the proletariat were determined to have the workers follow the example of their Bolshevik "brethren" and establish, "as was done in Russia, a genuinely popular government of representatives of the

workers and soldiers."<sup>1</sup> Some of these leaders were now impressed by the knowledge that an advanced state of industrial development was not a prerequisite for the violent overthrow of capitalism. They believed, as did Lenin and Trotsky, that the logic of world history was on their side and that the proletarian movement, started in Russia in 1917, would inevitably spread far.

Brazilian authorities, likewise influenced by the Bolshevik revolution, seldom missed opportunities to warn that the real purpose of strike movements was more sinister than the achievement of wage increases and the eight-hour day. They could point to the motives of anarchist leaders who organized the strike that broke out in Rio a week after the end of World War I, before the state of siege came to an end. Aided by bombs, the plotters hoped to reenact events that had occurred in Petrograd a year earlier.<sup>2</sup>

The leader of the "council" to direct this insurrection was Professor José Oiticica. He was assisted by Agripino Nazaré, a lawyer from Bahia, and Astrogildo Pereira, whose letters to the press had cost him his job in the Ministry of Agriculture.<sup>3</sup> Others associated with the insurrectional council were Manuel Campos, the Spanish-born anarchist who had directed *Na Barricada* in 1915-1916; Álvaro Palmeira, a professor with influence among civil construction workers; and Carlos Dias, the graphic worker who for more than ten years had helped turn out anarchist publications. Textile labor leaders Manuel Castro and Joaquim Morais were in on the plot. So were José Elias da Silva, João da Costa Pimenta, and journalist José Romero.

While the council and others instructed the workers, who were about to strike for better working conditions, Brazil's attention was focused on the dreadful influenza epidemic and the plans for inaugurating President-elect Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves, scheduled to take over from Venceslau Brás on November 15, 1918.

The epidemic of "Spanish gripe," or "Spanish flu," serious in São Paulo, was at its worst in the national capital. By mid-November 1918, reports showed that, of Rio's 914,292 inhabitants, 401,950 were suffer-

<sup>1</sup> José Oiticica, quoted by Lieutenant Jorge Elias Ajus, according to Investigator Nascimento Silva's report of December 1, 1918, given in [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, November 22, 1968; Hílcar Leite, interview, December 8, 1967.

<sup>3</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, November 22, 1968.

ing from, or had been suffering from, the epidemic, and that already 14,459 Cariocas had died from it.<sup>4</sup> President-elect Rodrigues Alves, it was announced, was so ill with the grippe that he could not take office. In his place Vice-President-elect Delfim Moreira assumed the presidency, and not much later Rodrigues Alves died.

Unfortunately for Oiticica and his fellow conspirators, Ricardo Correia Perpétua, the council member in charge of distributing subversive bulletins to soldiers at the Vila Militar barracks, introduced Army Lieutenant Jorge Elias Ajus to the plotters. Ajus, speaking of Brazil's need of a "popular" Soviet type of government, was eagerly accepted because of his military connections; he was named joint chief of the movement along with Oiticica.<sup>5</sup> But he was a spy.<sup>6</sup>

Ajus attended the meeting of November 14 at Oiticica's home (where Oiticica warned of the need to speak softly lest his wife, in an adjoining room, overhear the plot and later denounce it).<sup>7</sup> It was revealed that all the textile workers and metalworkers were ready to act. Workers in the Botafogo area were to take the presidential palace and raise a red flag over it; those at Campo de São Cristóvão were to capture the War Ministry's deposit of arms; textile workers at Bangu were to seize the cartridge manufacturing plant of Realengo; Manuel Campos's followers in the Department of Health were to facilitate an attack on the arms supply of the Police Department. Oiticica observed that the outbreak should occur while the Senate and Chamber of Deputies were in session so that all the legislators could be taken. Ajus was to handle the military.

A larger meeting, attended by about forty conspirators, was held on November 15 in one of Oiticica's classrooms. After João da Costa Pimenta opened the meeting, Lieutenant Ajus argued that the movement should commence as a single, strong, concentrated effort to seize the police headquarters and the Army weapons depot at Campo de São Cristóvão. Oiticica agreed, saying that after the strike had been called at 3:30 P.M. on

<sup>4</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 15, 1918.

<sup>5</sup> Declaration of Jorge Elias Ajus in *Correio da Manhã*, December 24, 26, 1918, given in Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, pp. 327-343. See especially, p. 333.

<sup>6</sup> See testimony of Jorge Elias Ajus in *ibid.* Later Oiticica wrote of "the treason of Cavalry Lieutenant Ajus" (*Ação Direta* 1, no. 4 [May 7, 1946]). Otávio Brandão has stated that "Oiticica made the mistake of believing in an Army officer, who really represented the authorities" (interview, December 5, 1968).

<sup>7</sup> Declaration of Jorge Elias Ajus, in Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, p. 332.



November 18, all of the approximately fifteen thousand strikers should go to Campo de São Cristóvão.

On the night of November 17, when eight or ten council members met at Oiticica's home, Ajus explained that he would be off duty on November 18 and unable to cooperate effectively with the movement. He asked that the outbreak be postponed until the twentieth. But Agripino Nazaré persuasively opposed the idea, pointing out that the textile workers, all set to strike on November 18, could not be held back. Oiticica then outlined some of the measures taken. He said that "four thousand workers" were ready to go "all the way" and that "1,600 bombs" had already been distributed.<sup>8</sup> He felt it would be easy to secure the arms depot at Campo de São Cristóvão and explained how metalworkers would cut telephone lines and blow up a Light and Power Company tower, placing the city in darkness. Forty drums of petroleum and gasoline, he said, were available for setting fire to the City Hall, the central police building, and the Army general barracks.

Early on the afternoon of November 18, Oiticica was reviewing the final details with some council members in an office on Alfândega Street. Suddenly the authorities, advised of everything by Ajus, appeared and arrested Oiticica, Manuel Campos, Ricardo Perpétua, Astrogildo Pereira, Augusto Leite, and Carlos Dias. Júlio Rodrigues, who made these arrests on orders of Police Chief Aurelino Leal, said later that he and his associates made every effort to arrest João da Costa Pimenta, Manuel Castro, Joaquim Morais, and Raimundo Martins. But these labor leaders successfully fled and hid.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>9</sup> Declaration of Júlio Rodrigues in Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, p. 329.

## 12. The Anarchist Insurrection of November 1918<sup>1</sup>

At 4:00 P.M. on November 18, textile workers in the Federal District struck; reportedly six thousand in the Bangu sector left their jobs "with

<sup>1</sup> B. I. Koval, "Bosstaniye v Rio de Janeiro v Nojabre 1918 g," *Novaya i Noveishaya Istoriya* (March-April 1971) of the Akademiya Nauk SSSR Institut Vseobshchei Istorii, gives an account of the uprising largely based on [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*. Koval's article reflects the antagon-

a great clamor."<sup>2</sup> Then metalworkers and civil construction workers followed their example.

Factories had been filled with bulletins calling for "insubordination" and "violent reaction against the despotism of the plant owners." The bulletins distributed to Army barracks asked soldiers and sailors—"brothers of the workers"—to participate in the formation of "committees of soldiers and workers to take over all public services."<sup>3</sup>

By 5:00 P.M. only a few hundred insurrectionists had gathered at Campo de São Cristóvão.<sup>4</sup> During the fighting, in which some of them seized the Tenth District police Delegacia, a bullet wounded the local police *delegado*, and a bomb, flung at a police brigade truck, injured four soldiers, but none of the injuries were serious. To rescue the Delegacia from the insurgents, a cavalry unit advanced from the Army's well-guarded arms depot and by "repeated rifle shots" ousted the insurgents from the building.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, Army and police reinforcements arrived, as had been arranged by Aurelino Leal. The insurgents fled, but dozens of them were arrested. Occasionally bombs, which they left behind, exploded.<sup>6</sup>

At one of the textile plants, Fábrica de Tecidos Confiança, a few workers, led by Miguel Martins, rushed into the offices to assault members of the management. Other workers defended the management, leading to a battle with knives in which Miguel Martins met instant death. Three other workers were seriously wounded (one dying four days later).<sup>7</sup> On November 19, amidst much oratory, the body of Miguel Martins was buried in a casket draped with his labor union flag.<sup>8</sup> He was described as "the victim of treason by a companion."

Aurelino Leal, who had earned the name of Torquemada or the Carioca Trepov among proletarian leaders,<sup>9</sup> prohibited labor meetings. João Gon-

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ism to anarchists Carlos Dias and José Oiticica, which developed in Bolshevik circles in the years following that uprising.

<sup>2</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 20, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, November 19, 1918.

<sup>4</sup> Testimony of Tenth District Delegado Benedito Marques da Costa Ribeiro in Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, p. 338.

<sup>5</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 19, 1918.

<sup>6</sup> *Jornal do Brasil*, November 20, 1918.

<sup>7</sup> *Jornal do Brasil*, November 20, 23, 1918.

<sup>8</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 20, 1918. Burial was at the São Francisco Xavier Cemetery.

<sup>9</sup> Torquemada, Spanish grand inquisitor, died in 1498. Dmitri Trepov, tsarist police chief, suppressed disturbances in 1905. Sometimes Leal was called the

galves, Francisco de Oliveira, and other labor leaders in Bangu protested and were arrested.<sup>10</sup> A group of textile workers sought Aurelino Leal's permission to meet, but they were told that they could not do so because the request had not come from their union leaders (who were in jail or in hiding). The workers tried to assure the police chief that their wages and working conditions were such that they could not possibly fabricate bombs. "Positively, sir, we workers do not want a revolution: we want to work, with our rights respected."<sup>11</sup>

On November 22 Acting President Delfim Moreira and the justice minister signed a decree that dissolved the União Geral dos Trabalhadores<sup>12</sup> and suspended temporarily three unions that Aurelino Leal had already closed: the unions of textile workers, metalworkers, and civil construction workers. A subcommittee of the União Geral dos Metalúrgicos (Metalworkers' Union) complained that when the union's committee gathered to decide whether workers should return to their jobs, the entire committee was "arbitrarily imprisoned."<sup>13</sup> Metalworkers, Lieutenant Ajus informed the authorities, had been in charge of blowing up a Light and Power Company tower.

Ineffectual bombs were hurled at two Light and Power Company towers on November 19. Then the company announced that only a large supply of dynamite "of extraordinary power" could topple the towers, and that, even if this happened, the company's accumulators would have enough energy to keep Rio supplied with electricity for twenty-four hours—the time required to repair the installations.<sup>14</sup>

On November 22, following these comforting words, sensational headlines told of how the police had foiled a new and terrible anarchist plot to deprive Rio of light, power, and streetcar service by dynamiting the Ribeirão das Lages dams.<sup>15</sup> No less than ten "agitators" were said to have been arrested after they had been found in possession of subversive bulletins, a large quantity of arms, and maps showing "the road running from Rio das Pedras to Ribeirão das Lages, as well as the points to be dynamited. The police believed that their plan was to dynamite various

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"five-and-ten-cent-store Trepov" (*Trepov marca barbante*). See Nelson Werneck Sodré, *A História da Imprensa no Brasil*, p. 365.

<sup>10</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 20, 1918.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, November 21, 1918.

<sup>12</sup> *Jornal do Brasil* and *Correio da Manhã*, November 23, 1918.

<sup>13</sup> *Jornal do Brasil*, November 22, 1918.

<sup>14</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 20, 1918.

<sup>15</sup> *Jornal do Brasil* and *Correio da Manhã*, November 22, 1918.

pumps and then place bombs under the destroyed pumps in order to kill the workers in charge of repairing them."<sup>16</sup>

The news of this near calamity was accompanied by the disclosure that the police had arrested (November 18–21) "no fewer than 78 anarchists."<sup>17</sup> Among them were suspected Spaniards employed at plants in Gávea,<sup>18</sup> strikers who sought to meet in a thicket in Bangu, men found in a shed with "subversive documents," and individuals in possession of bombs or weapons. It was rumored that the foreign anarchists would be deported and the nationals would be sent to Fernando de Noronha Island, off the northeast coast.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 22, 1918.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, November 22, 1918.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, November 20, 1918.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, November 21, 1918.

### 13. End of the November 1918 Strikes

To demonstrate the existence of a plot behind the strike, authorities stressed that the strikers had all left work simultaneously and without advising their employers of their demands.<sup>1</sup> With labor leaders dispersed and workers barred from meeting, unions found it difficult to voice their demands. However, on November 20 *Jornal do Brasil* published some of the workers' "claims." The construction workers wanted the eight-hour day and "guarantees" in cases of on-the-job accidents. The metalworkers wanted a minimum wage, an eight-hour day, and recognition of their union as the only intermediary between workers and management.

Textile workers complained that company owners had disregarded the settlement of July 1917.<sup>2</sup> On November 23, *Jornal do Brasil*, which supported this charge,<sup>3</sup> quoted a textile workers' resolution that they would not return to work unless a minimum wage, an eight-hour day, and the six-day week were implemented.

To persuade the workers to return, the government issued a series of

<sup>1</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 21, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> *Jornal do Brasil*, November 20, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, November 23, 1918.

bulletins—some of them addressed to the wives and mothers of workers. The bulletins explained that the government, the “friend and natural protector of orderly workers,” would deport agitators who exploited them and subjected them to “terrible slavery.”<sup>4</sup> One bulletin issued by the Security Corps on November 26 told of money found on arrested anarchists. “When jailed, Manuel Campos was found with over 500\$000. . . . What more clearly proves that the anarchists exploit the orderly workers? But this regime of compulsion is ending. By yesterday already 8,940 workers had returned to their jobs. Let the rest return, because the police are acting and will not give respite to the dynamiters.”<sup>5</sup>

Late in November, most of the remaining strikers returned to their jobs.<sup>6</sup> But the companies refused to readmit any they felt had been troublesome.<sup>7</sup> By this time the police had about two hundred “agitators” in the Casa de Detenção. Contrary to rumors inspired by the presence of a warship,<sup>8</sup> they were not sent to Fernando de Noronha Island but, instead, were held for questioning. The police particularly wanted information about plans to damage pumps and dams.<sup>9</sup>

Students at the Pedro II School and Escola de Medicina asked for Oiticica’s freedom. But they had to continue without their teacher because, when Oiticica was released on December 10, it was to be “deported” on the *Olinda*, with his wife and children, to the northeastern state of Alagoas.<sup>10</sup>

João da Costa Pimenta went to São Paulo, and Agripino Nazaré went to his home state of Bahia. Astrogildo Pereira remained jailed in Rio. Writing to Oiticica in January 1919 about the legal proceedings against them, Astrogildo closed by saying: “Our spirits do not sag. In all of us the same enthusiasm throbs, and our beliefs are rooted more deeply than ever. The world is ours—and all the sabers and jails of Sr. Aurelino are, in the end, a powerful and undeniable stimulant.”<sup>11</sup> “Hurrah for anarchy!” he wrote in another letter. He completed an article for *A Plebe* in which he warned

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Corpo de Segurança, “O Que os Operarios Precisam Saber,” *Correio da Manhã*, November 27, 1918.

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 28, 1918.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., June 2, 1919. (See Proposal of União dos Operários em Fábricas de Tecidos.)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., November 28, 1918.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., December 1, 1918.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., December 11, 1918.

<sup>11</sup> José Oiticica, “Brandão de Gildo!!!” *Ação Direta* 10, no. 115 (March 1957).

the workers against the two candidates who were competing in a special election to fill the Brazilian presidency. Both Epitácio Pessoa and Rui Barbosa, he wrote, were company lawyers, stockholders, and capitalists.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, "Nem Aguia Nem Patativa!" *A Plebe* 2, no. 6 (March 29, 1919).

#### 14. Brazil's Most Brilliant May Day: 1919

At his father's property in Alagoas, José Oiticica received a visit from Otávio Brandão, who had helped Antônio Bernardo Canelas publish antiwar articles in *A Semana Social*. Brandão was interested in mineralogy and paleontology and had made trips all over Alagoas, studying the land and the people, seeking "to discover natural riches in general and petroleum in particular."<sup>1</sup> He told of his findings in the manuscript of a book, *Canais e Lagoas*, and in two lectures given in Maceió in 1917. In one lecture Brandão predicted the discovery of commercial petroleum in Alagoas.<sup>2</sup>

Brandão, a romantic admirer of the Bolshevik revolution, was the founder of the Congregation for the Freedom of Land and Man,<sup>3</sup> which advocated parceling out the land among the peasants. On November 30, 1918, when news reached Alagoas of the unsuccessful uprising in Rio, Brandão mourned the outcome in one of his poems: "Gritos d'Alma em Torno do 18 de Novembro de 1918" (Cries of the Soul about November 18, 1918).<sup>4</sup>

Oiticica agreed to write an introduction for Brandão's *Canais e Lagoas*, and for a while the two men worked together, spreading the anarchist message among fishermen.<sup>5</sup> But in March 1919, after the Alagoas police announced the discovery of a "Maximalista plot" in Maceió,<sup>6</sup> Oiticica returned to Rio. Brandão was arrested briefly and then threatened with as-

<sup>1</sup> Octavio Brandão, *Canais e Lagoas*, I, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Congregação Libertadora da Terra e do Homen.

<sup>4</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, Rio de Janeiro, August 30, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> José Oiticica, "Bem Feito!" *Ação Direta* 10, no. 113 (December 1956).

<sup>6</sup> "O Norte Rebelde," *A Plebe* 2, no. 10 (April 26, 1919).

sassination by local officials. Therefore, in May 1919, he too went to Rio.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, with the state of siege lifted and with the press reporting the establishment of soviet governments in Bavaria and Hungary, Brazilian anarchists optimistically prepared to form a Partido Comunista do Brasil. Leuenroth and Hélio Negro (pseudonym of commercial worker Antônio Candeias Duarte) used the columns of *A Plebe* to explain communism and Bolshevism. On March 8, 1919, Hélio Negro's article ("Private Property or Communism? What the Bolsheviks and Anarchists Want") predicted that the struggle in Brazil between communism and capitalism would soon be concluded. But the author left readers unclear as to what the property-less society would be like. Solutions, he said, would be indicated by needs, and "we do not pretend to forecast all the needs and details of a libertarian communist organization."<sup>8</sup>

In Rio a local Partido Comunista was formed on March 9, 1919, its doors open to "anarchists, socialists, and all who accept socialist communism."<sup>9</sup> The Party announced that Congressman Nicanor do Nascimento had attended the organization meeting, and that all Party meetings were open to the public.<sup>10</sup>

The Communist Party of Rio declared itself the organizer of the May Day rally there. Minervino de Oliveira, who had been active in the labor movement since 1911,<sup>11</sup> told his fellow marble workers to celebrate May Day, not with festivities, but with the resolution to reduce twenty minutes of daily work, thus attaining the eight-hour day. He wrote that their predecessors, "the victims of the North American tyrants," had fallen fighting for this objective.<sup>12</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira and most of his imprisoned anarchist companions were released in time to participate in the May Day commemoration, the greatest ever held in Brazil up to that time.<sup>13</sup> Speechmaking around the

<sup>7</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, Rio de Janeiro, August 30, 1970. Octavio Brandão, "Combates e Batalhas," 10-pages typewritten (September 1968). José Oiticica, "Brandão e Gildo," *Ação Direta* 11, no. 115 (March 1957).

<sup>8</sup> Helio Negro, "Propriedade Privada ou Comunismo? O Que Querem os Bolchevistas e os Anarchistas," *A Plebe* 2, no. 3 (March 8, 1919).

<sup>9</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, *Anarquismo: Roteiro da Libertação Social*, p. 130. *A Plebe* 3, no. 19 (June 28, 1919).

<sup>10</sup> *A Plebe* 3, no. 19 (June 28, 1919).

<sup>11</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, October 25, 1969.

<sup>12</sup> Minervino de Oliveira, "Aos Marmoristas," *A Plebe* 2, no. 10 (April 26, 1919).

<sup>13</sup> *A Plebe* (2, no. 12 [May 10, 1919]) speaks of "over 50,000" being present. *A Razão* (May 2, 1919), quoted in [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo,

pedestal of the statue of the Viscount of Rio Branco in Praça Mauá was opened by José Fernandes, who had been expelled from Brazil on the *Curvello* in 1917 and who now "spoke in the name of the Partido Comunista." The greatest acclaim was for José Elias da Silva's speech extolling the Bolshevik revolution and bitterly attacking the Brazilian social structure. It was the high point of the occasion.<sup>14</sup>

After the speeches, the throng, led by the representatives of the Partido Comunista and accompanied by bands of music and placards favoring "free Hungary" and "emancipated Bavaria," made its way up Rio Branco Avenue. Then, from the steps of the Municipal Theater, resolutions were read and adopted by acclamation. One motion sent a special greeting to the proletariat of Russia, Hungary, and Germany, and "solemnly" protested against "any bourgeois military intervention that might seek to attack the revolutionary work so auspiciously begun in Russia."<sup>15</sup> Another resolution called for the release of five workers who were still in jail in Magé, Rio de Janeiro, accused of involvement in the November 1918 insurrection.

On May 2 the civil construction workers in Rio achieved the goal stressed in Minervino de Oliveira's manifesto. They simply refused to work beyond eight hours.<sup>16</sup>

In São Paulo on May 1, *O Estado de S. Paulo* carried a proclamation, more appropriate to the proletarian press, bearing a signature that Nereu Rangel Pestana was using: "Ivan Subiroff, Delegate of the Republic of the Russian Soviets in São Paulo." Under the heading "Communism in Brazil: Proletarians of All Countries Unite!," the proclamation attacked Governor Altino Arantes and President-elect Epitácio Pessoa. It described "senators, congressmen, and aldermen" as "capitalists, industrialists, and masters," and proclaimed that "it is time to initiate the struggle against all these usurpers."<sup>17</sup>

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and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, pp. 181-182, speaks of "sixty thousand, without exaggeration."

Maurício de Medeiros wrote in *O Imparcial* that the masses did not understand the meanings of the anarchist slogans on the placards around which they assembled. This statement resulted in an attack on Maurício de Medeiros by José Oiticica in *Jornal do Brasil*, May 8, 1919 (Edgar Rodrigues, *Nacionalismo & Cultura Social, 1913-1922*, p. 249).

<sup>14</sup> Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, p. 181 (quoting *A Razão*, May 2, 1919).

<sup>15</sup> *A Plebe* 2, no. 12 (May 10, 1919).

<sup>16</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 1, 1919.



At Praça da Sé, in the afternoon, a crowd of Paulistas heard a "delegado" of the Partido Comunista do Brasil: Manuel Campos ("coauthor" of the November 1918 insurrection in Rio). Other speakers were Florentino de Carvalho, back from Barbados Island, and Hélio Negro (Antônio Candeias Duarte). The workers especially applauded Edgard Leuenroth, who made the closing address. Then, after singing "The International," the crowd marched through the streets, led by girls in red blouses.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, May 3, 1919. This newspaper estimated that "at least 10,000" participated in the São Paulo commemoration.

## 15. Achieving the Eight-Hour Day in São Paulo (May 1919)

During the first part of 1919 wholesale food prices fell (see Table 6). Still, workers in São Paulo City were in a mood to use almost any incident as an excuse for a general strike. On May 2 at the Matarazzo plant in Brás, a worker who had made a May Day speech told his foreman that he was being mistreated. After an angry exchange of words, he was dismissed. Fellow laborers left their jobs and went through the streets calling on men at other plants to follow their example. By the end of the day an estimated ten thousand were on strike, and demands were being formulated.<sup>1</sup> At night strikers went to a station of the "English Railway" (São

TABLE 6

São Paulo Wholesale Prices (Mil-réis), 1917-1919

Commodity	July 2, 1917	February 23, 1918	June 28, 1918	January 3, 1919	April 29, 1919	May 10, 1919
60 kgs. ref. sugar	41	47	54	68	54	52
60 kgs. rice ( <i>bom</i> )	30	29	36	46	39	38
45 kgs. manioc meal	13	22	16	—	14	12
60 kgs. white beans	28	20	22	26	21	17
60 kgs. white corn	6	6	10	12	10	9

SOURCE: *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 3, 1917; February 24, June 29, 1918; January 4, April 30, May 11, 1919.

<sup>1</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 3, 1919.

Paulo Railway Company, Limited), seeking support, but soldiers threw them out.

In the next few days most of the city's industrial workers joined the movement. Twenty thousand were reported on strike on May 4.<sup>2</sup> On May 10 Leuenroth's *A Plebe* described the strike as spontaneous—a result of poor conditions of the working class—and denied that it should be attributed to the May Day speeches.<sup>3</sup> The anarchist newspaper asserted that the "approximately fifty thousand" strikers included all workers engaged in textiles, bakeries, graphic arts, needlework, smelters, saw mills, and cold storage plants. Items in the daily press made *A Plebe's* figure seem conservative.<sup>4</sup> The movement affected workers in other cities in the state to a greater extent than it had in 1917.

At the União Operária de Brás a list of demands was adopted on May 4 by the Conselho Geral dos Operários (General Council of Workers), made up of strikers from all the plants in the city. The eight-hour day headed the list. Again the workers asked for the prohibition of work by children and of night work by women. They also sought a minimum wage based on the cost of living and a reduction in rents and in the prices of prime necessities.

"We cannot make prices decline," an industrialist declared.<sup>5</sup> Altino Arantes telegraphed São Paulo congressmen in Rio, asking them to initiate the rapid enactment of labor provisions adopted at the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>6</sup> Some of these provisions were "a living wage," an eight-hour day or a forty-eight-hour week, and the suppression of labor by minors.

The state secretary of justice said that he viewed the labor movement with sympathy. But he did not stop a police clash with strikers when the latter kept placing rocks on streetcar tracks. When a crowd tried to hold up a streetcar bringing Light and Power Company workers to their jobs, a striker stabbed a police officer in the shoulder.<sup>7</sup>

During the police retaliation, "modern educators" Adelino de Pinho and João Penteado were seized in their classrooms.<sup>8</sup> Leuenroth went into hiding. *A Plebe* declared: "We cannot remember scenes as brutal and cruel as those which occurred in some of the streets of Brás, Moóca, and

<sup>2</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 5, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> *A Plebe* 2, no. 12 (May 10, 1919).

<sup>4</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 7, 8, 9, 11, 1919.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Antônio Martins, in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 10, 1919.

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 5, 1919.

<sup>7</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 6, 1919.

<sup>8</sup> Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, p. 185.

Ipiranga, where the cavalry, helped by the notorious 'secret' cudgel-wielders, carried out the most ferocious acts that their moronic minds could conceive."<sup>9</sup> In the town of São Bernardo do Campo, south of São Paulo City, a striker, Constante Castellani, was killed by a bullet when soldiers broke up a crowd of strikers.

After the disorders of May 5, the strikers behaved peacefully. The police expressed "great satisfaction" with the "discovery of those responsible for this strike" and with the arrest of some who had "directly influenced the spirit of the workers."<sup>10</sup> Then the Conselho Geral dos Operários complained that the police, seeking to arrest and beat up Evaristo Ferreira de Sousa, an administrator of *A Plebe*, had made off with his books and his twelve-year-old stepson.<sup>11</sup> Masonic Grand Master Guarnieri lamented that a class struggle to help unfortunates "has degenerated into a civil war with manifestations of barbarism characteristic of the medieval ages and the inquisition."<sup>12</sup>

Congressmen Maurício de Lacerda and Nicanor do Nascimento, invited by the strikers to come and learn about "the police violence," arrived in São Paulo on May 14 with officers of the Rio textile and footwear unions.<sup>13</sup> The two congressmen conferred with labor leaders and the state justice secretary and discovered that strike settlements were rapidly being made.<sup>14</sup> The Louças Santa Catarina dishware plant was already in operation, and its management had agreed to the eight-hour day, a "wage increase," and an end to work by children. Outside of the state capital, agreements incorporating the eight-hour day had in many cases been reached after short strikes against firms in Jundiaí, Sorocaba, and Campinas. In Santos, workers of the Dock Company gained the eight-hour day on May 7 after a short strike.<sup>15</sup>

In the state capital, workers of Companhia Nacional de Tecidos de Juta returned to work on May 17 with the eight-hour day and wages that were to reflect "incorporation of the 20 percent increase of 1917 and a further increase of 20 percent."<sup>16</sup> The Klabin firm's settlement provided that un-

<sup>9</sup> *A Plebe* 2, no. 12 (May 10, 1919).

<sup>10</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 8, 1919.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, May 11, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, May 12, 1919.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, May 15, 1919; *Correio da Manhã*, May 13, 1919.

<sup>14</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 15, 1919.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, May 9, 1919.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, May 18, 1919.

contracted workers hired on a day-to-day basis would receive for 8 hours the same pay previously given for 10.5 hours; workers with contracts received what was described as a 25 percent wage increase.<sup>17</sup>

*A Plebe* pointed out that the companies were picturing themselves as making generous offers by adding wage increases, on an hourly basis, to the 20 percent supposedly gained in 1917. But *A Plebe* asked: "What does the 20 percent signify if the amount earned in eight hours is less than what was received before the present strike?"<sup>18</sup> The Federação Operária de São Paulo stressed this point when it explained why some workers continued on strike and why others, who had returned to work, decided to strike again.

In the Chamber of Deputies Nicanor do Nascimento gave his impressions of São Paulo: "Rallies were broken up, union headquarters were brutally violated. . . . Citizens were seized with incredible violence and held many days in rigorous custody, for no crime other than expressing their opinions."<sup>19</sup> *A Plebe* asked the whereabouts of Domingos Pereira, arrested on May 5: "Dead or alive, we want to know where he is!" In June, when it was learned that he was being deported on the *Darro*, friends telegraphed Salvador, Bahia.<sup>20</sup> But Agripino Nazaré could not get him ashore when the *Darro* stopped there.

"Ivan Subiroff" (Nereu Rangel Pestana) tabulated food prices and, with the help of some miscalculations, showed that these had increased since July 1917.<sup>21</sup> Isaltino Costa, who also wrote for *O Estado de S. Paulo*, felt that the cost of living increase had been the key issue, and wrote that it would be ludicrous to connect Brazilian strikes with anarchist or Maximalist currents. Brazilian workers, he found, were profoundly religious, loved their families, and kept away from bars. Unlike the workers in Europe and Spanish America, they did not, he wrote, practice "violence, sedition, revolt, and spoliation."<sup>22</sup>

"Orderly races," Isaltino Costa said, had immigrated to Brazil: Portuguese to Rio de Janeiro and the north, Italians and Portuguese to São Paulo, and Germans to the south. He contrasted this happy situation with that in Argentina, "the foremost fomenter of immigration." Argentina's

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, May 21, 1919.

<sup>18</sup> *A Plebe* 2, no. 14 (May 24, 1919).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, no. 14 (May 24, 1919).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, no. 17 (June 14, 1919).

<sup>21</sup> Ivan Subiroff, "A Greve do Operariado," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 4, 1919.

<sup>22</sup> Isaltino Costa, "Desharmonias Economicas, II," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 15, 1919.

"more heterogeneous" mix included "many professional agitators" from Barcelona, Spain, and "dangerous" Slavs from Russia and the Balkans.

## 16. The May-July 1919 Movement in Rio

On May 6, 1919, labor groups in Rio presented petitions to Delfim Moreira asking that the eight-hour day be established in all industrial plants.<sup>1</sup> The acting president's response was to send a cautious message to Congress on May 17. He asked the lawmakers to study labor legislation and submit suggestions that would "respect the peculiarities of our economic and social setting as well as the characteristics of Brazil's federative political regime."<sup>2</sup> To begin this work, an eight-man Commission on Social Legislation was formed. Maurício de Lacerda, one of its members, recommended that labor organizations act as a "consultive organ" of the commission.<sup>3</sup> Accused of being a socialist and a Maximalist, he denied being either.<sup>4</sup>

A series of strikes in Rio, most of which achieved the eight-hour day, began before Congress received Delfim Moreira's message. In the first of these, approximately three hundred maritime workers left their jobs on May 7.<sup>5</sup> While Major Bandeira de Melo and his men patrolled the docks, the Lloyd Brasileiro shipping company tried to maintain operations by using outsiders.<sup>6</sup> After much acrimony, the Associação dos Marinheiros e Remadores (Association of Sailors and Rowers) and Lloyd reached an agreement on May 26. It listed new wage rates, stipulated the eight-hour day with one mil-réis for each hour of overtime and contained one clause that Transport Minister Afrânio de Melo Franco had insisted on: former sailors, who had served in the Navy during the war, were to be given "equal rights" when the Association of Sailors and Rowers indicated personnel for job openings.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 7, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, May 17, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, May 21, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, May 20, 1919.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, May 8, 1919.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, May 15, 16, 17, 1919.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, May 29, 1919.

Before this settlement was reached, Rio brewery workers, shoemakers, tailors, dressmakers, barbers, photographers, and employees in bakeries and cigarette plants struck for the eight-hour day.<sup>8</sup> On May 18, ten thousand were reportedly absent from work. But most of them were not on strike long, because managements were usually willing to grant the eight-hour day with no reduction in wages. Besides achieving the eight-hour day, workers of the Sul Mineira Railroad received assurances that work by children under fourteen would no longer be permitted.<sup>9</sup>

The Rio Light and Power Company staved off labor unrest by issuing a new wage tabulation, to be effective on June 1. According to the tabulation, those who had been with the company a short time (one to three years) would receive an hourly wage of 0\$750, which compared with 0\$660 paid in May 1919 and 0\$600 paid before April 1918.<sup>10</sup> The table stipulated that 125 percent of this rate would be paid for work in excess of eight hours per day.

Heartened by the settlements of May, Rio's giant União dos Operários em Fábricas de Tecidos (Textile Workers' Union) announced a strike on June 1. Besides seeking the eight-hour day, with time and one-half for overtime, the union asked for a 10 percent wage increase for those paid by the day and a 30 percent increase for those paid on a piece basis. It also called for the rehiring of those who had been dismissed in November 1918 and the abolition of work by children and night work by women.<sup>11</sup>

Police, remembering the role of the Textile Workers' Union in November 1918, prepared for trouble. But June was quiet except for a conflict that followed an assault by strikers on a streetcar carrying nonstriking workers; in this conflict, two nonstriking workers were injured.<sup>12</sup>

On June 24, headlines stated that the textile workers would return to their jobs because the companies, at the request of Police Chief Aurelino Leal, had agreed to grant "some of the demands."<sup>13</sup> But instead of reporting to work, the strikers went to Praça Mauá to hear their union president declare that their claims had been denied—even though they were exactly

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, May 11, 13, 19, 23, 25, 27, 28, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, May 23, 1919.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, May 25, 1919; 1\$000 (one mil-réis) was worth about U.S. \$.25.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, June 2, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, June 7, 1919. A Rio municipal councilman accused Aurelino Leal of mistreating workers so that they would react and cause "embarrassment" for the incoming administration of President Epitácio Pessoa (*O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 6, 1919).

<sup>13</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, June 24, 1919.

the same as those "granted to our companions in São Paulo."<sup>14</sup> Strikers distributed manifestoes in the streets and explained their case in newspaper offices.

Early in July, plant owners were encouraged by the failure of a strike against the Central do Brasil Railroad.<sup>15</sup> In mid-July, textile workers, unpaid for six weeks, began returning to work. The police, fearing that die-hards would molest "deserters" of the strike and undertake sabotage, broke up groups of strikers.

Soon ten thousand textile workers were back at work. When companies closed plants on July 21, they announced that the step was not taken out of fear of those who wished to revive the strike. The plants were closed for the day to allow workers to greet Eptácio Pessoa, who was arriving on an American battleship to take over the presidency from Delfim Moreira.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., June 27, 1919.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., July 8, 1919. Army men operated the Central do Brasil trains during the strike.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., July 22, 1919. Astrogildo Pereira, using his pen name Astper, greeted the news that Eptácio Pessoa would not retain "Aurelinoff" (Aurelino Leal) as police chief by suggesting punishments for "Aurelinoff." These included his being forced to swallow all the documents he had written against the anarchists (Edgar Rodrigues, *Nacionalismo & Cultura Social, 1913-1922*, pp. 259-260).

## 17. The Communist Conference of June 1919

**I**n April 1919 the secretariat of the month-old Partido Comunista of Rio de Janeiro called on Communist groups in other cities to send representatives to a Brazilian Communist Conference to be held in Rio.<sup>1</sup> Then the Rio Party built up its own membership by organizing the May Day rally, by forming the Liga Comunista Feminina, and by holding meetings, which it urged the public to attend. Lawyer Evaristo de Moraes spoke at the Party meeting held to commemorate the abolition of slavery.

In São Paulo in April, Hélio Negro (Antônio Candeias Duarte) and Edgar Leuenroth hurriedly published a 128-page booklet, *O Que É o Maximismo ou Bolchevismo: Programa Comunista*, with an introduction that promised a more careful study later. The booklet described an ideal

<sup>1</sup> *A Plebe* 3, no. 19 (June 28, 1919).

República Comunista, based on the anarchist dream, and had comforting words about organization in Russia: "Presently in Russia, in accordance with its constitution . . . , a transitional political and economic organization gives all the power of the nation to the workers and soldiers, organized in councils (soviets)." Negro and Leuenroth noted that Chapter V, Article 9, of the Russian constitution "bestows the power on the urban and rural proletariat and on THE POOREST PEASANTS, IN ORDER TO SUPPRESS THE EXPLOITATION OF MAN BY MAN AND TO BRING ABOUT THE TRIUMPH OF SOCIALISM UNDER A REGIME WITHOUT CLASS DIVISION OR POWER OF STATE."<sup>2</sup>

São Paulo's hectic month of May left no opportunity to form a party. The Partido Comunista de São Paulo, or "São Paulo Nucleus," was established on June 16, 1919, at a meeting in the headquarters of A Internacional, an organization for employees in hotels, restaurants, and bars (São Paulo's imitation of Rio's Centro Cosmopolita). At the meeting, *A Plebe* reported, "three comrades explained the ideas of anarchist communism and the modern principles of liberty. All acclaimed these principles and the bases of the new organization, which already had numerous adherents. Many present signed up."<sup>3</sup>

The "First Communist Conference of Brazil" met in Rio on June 21–23. Often referred to as a congress, it was in Leuenroth's opinion "an assembly of the whole Brazilian anarchist movement."<sup>4</sup> At the first session, held at the Centro Cosmopolita, hundreds<sup>5</sup> of nondelegates were present to follow the proceedings, which took place at a large table in the center of the room. Seated around the table were twenty-two delegates, representing "Communist" groups of the Federal District and the states of Alagoas, Minas Gerais, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Sul, and São Paulo.<sup>6</sup> Seventeen delegates were native Brazilians: the others had long resided in Brazil.<sup>7</sup> Three were women.<sup>8</sup>

*A Plebe* stated that the session had no presiding officer, whereas *Correio da Manhã's* reporter described Oiticica as "president" of the "congress."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Helio Negro and Edgard Leuenroth, *O Que É o Maximismo ou Bolchevismo: Programa Comunista*, pp. 5–6. References are to the constitution "approved in January 1918 by the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets."

<sup>3</sup> *A Plebe* 3, no. 18 (June 21, 1919).

<sup>4</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, *Anarquismo: Roteiro da Libertação Social*, p. 131.

<sup>5</sup> *A Plebe* 3, no. 19 (June 28, 1919).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Also Leuenroth, *Anarquismo*, p. 131.

<sup>7</sup> *A Plebe* 3, no. 19 (June 28, 1919).

<sup>8</sup> "O Congresso Comunista," *Correio da Manhã*, June 22, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*



Before Oiticica opened the session, everyone in the room received copies of his long Party Program and of the booklet by Negro and Leuenroth. The Party Program, divided and subdivided into many items, was accompanied by a note advising that it would appear as the "introductory ABC" of Oiticica's forthcoming book, *Catecismo Anarquista*.<sup>10</sup>

The program's political section advocated suppression of the state, all laws, and all religious authority; decisions were to be reached at public assemblies of communes, with minority groups free to set up new communes if the decisions annoyed them. The social part of the program called for the elimination of private property and the administration of factories, railroads, and other public services by their workers (with no one assuming any executive function). General needs would determine how much work had to be done. The product of work would go to warehouses for distribution "to each according to his needs."<sup>11</sup>

Oiticica spoke ardently for free love and against universal suffrage. Declaring that he detested the rabble, he added that he would not abandon the rabble to its misery. Amidst applause he proclaimed that his ideal was to elevate the common people. "I do not seek the democratization of aristocrats. What I seek is the aristocratization of democrats. What I desire is to give them intelligence, culture, love of eternal beauty, of imperishable art."<sup>12</sup>

Discussion about Oiticica's program lasted far into the night.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the delegates resolved that a commission, bearing in mind the comments made during the session, should draw up the Party principles, and that they should be sent for ratification to the various nuclei of the Party.<sup>14</sup>

To a reporter Oiticica explained that "this Party was founded when I was in Alagoas. On returning here I resolved not to be present at any labor or Party meeting, and until today I have abided by this resolution. Just before the preparatory session of the Congress, I was advised of my selection as a representative of the Rio de Janeiro section. I accepted the appointment, absolutely certain of the constitutional guarantee that promises us liberty of thought. My action then, in the establishment of the Party, has amounted to nothing."

"What," asked the reporter, "is the purpose of the Communist Congress?"

<sup>10</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, June 22, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, June 22, 1919.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *A Plebe* 3, no. 19 (June 28, 1919).

"To explain ourselves. You know that anarchist ideas are grossly distorted in the pulpits and in the Anglo-American cables.

"The police have not bothered us. The Partido Comunista has functioned here for over two months without police intervention. In Brazil there are several genuinely anarchist publications. For example, *A Plebe*, *Alba Rossa*, *Tribuna do Povo*; and, here in Rio de Janeiro, *A Liberdade*, *Jerminal*, and *O Internacional*." Oiticica also mentioned the newspaper he hoped to publish; he called it "my thwarted *Spártacus*," and said the police had openly threatened it.<sup>15</sup>

When delegates and others arrived for the second session, they found the Centro Cosmopolita controlled by policemen. Bandeira de Melo, now head of the Third Delegacia Auxiliar (responsible for the repression of anarchism in Rio), announced that the police chief had banned the First Communist Conference.

This "ferocious attitude of the notorious Aurelino"<sup>16</sup> forced the anarchists to hold the last two sessions in Niterói, across the bay and outside of the Federal District. There the delegates decided that all residents of Brazil could join the new Party if they agreed with its program, and that membership entailed the obligation of defending and preaching the program.

At the closing session on June 23 the commission to edit the Party's principles advised that it expected to publish them soon.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. (reporting from *A Notícia* of Rio de Janeiro).

<sup>16</sup> *A Plebe* 3, no. 19 (June 28, 1919).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

## 18. Aftereffects of the First Communist Conference

In the Chamber of Deputies Nicanor do Nascimento criticized the Rio police for having interfered with the First Communist Conference.<sup>1</sup> A part of the daily press did likewise.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "Dados Historicos sobre o Anarquismo no Brasil" (manuscript, November 1961), p. 31.

In a signed editorial in *Correio da Manhã*, Congressman Andrade Bezerra, member of the Commission on Social Legislation, declared that Brazil had no reason to worry about Maximalism.<sup>3</sup> Maximalism, he wrote, developed in Russia as a protest against class privilege, the usurpation of rights, and odious impositions. But in Brazil "we have no privileges that prevent the humble from reaching the most influential positions. We do not have feudal landed property in the possession of rich, exclusionistic lords. Rather, we have a sparse population for occupying an immense, still uncultivated, territory."

Bezerra described capital in Brazil as so "insecure" that wealth seldom lasted beyond two generations. "Most men of influence come from modest circumstances, for Brazil has no odious privileges that obstruct their victorious careers." Bezerra found that in such a land—a land of "the most complete liberty"—Maximalism was an exotic plant, which could acclimate itself only with difficulty. In a concluding thought, Bezerra advised Brazilian workers not to imitate foreign agitators but to work harder and harder, bringing to Brazil "an even greater technical and moral efficiency."<sup>4</sup>

While arguments were exchanged—with the defenders of the police mentioning the insurrection of November 1918<sup>5</sup>—anarchist leaders found themselves in an awkward position of their own making. They could not agree on a program for the Communist Party.

On August 2 *A Plebe* stated that the "Communist Conference, recently held in Rio," had "assigned to the São Paulo Nucleus the elaboration of the bases of the Party program," and that a series of meetings had therefore been held at the provisional headquarters of the Partido Comunista of São Paulo. The meeting of July 26 had been "animated," but after the meeting of July 31 *A Plebe* believed that it would soon be possible "to distribute the bases of the program to the people."<sup>6</sup> What at last emerged was modestly entitled "The Project of the Program of the São Paulo Nucleus" and was published in *A Plebe* on August 23.<sup>7</sup>

According to this project, the ultimate objective of the Partido Com-

<sup>3</sup> Andrade Bezerra, "Communismo Anarchista," *Correio da Manhã*, July 3, 1919. For additional views of Andrade Bezerra on labor matters see "O Deputado Andrade Bezerra Fala sobre os Problemas do Trabalho," *Correio da Manhã*, May 24, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> Andrade Bezerra, "Communismo Anarchista."

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *A Plebe* 3, no. 24 (August 2, 1919).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 27 (August 23, 1919).

unista was to abolish the state, the laws, the political institutions, and "all hierarchical and authoritarian associations." An end would be brought to "all social, religious, or moral factors that prevent the free and conscious realization of matrimony, for which the physical, intellectual, and moral affinities of the mates are the best guarantee for the perpetuation of their union in an honest and affectionate manner until death." The Communist Party's immediate objectives included the fight against "prostitution and alcoholism and all vices that degenerate and besot the people."

In the economic realm, the program called for the abolition of "rural, urban, and industrial properties, with the exception of small properties, which will be used by their present owners if this is deemed desirable." Lands, factories, shops, all means of transport, and all consumer goods were to be socialized. "The collectivity will guarantee to all individuals: maintenance, instruction, and, for those able to work, the means of working." Except for children, the sick, and the aged, the rule was to be: "he who does not work does not eat."

Organizationally, Brazil would be made up of communes, groups of communes, and regional federations of the groups. They would keep in touch with each other "to facilitate the exchange of products."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

## 19. General Strikes in Salvador and Recife

In mid-1919 general strikes in Bahia, Pernambuco, and Rio Grande do Sul convinced the organizers of the Partido Comunista do Brasil that the proletariat beyond Rio and São Paulo had at last awakened, increasing the possibilities of a widespread, coordinated movement to overthrow the government and the capitalist system.

The strike in Salvador, Bahia, was started early in June 1919 by construction and textile workers, and within a few days it spread so far that the city was paralyzed. The Associação Comercial, representing the business interests, asked Governor Antônio Moniz to use the state police to end the strike; but the governor, a socialist economics professor, refused on the ground that the strikers were peaceful.

The Associação Comercial wired Delfim Moreira and others in Rio to

say that strikers planned "to plunder" and that for three days the city had been "without bread, light, meat, telephone service, or any sort of transportation."<sup>1</sup> The closing of stores was blamed on Moniz's failure to provide "guarantees." When the newspapers of Salvador suspended publication they issued a statement saying that the governor was using the strikers "to get revenge on the independent press."<sup>2</sup> Senator Rui Barbosa accused Moniz of being allied with Maximalism.<sup>3</sup>

Agripino Nazaré, the lawyer who represented the strikers, was pleased to find the "neutral" Moniz sympathetic to the strikers' demands.<sup>4</sup> After five days, labor won a settlement that brought it the eight-hour day with no reduction in wages. Those paid on a piece basis received a 20 percent pay increase.

The restrained role of the police, a feature of Salvador's general strike, was also a characteristic of the general strike that occurred in Recife, Pernambuco, almost two months later.

For the workers in Pernambuco, Antônio Bernardo Canelas had founded a weekly newspaper, *Tribuna do Povo*, in 1918, after he had been forced to leave Alagoas. It was the organ of the Federação de Resistência das Classes Trabalhadoras de Pernambuco, which claimed to have "about thirteen *sindicatos* in Recife and fourteen *sindicatos de ofícios vários* in the interior."<sup>5</sup> Canelas, hoping to represent the Federação at a labor congress in Europe, turned in January 1919 to the Pernambuco police chief for help. The police chief considered Canelas's ideas (such as founding an anarchist-oriented school for workers' children)<sup>6</sup> dangerous; happy to be rid of him, he supplied a passport and arranged for his immediate departure as a sailor on a freighter—when such passages were almost impossible to get.<sup>7</sup>

Workers whom Canelas and José Elias da Silva had helped to organize

<sup>1</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 8, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, June 10, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> Edmundo Moniz, interview, December 8, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> José Francisco de Oliveira, "O Surgimento do Partido Comunista em Pernambuco e as Lutas da Classe Operária," *Novos Rumos* (Suplemento Especial), March 23-29, 1962.

<sup>6</sup> Joaquim Pimenta, *Retalhos do Passado: Episódios que Vivi e Fatos que Testemunhei*, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> Antonio Bernardo Canelas, *Relatório da Viagem à Europa Realizada por Antonio Bernardo Canelas em Missão da Federação de Resistência das Classes Trabalhadoras de Pernambuco, 21 de Janeiro a 6 de Setembro de 1919*, p. 7.

were bitter as they sang "The International" at the headquarters of the Federação de Resistência das Classes Trabalhadoras on May 1, 1919. Ill-nourished, many members of the working class had been easy victims of the wave of "Spanish flu" when it struck late in 1918. It is said that almost two thousand of them died in one week in Pernambuco.<sup>8</sup>

The União Cosmopolita, which claimed to represent the workers of the British-owned Pernambuco Tramway Company, the largest employer in the region, demanded better wages and improved working conditions and recognition of itself as the representative of the company's workers. In reply, late in July 1919 the Tramway Company dismissed all of its workers who were directors of the União Cosmopolita.

Although the União Cosmopolita was not affiliated with the Federação de Resistência, the Federação voted to back the União with a general strike. Workers of the British-owned Great Western Railway adhered, thus affecting some of the eastern half of Pernambuco.

During four tense days Recife was paralyzed by what Joaquim Pimenta, writing in 1949, says was a strike of greater "proportions" than any "ever seen in Brazil up to today."<sup>9</sup> At the time of the strike, Joaquim Pimenta, a native of Ceará, was a popular professor at the Recife Law School. He was fond of wearing a long, black "Bolshevik" cape, of greeting workers as "comrades" in the streets, and of citing Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky in his lectures. About a month before the strike, he had offered his legal services to the Federação, and so, as its lawyer, he directed the strike negotiations on behalf of the workers.

The only Recife newspaper to circulate during the strike was the Federação's *Tribuna do Povo*.<sup>10</sup> Cristiano Coutinho Cordeiro, who directed *Tribuna do Povo* following Canelas's departure for Europe, wrote that in the streets, where a nervous multitude congregated, only one vehicle was seen: it was decorated with a small red flag and bore the Executive Commission of the Federação and its lawyer.<sup>11</sup>

So successful was Pimenta in getting the public to feel that the strike was not "a simple class question" but, rather, a struggle against British im-

<sup>8</sup> Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, p. 122.

<sup>9</sup> Joaquim Pimenta, *Retalhos do Passado*, p. 201.

<sup>10</sup> Christiano Cordeiro, "A Margem de uma Polemica," *Correio do Povo*, 1926. See also "A Greve e a Imprensa," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 28, 1919.

<sup>11</sup> Cordeiro, "A Margem de uma Polemica." In 1919 Cristiano Cordeiro and his cousin, Rodolfo Coutinho, were in charge of the propaganda of the local Grupo Comunista.

perialism, that the state government did not move to repress it.<sup>12</sup> Governor Manuel Antônio Pereira Borba, a lawyer with textile interests, threatened to act against the directors of the Tramway Company and the Great Western Railway.<sup>13</sup> The directors exchanged cables with London and then yielded to the strikers.

The prestige and popularity of Joaquim Pimenta, who addressed throngs during the victory parade, could not have been greater.<sup>14</sup> Because the strength of the labor movement in Pernambuco seemed to justify a daily newspaper, *A Hora Social* was born. Succeeding *Tribuna do Povo* as the Federação's organ, it was the first workers' daily in the north of Brazil.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Joaquim Pimenta, *Retalhos do Passado*, p. 200.

<sup>13</sup> Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, p. 194.

<sup>14</sup> Subsequently the proletariat of Recife supported Joaquim Pimenta in several movements, such as the "Hunger Campaign" to reduce the "Monster Budget" of Governor José Bezerra in 1921, and a campaign for Pernambuco's "autonomy" in 1922. Labor leaders attacked him for involving the working class in struggles that were not its concern (see Manuel de Souza Barros, "A Década 20 em Pernambuco," chap. 6). Cristiano Cordeiro (a former student of Joaquim Pimenta) came to feel that after the 1919 strike Pimenta was more of a "point of divergence in the labor sector" than a help (Cordeiro, "A Margem de uma Polemica").

<sup>15</sup> *A Hora Social*, directed by Cristiano Cordeiro, José Barcelos, Antônio Correia, and Alcides Rosa, became a weekly after two or three months. Alcides Rosa, a graphic worker who espoused the cause of the peasants, enrolled in a "lightning course" in Rio and therefore received the sealed ring and the title of *doutor*.

## 20. Canelas Reports on the World Revolution

**I**n Recife, Antônio Bernardo Canelas, pale and thin, living ascetically in a loft and laboring ceaselessly as editor and typesetter of *Tribuna do Povo*, had become known for his dedication to work.<sup>1</sup> He had also become known as an eccentric who was difficult to get along with, and it seems certain that if he had attained his objective of attending the Amsterdam Labor Conference of July 1919 he would have enlivened the proceedings with his radical views. In Europe three months before the conference,

<sup>1</sup> Cristiano C. Cordeiro, letter, September 20, 1971.

Canelas studied French organized labor and developed a low opinion of what he called its "prudent" and "moderate" leadership.<sup>2</sup>

Visa difficulties in Europe and a delay in the remittance of funds to Canelas from the Pernambuco and Rio Federações prevented him from attending the conference. Unable to raise his voice in protest in Amsterdam when Samuel Gompers, of the American Federation of Labor, claimed to represent "the twenty-one republics of Central and South America,"<sup>3</sup> Canelas returned to Brazil in August 1919. He brought with him the answers to the great questions posed by the Bolshevik revolution and recommendations designed to make the already successful Brazilian movement even more successful.

The Brazilian movement, he said, was more fortunate than the European one for it was unified and guided by one tendency: the "revolutionary-syndicalist" tendency.<sup>4</sup> Above all, he added, the Brazilian organized workers were not troubled by the "socialist parliamentary illusion" that was plaguing Europe. To those who would point to achievements by parliamentary methods in Italy, Canelas replied that success there was due to the pressure of syndicalists and anarchists and would have been greater if the syndicalists and anarchists had not had to contend with the parliamentary and reformist socialists.<sup>5</sup>

"The spirit of socialism," Canelas wrote, "is not politics but direct action."<sup>6</sup> Marx, he went on to say, had recommended electoral and parliamentary activities only as a diversion, to distract the enemy from the principal action; but in Europe, Canelas found, the diversion had come to be regarded as the principal action. For Canelas this attitude seemed especially inexcusable at the moment, for he believed that the struggle brought on by the Bolshevik revolution required discarding the use of diversion.<sup>7</sup>

Bolshevism, Canelas reported, had completely transformed itself on the day it was victorious in Russia. Once a rigorously Marxist party, it had become, he said, a formula developed from practice, for the application of socialism, and might vary from country to country. In the Russian case

<sup>2</sup> Antonio Bernardo Canellas, *Relatorio da Viagem á Europa Realizada por Antonio Bernardo Canellas em Missão da Federação de Resistencia das Classes Trabalhadoras de Pernambuco, 21 de Janeiro a 6 de Setembro de 1919*, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.



he found that practice had introduced "an infinity of methods, unknown and unforeseen before the Bolshevik revolution."<sup>8</sup> Anarchist influence, he said, had been especially important in the transmutation of Bolshevism. As for the dictatorship of the proletariat, he accepted it as a transitory measure for combatting the bourgeoisie, and pointed out that the elimination of the bourgeoisie would leave no one over whom to exercise a dictatorship.<sup>9</sup>

The Communist International,<sup>10</sup> launched by Bolshevik leaders in Moscow in March 1919 for spreading Communism by well-disciplined Communist parties in other countries, had been the subject of much discussion in European labor circles. Canelas correctly observed that it was not syndicalist and added that "its principles are socialist-communist, approaching anarchism more than parliamentary socialism."<sup>11</sup>

Canelas proposed a plan to take advantage of the existence of the then-remote Communist International and the more accessible Amsterdam International: Brazilian organized labor would take the lead in forming a South American Syndical International. It would, he said, be "communist and revolutionary because communism and revolution constitute the spirit of the working masses of South America." This South American International was to adhere "as a bloc" to the Amsterdam International, where, Canelas felt certain, it would have enough influence to change the complexion of the world labor organization and persuade it to adopt "the communist program of the Moscow International."<sup>12</sup>

Canelas stated that the social revolution was on its way to becoming a reality in the majority of nations, and he predicted that if the Russian Maximalist armies saved the Russian revolution from "the bourgeois encirclement," the social revolution would come to all countries within five or ten years.<sup>13</sup> To prepare for the new era he recommended that the Brazilian revolutionaries reorganize and extend the *Confederação Operária Brasileira*, educate the workers technically, and propagate the idea of communism. Taking this action—rather than meeting underground "to agree on plans of attack"—was the way to work; and if the work were well done, the revolution, Canelas concluded, would "surely come."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>10</sup> The Communist International is sometimes called the Third International, or Comintern.

<sup>11</sup> Canelas, *Relatorio*, p. 71.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78, 75.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.



BOOK III: *Decline of the Anarchist Strike  
Movement, 1919–1921*

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## 1. The Seizure of *Spártacus* Leads to a Riot

*Spártacus*, voice of the Rio Nucleus of the Partido Comunista, first appeared in Rio on August 2, 1919.<sup>1</sup> José Oiticica headed the newspaper's Grupo Editorial, and Astrogildo Pereira became chief editor and administrator.

The Grupo explained that the newspaper, planned as a daily, would have to begin as a weekly.<sup>2</sup> Although 436\$700 was raised on August 3 at a Festival Pró *Spártacus*, featuring talks by Fábio Luz and Otávio Brandão,<sup>3</sup> and although circulation rapidly increased from four to six thousand,<sup>4</sup> *Spártacus* remained a weekly, unable to follow the example of *A Plebe*, which became a daily on September 7, 1919. *Spártacus*'s last number, the twenty-fourth, was dated January 10, 1920.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Spártacus*'s mailing address was Post Box 1936, which had served *Na Barricada* in 1915 and 1916 and was in 1919 the address of the Rio Nucleus of the Partido Comunista. *Spártacus* used a reformed style of spelling and thus readers found it attacking Senator Adolfo Gordo (instead of Adolpho Gordo) and speaking for the Partido Comunista (instead of Partido Communista).

<sup>2</sup> *Spártacus* 1, no. 1 (Rio de Janeiro, August 2, 1919).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, no. 2 (August 9, 1919).

<sup>4</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 165.

<sup>5</sup> José Romero, "O 10º Aniversario de 'Ação Direta,'" *Ação Direta* 11, no. 106 (May 1956).

Not long after the birth of *Spártacus*, a strike closed operations at the five most important printing shops in Rio.<sup>6</sup> The Centro Industrial e Comercial Gráfico, representing the owners of fifty-six printing shops, declared the workers' demands "absurd"<sup>7</sup> and resolved on a lockout by all the shops starting on August 21.<sup>8</sup> One shop owner, arguing that the action was illegal and "contrary to the principles of humanity," prepared to carry on business; but he backed down when the Centro threatened to fine him five thousand mil-réis.<sup>9</sup>

Police Chief Geminiano da Franca and Third Delegado Auxiliar Nascimento Silva, appointees of Epitácio Pessoa, stepped up the campaign against anarchism and communism. They took from "railroad stations and post offices all copies they could find of *A Plebe*,"<sup>10</sup> and on September 8 they ordered the apprehension of all copies of the September 6 number of *Spártacus* on the ground that the newspaper's "advanced doctrines and insolent language were an insult to the institutions and the government."<sup>11</sup> Specific charges were: advocating the assassination of Lloyd George, preaching revolution, and using "indecorous language" in speaking of the authorities.<sup>12</sup>

*Spártacus* denied that "a jesting remark" by a contributor meant that it advocated assassinating the British prime minister, and it added that it was "very significant" that the *Times of Brazil*, an English paper published in São Paulo, had complained to the authorities about *A Plebe* and *Spártacus*. *Spártacus* felt the seizure demonstrated that it was fighting the bourgeoisie well. But the loss of sales necessitated economies, and the September 13 number came out in two pages instead of the usual four.<sup>13</sup>

On September 9 spies told the police that the Unions of Shoemakers and Civil Construction Workers ("associations that pretend to be labor unions") were holding secret meetings at which "revolutionary agitators" spoke of the seizure of *Spártacus* "in the most horrible terms."<sup>14</sup> To "bring an end to this outrage," the police invaded these unions and the

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, September 13, 1919.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, August 21, 1919.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, August 19, 20, 21, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, August 23, 29, 1919.

<sup>10</sup> Ugo Fedeli, *Gigi Damiani: Note biografiche: Il suo posto nell'anarchismo*, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, September 10, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> *Spártacus* 1, no. 7 (September 13, 1919).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, September 10, 1919.

Textile Workers' Union, making over thirty arrests. "Subversive papers, books, and bulletins that preach the destruction of the present society" were taken.<sup>15</sup>

The Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro (successor of the União Geral dos Trabalhadores, dissolved in November 1918) had already planned a rally for the afternoon of September 9 in São Domingos Square to protest "violences" in Pernambuco. At the rally the speakers urged the crowd to return on the following afternoon to hear about "violences" in Rio.

The rally of the tenth was ended at 6:00 P.M. by police officers who felt that the orators, "all foreigners," were "inciting disorder." Then the multitude, singing "The International" and "making subversive calls," set out for the União dos Operários em Construção Civil (UOCC—Union of Civil Construction Workers) on Praça da República. Passing Army barracks, it shouted *vivas!* for the armed forces and "death" to the police and the government.<sup>16</sup>

Third Delegado Auxiliar Nascimento Silva rushed with police and Guarda Civil troops to Praça da República. There he found an orator in shirtsleeves giving an inflaming speech, "in a Spanish accent,"<sup>17</sup> from a window of the Union of Civil Construction Workers, which occupied offices on the second floor. The *delegado* sent a police officer to order the orator to stop, but the officer was knocked unconscious by a chair dropped from the union offices.<sup>18</sup> During the ensuing clash between workers and police, stones and other objects poured from second floor windows. On the street level workers entrenched themselves in a brewery and hurled bottles, glasses, and boxes at the police. Shots were fired before the police controlled the area. The authorities reported the arrest of thirty "foreigners" and eight nationals and advised that three workers and three policemen had been injured, none seriously.<sup>19</sup>

Maurício de Lacerda, who was present at the clash, spoke in the Chamber of Deputies about the "police foray against the mass of people." His description of cavalrymen, indiscriminately wielding swords, gave the

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. The Metalworkers' Union was assaulted by the police on September 10, 1919 (see *Spártacus* 1, no. 7).

<sup>16</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, September 11, 1919.

<sup>17</sup> *O Paiz*, September 12, 1919.

<sup>18</sup> "Relatorio do 3º Delegado Auxiliar," *O Paiz*, September 17, 1919.

<sup>19</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, September 11, 1919.

impression that innocent persons had been injured, some trampled on by horses.<sup>20</sup>

The lockout by the printing shop owners was, according to *Correio da Manhã*, "a bomb for the Associação Gráfica do Rio de Janeiro." While the association conducted an ineffective fund-raising drive to help its hungry members, shop owners paid wages to workers who were "faithful to the industrialists." When the "faithful"—the shop owners' "dedicated workers"—asked for an end of the lockout, the owners agreed. Members of the Graphic Workers' Association refused to return to work but reportedly changed their minds after the owners threatened to replace them if they did not return by September 10.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Maurício de Lacerda quoted in *Spártacus* 1, no. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, September 13, 1919.

## 2. Repression in Rio Grande do Sul

Having become the international expert among the Brazilian anarchists, Antônio Bernardo Canelas wrote in *Spártacus* on such topics as "The Question of Fiume"<sup>1</sup> and the International Labor Conference, which was to take place in Washington, D.C., late in 1919 as arranged at the Paris Peace Conference. Canelas and Oiticica maintained that the conference would be a bourgeois affair because, of the four delegates from each country, two were to be chosen by the government and one each by employers and workers. They recommended that the Brazilian proletariat not be represented.<sup>2</sup>

The Rio daily, *O Imparcial*, described Canelas as the "true leader" of the Brazilian subversive movement and its representative at "the Communist Congress of Amsterdam."<sup>3</sup> But it was more common to speak of

<sup>1</sup> *Spártacus* 1, no. 10 (October 4, 1919). The port of Fiume, now Rijeka, in the Adriatic Sea was the subject of a dispute in which Italy and Yugoslavia were especially interested.

<sup>2</sup> José Oiticica, "A Conferência," *Spártacus* 1, no. 6 (September 6, 1919); Antonio Canelas, "A Conferência de Washington e o Operariado Brasileiro," *Spártacus* 1, no. 8 (September 20, 1919).

<sup>3</sup> "A Grande Informação," *Spártacus* 1, no. 8 (September 20, 1919).



Oiticica as head of the movement. In Rio Grande do Sul, *A Federação*, reflecting the views of the state governor, reported that the Rio police would use articles in *Spártacus* to bring charges against its editors, "of whom the chief is the habitual agitator Oiticica, director of the Maximalist movement in Rio."<sup>4</sup>

The authorities of Rio Grande do Sul were concerned about subversive literature appearing in their state during a strike that began on August 31, 1919, against the Porto Alegre Power and Light Company and was spreading. *O Sindicalista*, founded in 1918 as the organ of the Federação Operária do Rio Grande do Sul, proclaimed: "We are at war against private property, the State, and the Church. The objective of the war is the complete elimination of these institutions."<sup>5</sup> A bulletin distributed by the Syndicate of Power and Light Company Workers declared: "Let every man go into the streets and let every coward remain at home! Let us be men! Does the bourgeoisie not want to surrender? Then it is responsible for what will happen. 'Victory or Death' is our motto!"<sup>6</sup>

On September 4, five thousand of Porto Alegre's nine thousand workers were striking peacefully.<sup>7</sup> The Power and Light Company workers, demanding a wage increase and an eight-hour day,<sup>8</sup> had been joined by most of the bakery workers and many wagon drivers and telephone workers. Navy men had been assigned to the Power and Light Company, and therefore the city received electricity starting on September 5 and partial streetcar service starting on September 6.<sup>9</sup> A bomb, thrown at the power plant building on the sixth, shattered some window panes.

The police, citing an article in the penal code, banned a meeting that strikers planned to hold in Porto Alegre's Montevideu Square on Sunday, September 7 (Independence Day). But the lawyer of the Federação Operária consulted the federal constitution and pronounced the meeting legal. After about five hundred strikers gathered, shooting broke out. A few strikers used revolvers, but most of the shots were fired by soldiers of the state's blue-uniformed police force, the Brigada Militar. People rushed to shelter wherever they found open doors. One worker had a door closed

<sup>4</sup> *A Federação* (of Porto Alegre) quoted in *Correio da Manhã*, September 14, 1919.

<sup>5</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 196.

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, September 14, 1919.

<sup>7</sup> *Correio do Povo*, Porto Alegre, September 5, 1919.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, September 9, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, September 6, 7, 1919.

on him by men already in safety. Soldiers shot him dead and later explained that he had aimed a revolver at them.<sup>10</sup>

Early the next morning a bomb was thrown at the home of a Power and Light Company office worker who had not joined the strike. Then, as automobile drivers began a one-day strike to protest the wounding on the seventh of one of their group, troops of the Brigada Militar, on the governor's orders, took over the Federação Operária, the Syndicate of Power and Light Company Workers, and the União Metalúrgica. Their directors were disarmed and arrested.<sup>11</sup>

The Federação Operária addressed telegrams to *A Plebe* and to the "Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores" in Rio.<sup>12</sup> As a result, *A Plebe* screamed that the Gaúcho state police was killing and wounding people in the public square,<sup>13</sup> and the Partido Comunista do Brasil condemned Gaúcho police activity along with the seizure of "our newspaper *Spártacus* and *A Plebe*."<sup>14</sup>

By September 11 the Porto Alegre strike movement was in decline.<sup>15</sup> The Power and Light Company had hired retired members of the Merchant Marine and was providing full streetcar service.

*A Federação* reported that "the police force of Porto Alegre, like that of the federal capital, is taking the most energetic steps to bring reason to these groups of deranged people who want to place themselves outside of the law." Of the strikers, *A Federação* said: "Do they want a wage increase, shorter hours? No. No, this is simply what they pretend. What they want is nothing less than the abolition of the state and of private property. What insanity! Also, abolition of the church."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., September 9, 1919.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., September 9, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> "A Onda Reaccionaria," *A Plebe* 3, no. 4 (September 11, 1919).

<sup>14</sup> Partido Comunista, "Circulo de Protesto," *A Plebe* 3, no. 7 (September 14, 1919).

<sup>15</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, September 14, 1919.

<sup>16</sup> *A Federação*, quoted in *Correio da Manhã*, September 14, 1919.

### 3. Nascimento Silva Sets an Example for São Paulo

Following the riot of September 10, 1919, Rio Police Chief Geminiano da Franca called on the justice minister to discuss "how to free the federal capital and our population" from agitators. Back in his own office, he conferred with the criminal attorney of the nation and heard maritime workers' representatives assure him that their class would refrain from subversion.<sup>1</sup>

Legislators worked on a new law project advanced by Adolfo Gordo. It would specify prison sentences for those who incited people to rob, assault, kill, commit arson, or destroy or subvert any institution or legal regime. Incitement was defined as the advocacy of these crimes "by speeches or any sort of publicity."<sup>2</sup>

Third Delegado Auxiliar Nascimento Silva, investigator of the November 1918 insurrection, sent contingents of infantry and cavalry to disperse workers when they tried to meet in public squares.<sup>3</sup> He engaged in a new investigation, preparatory to deporting anarchists, and therefore pored over copies of *Spártacus* and *A Plebe* and interrogated men arrested on September 10. Calling in the press, he said that one prisoner had disclosed anarchist schemes for attacking the police and that others had confirmed that the speaker at the Union of Civil Construction Workers had "frankly preached revolution."<sup>4</sup>

Nascimento Silva's agents invaded the homes of "dangerous anarchists" in a search for bombs and subversive literature. In the home of a bakery worker formerly employed by the Light and Power Company, they found "forty bombs of dynamite," revolutionary propaganda, and a picture of Lenin. The agents, unimpressed when the worker explained that the explosives were for blasting stone for ovens,<sup>5</sup> supplied the press with photographs in which "the Bolshevik arsenal" appeared with Lenin's picture and a sign reading "Hail! Social Revolution."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *O Paiz*, September 12, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 12, 17, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> *O Paiz*, September 14, 1919; *Correio da Manhã*, September 29, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> *O Paiz*, September 12, 1919.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, September 14, 1919.

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, September 14, 1919.

Nascimento Silva's report was released on September 16. Besides giving his version of the September 10 riot, based on his own observations and information received from prisoners, the report advanced a general conclusion: the Brazilian workers, influenced by inflaming and insincere speeches, were allowing themselves to be led to riot, anarchy, crime, and revolution. "The orators preach the implantation of a state like that of Russia" and "the elimination of the present administrators, starting with the President of the Republic."<sup>7</sup>

On October 6 Rio police "secretly" put six "anarchists" in "a secret place" aboard a vessel and announced that on October 9 they would deport five more "anarchists."<sup>8</sup> The public learned that when the *Gelria* stopped at Recife on October 13, the Maritime Police there took "special precautions" to see that no anarchist would get ashore.<sup>9</sup> When a third shipment of "anarchists" (together with one "vagrant") left Rio aboard the *Demerara* on October 14, police agents accompanied the deportees from Rio to "the last Brazilian port."<sup>10</sup>

Oiticica wrote that the authorities demonstrated "foolishness" and "absurdity" in choosing their victims. He particularly had in mind José Romero, long engaged in anarchist journalism, and Ricardo Correia Perpétua, the November 1918 insurgent in charge of distributing subversive bulletins to soldiers. Oiticica said: "Everyone knows that Ricardo Perpétua has kept away from worker circles and engaged in no propaganda. His deportation represents vengeance. It cannot be anything else. The expulsion of José Romero is an infamy. Romero has lived in Brazil for twenty-nine years."<sup>11</sup>

On October 11 Eusébio de Andrade, member of the Senate Commission on the Constitution and Justice, called the new Gordo law project "an element of social defense in the face of the penetration, disguised or not, of anarchism, which spreads profusely from Europe to all parts of the globe."<sup>12</sup> Senator Gordo, testifying on October 18, read articles from an Argentine law dealing with anarchism and suggested that the "Gordo

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, September 17, 1919; *O Paiz*, September 17, 1919.

<sup>8</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 7, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, dateline Recife, October 13, 1919.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, October 16, 1919.

<sup>11</sup> José Oiticica, "A Expulsão," *A Plebe*, October 17, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 12, 1919.

project" be strengthened by the inclusion of some of them.<sup>13</sup> But the commission liked the project as it was and gave its approval to the list of crimes and punishments aimed particularly at those who might "subvert the present social organization" by speeches or written publicity. One clause would allow the government to close "for a specified period, associations, *sindicatos*, and civil societies when they engaged in acts harmful to the public good."<sup>14</sup>

Brazilian police officers, working with the police of Uruguay, Argentina, and Paraguay, proposed that a pact stipulate that "undesirable persons who are not received by a country signing this pact will not be admitted to any other country adhering to the pact." "Undesirable persons" were defined as those who "disturb public order, preaching elimination of the authorities or of any individual, and the extinction of property, and especially those who go under the names of Maximists, anarchists, etc."<sup>15</sup>

On October 18 Nascimento Silva telephoned the São Paulo police to tell of the steps being taken in Rio "to repress anarchism."<sup>16</sup> The São Paulo police could report that although the state capital had been calm, they had been vigilant. In a search for subversive material, they had invaded the offices of *A Plebe*, destroying copies of the daily as well as some printing equipment.<sup>17</sup> *A Plebe's* editors, Leuenroth, Gigi Damiani, and Afonso Schmidt, had published a complaint in *O Estado de S. Paulo*.<sup>18</sup>

In Santos in September, Police Delegado Ibraim Nobre had locked up Manuel Campos, charging him with involvement in the assassination of a dock foreman.<sup>19</sup> Recently more opportunities for arrests had come Nobre's way: on October 16, Santos streetcar conductors, working for the City Improvements Company, had struck because the Municipal Council had failed to heed their complaint that "firemen are acting as conductors . . . an affront to our class." While municipal inspectors and the firemen, guarded by policemen, operated streetcars, Nobre arrested strikers.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, October 19, 1919.

<sup>14</sup> Decree 4269 of January 17, 1921.

<sup>15</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 18, 1919.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, October 19, 1919.

<sup>17</sup> *A Plebe*, October 17, 18, 1919.

<sup>18</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 17, 1919.

<sup>19</sup> *Spártacus* 1, no. 8 (September 20, 1919); *A Plebe*, October 18, 1919.

<sup>20</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 17, 1919.

#### 4. The Explosion of October 19, 1919

On Sunday evening, October 19, a bomb exploded in the home of José Prol in Brás. It killed four men, including Prol, and inflicted slight injuries on Prol's wife and two children. Prol, the police said, had been making the bomb with three friends when it went off.

Already the police were familiar with the Prol home: they had been there in May, seeking *A Plebe* administrator Ferreira de Sousa, a former Prol boarder. Now the police explained that Prol's fellow victims had been his three new boarders, anarchists Belamino Fernandes, Joaquim dos Santos Silva, and José Alves. Fernandes, a Portuguese in his twenties, had been arrested with Prol in June for posting Communist Party bulletins in Brás.<sup>1</sup> Joaquim dos Santos Silva, also Portuguese and in his twenties, had been arrested at an anarchist rally in 1914.

Commenting on "the horrible disaster of Sunday," *A Plebe* said that the four dead anarchists had been "dedicated companions."

We never knew that they were interested in explosives. . . . That "bomb" . . . , was it not placed there by some infamous *agente provocador* . . . ? The police of Sr. Tirso Martins were going about the neighborhood collecting information.

. . . That tragic disaster, which killed four anarchists, opening the door for a fantastic hunt for dynamiters, comes at the opportune hour for developing the reactionary plan, already formulated, and for which the police were seeking a plausible pretext—a pretext that we refrained from giving them when we did not react to the invasion of *A Plebe*.

These bombs . . . appear or explode in surprising abundance at the moment when the legislative powers, responding to the call of a clerical, conservative Paulista senator, are asked to approve a law which is passed off as designed to strike at the authors of criminal assaults or their organizers, but which in fact has the objective of stifling all socialist, syndicalist, and libertarian propaganda, and reestablishing the "crime of opinion."<sup>2</sup>

*A Plebe's* speculation about "some infamous *agente provocador*" is contradicted by the account of preparations for "a vast insurrectional revolution" given by Gigi Damiani years later to his biographer. Damiani

<sup>1</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 20, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> *A Plebe*, October 21, 1919.

explained: "The movement was to start in São Paulo, but one evening . . . a comrade who was carrying a hand bomb went to a house . . . , containing other arms and a whole arsenal which we were going to use, and then, who knows how, the bomb exploded, killing four people. . . . It was a complete disaster for the comrades who were killed as well as for the organization of the projected movement. With that explosion, the authorities found out where and how we were getting ready. In fact, the police, alerted, started searching and seizing people, and that ended everything."<sup>3</sup>

The explosion "ended everything" as far as Damiani's career in Brazil was concerned. For reasons of national security, authorities decided to overlook a Supreme Court decision that had saved Damiani from expulsion in the latter part of 1917. As a "dangerous foreign anarchist" who edited the "subversive" *A Plebe*, he was arrested at once and taken on the night of October 22 to the North Station in Brás. There, with three others who had been recently arrested, he was shut up, under guard, in a special railroad car to be sent to Rio and deported from Brazil.

Damiani's companions on the ride to Rio were Manuel Perdigão Saavedra, Sílvio Antonelli, and Alessandro Zanella.<sup>4</sup> Manuel Perdigão Saavedra, sick and in tattered clothing, was a Santos militant, a cousin of João Perdigão Gutierrez.<sup>5</sup> Antonelli, an anarchist plasterer, was editor of the Italian-language *Alba Rossa*; as in Damiani's case, a writ of expulsion against him had been annulled by the Supreme Court in 1917.<sup>6</sup> Alessandro Zanella, with twenty-four years' residence in Brazil and four children by his Brazilian wife,<sup>7</sup> was secretary of the Stonemasons' Syndicate of São Paulo. Arrested when leaving the *A Plebe* office, Zanella turned an interrogation at the police station on April Seven Street into an opportunity to preach "communist" propaganda.<sup>8</sup>

"Arrests—Why?" asked *A Plebe* when reporting these and other jailings. The prisoners' crime, it wrote, was that of "not belonging to the Centro Operário Católico."<sup>9</sup> The arrests were mentioned by insurrection-

<sup>3</sup> Ugo Fedeli, *Gigi Damiani: Note biografiche: Il suo posto nell'anarchismo*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>4</sup> *Spártacus* 1, no. 21 (December 20, 1919).

<sup>5</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, letter, São Paulo, April 14, 1970.

<sup>6</sup> Nereu Rangel Pestana, "Os Deportados," *Diário Popular* (São Paulo, October 25, 1919), transcribed in *A Plebe*, October 29, 1919.

<sup>7</sup> *A Plebe*, December 20, 1919; *Spártacus* 1, no. 21 (December 20, 1919).

<sup>8</sup> "Uma Carta de Zanella" (Dakar, October 31, 1919), *Spártacus* 1, no. 21 (December 20, 1919).

<sup>9</sup> *A Plebe*, October 23, 1919.

minded anarchists as a reason—sometimes as “the reason”—for the planned strike they hoped would paralyze gas, light, power, and transportation in São Paulo City and signal a general movement to overthrow the regime.

Twenty-four armed soldiers guarded Damiani, Manuel Perdigão, Antonelli, and Zanella on the trip to Rio.<sup>10</sup> The prisoners were pleased to find that the custom in Rio's Casa de Detenção, unlike that in São Paulo jails, was to feed prisoners.<sup>11</sup> But they were not long in the Casa de Detenção. On October 23 Perdigão was placed in a prison hospital, and his three companions were taken to the docks to be put aboard the *Principessa Mafalda*, about to leave for Italy.<sup>12</sup> A police agent offered money to the departing anarchists, who, “annoyed at the taunting gesture of alms,” refused it.<sup>13</sup> When the secretary of the Italian consul asked Damiani if he had any complaints, Damiani told him to go to the devil.

Nereu Rangel Pestana, defending the deportees in the São Paulo press, expressed skepticism about a report that Damiani had been found guilty of theft in Italy in 1894. Commenting on the charge that *Alba Rossa* editor Antonelli was supported by his wife's earnings, Pestana wrote that in 1917 Evaristo de Moraes was able to present, on Antonelli's behalf, “testimonials signed by the most honest members of the rich bourgeoisie of São Paulo—and probably this would not be possible for many who work in the Police Department of this state.”<sup>14</sup>

In Italy Damiani commented on the Brazilian situation in *Il Libertario*, *Umanità Nova*, and *Guerra di Classe*. He dedicated his book (*The Countries to Which One Should Not Emigrate: The Social Question in Brazil*)<sup>15</sup> to Nereu Rangel Pestana and Evaristo de Moraes.

<sup>10</sup> “Uma Carta de Zanella.”

<sup>11</sup> “Uma Carta de Gigi Damiani,” *A Plebe*, December 6, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 24, 1919.

<sup>13</sup> “Uma Carta de Gigi Damiani”; “Uma Carta de Zanella.”

<sup>14</sup> Nereu Rangel Pestana, “Os Deportados,” *Diário Popular* (São Paulo, October 25, 1919), transcribed in *A Plebe*, October 29, 1919.

<sup>15</sup> Gigi Damiani, *I paesi nei quali non si deve emigrare: La questione sociale nel Brasile*. See also Fedeli, *Gigi Damiani*, p. 24 and n.



## 5. The Great Anarchist Failure of October 1919

In Santos on October 20, 1919, a general strike was called to protest the jailing of striking streetcar conductors. Lest the public, alarmed by the news of the fatal explosion, suspect that the strike had been encouraged by anarchists for subversive purposes, *A Plebe* rebuked those who attributed a "political origin" to the strike: "The movement is exclusively of a labor nature and is a protest against imbecilic impositions by the spiteful authorities."<sup>1</sup>

Although some Santos stevedores, warehouse workers, and printers heeded the call, in a few days the movement was weak. With the City Improvements Company hiring new personnel, many conductors returned to work after the company threatened to fire them if they refused. At the same time, Police Delegado Ibraim Nobre kept busy: Municipal Councilman Heitor de Moraes, defender of workers, telegraphed President Epitácio Pessoa about 6 Santos labor leaders who faced deportation and submitted habeas corpus appeals on behalf of 474 City Improvements Company workers threatened with imprisonment.<sup>2</sup>

On October 23, the long-planned strikes against the Light and Power Company and the São Paulo Gas Company broke out in the state capital. Advocates of "direct action" had had difficulty finding a cause to stir workers who were not moved to strike to implant a "Maximalist" society. According to rumors on October 16, a strike would be called to protest the Light and Power Company's use of "firemen and others foreign to the class."<sup>3</sup> On October 22 a commission of Light and Power Company workers declared that the strike would be called to protest the imprisonments that followed the fatal explosion. Still a third reason was used when the Associação dos Motorneiros (Association of Motormen), meeting to decide whether to strike, was addressed by well-known labor leaders not belonging to it. Untruthfully the association was told that the Light and Power Company management had insulted a group of motormen by "maliciously" tearing up in their presence a petition for a small wage in-

<sup>1</sup> *A Plebe*, October 21, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 23, 24, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, October 17, 1919.

crease.<sup>4</sup> The dramatic narration swayed enough streetcar operators to bring on the strike. Dissenters feared to report to work lest they be attacked "by their more excited companions."<sup>5</sup>

Ibraim Nobre rushed from Santos to São Paulo to help make arrests while the managements of the gas and light companies hired new workers and arranged to bring others from Rio.

On October 24, the Federação Operária declared a general strike for the whole state. In São Paulo City only the workers at four or five textile plants and four or five hatmaking plants adhered.<sup>6</sup> Members of the four-month-old União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos (UTG—Union of Graphic Workers), feeling that they "were unprepared for the movement," voted a forty-eight-hour solidarity strike, but even this gesture was not adopted by printers at newspapers.<sup>7</sup> In Jundiaí some warehouse and station workers of the São Paulo Railway Company (the "English Company") struck, and in Santos the streetcar service continued below normal.<sup>8</sup>

Only on the afternoon of October 24 was the Light and Power Company presented with a list of demands. Upon being questioned, the conductors bringing the unsigned list said they were unfamiliar with it; they added that they themselves had no complaints but remained on strike out of fear of attacks. Simultaneously another group of workers went to the April Seven Street police *delegacia* to say that they had learned that the tale of the Light and Power Company's "insult" had been fabricated. They requested police protection in order to return to work.<sup>9</sup>

On Saturday, October 25, the Light and Power Company readmitted workers who blamed their recent absence on labor leaders' deceit. The company, helped by 180 men it had signed up in Rio and by students, operated about 150 streetcars that day, as compared with the normal 250.<sup>10</sup>

Remaining strikers, among them a few São Paulo Railway Company workers, met that morning but could not decide between those who argued for abandoning the strike and those who advocated sabotage. The União

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, October 25, 1919. See also Isaltino Costa, "A Ultima Greve," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 7, 1919.

For the most part, food prices in October 1919 were lower than they had been in May and June.

<sup>5</sup> Isaltino Costa, "A Ultima Greve."

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> "Relatorio da União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos de S. Paulo," in *Boletim da Comissão Executiva do 3º Congresso Operario* 1, no. 1 (August 1920): 10-12.

<sup>8</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 25, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> Isaltino Costa, "A Ultima Greve."

<sup>10</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 26, 1919.

dos Operários em Fábricas de Tecidos (textiles) suggested that its members, having supported the utility workers for two days, return to work.<sup>11</sup>

On Sunday, October 26, Paulistas read in the press that violent-minded strikers had formed two sabotage groups. The report said that the police had foiled the group that planned to cut the master cable of the Light and Power Company, but that "criminal hands" had removed fishplates connecting the rails of the São Paulo Railway for a length of five hundred meters near Pirituba Station.<sup>12</sup> Fortunately, the report added, the sabotage was discovered in time to save a passenger train coming from Jundiaí.

This news made it appear that the purpose of the strike had been to use workers in a "diabolical" plot rather than to achieve the demands of the Federação Operária—listed in the same Sunday newspapers. Some saw the demands as "political and bad" because they gave so much attention to the improvement of conditions affecting students, municipal employees, and workers in commerce.<sup>13</sup> Other objectives had to do with working conditions in industry, the administration of plant safety by workers' commissions, and the abolishment of fines.<sup>14</sup>

On October 30, with the strike a failure, *A Plebe* wrote of the demands: "With or without a strike, they continue to represent the point of view of the proletariat of São Paulo."<sup>15</sup> *A Plebe's* archenemy, the Centro Operário Católico Metropolitano, had recently voted that "the Catholic workers pledge unrestricted support to all the conservative classes in the present emergency and declare themselves at the side of the government for the repression of anarchism."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, October 26, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo's* Isaltino Costa, writing about these particular demands, said: "From this alone it can be seen that the Federação Operária was not interested in the well-being of the *operários* [workers] and that what it was doing was political and bad. It was more; it was a servile copy of what was done in Argentina" (*O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 7, 1919).

<sup>14</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 26, 1919.

<sup>15</sup> *A Plebe*, October 30, 1919.

<sup>16</sup> Isaltino Costa, "A Última Greve." The statement of the Centro Operário Católico Metropolitano was made on October 26, 1919.

## 6. Reaction in São Paulo

“For the righteous it is horrible to imagine what was in store for our population if evil had triumphed with the strikers.” Isaltino Costa, author of this thought, added that “opposition to traitorous anarchism found backing in all social classes.”<sup>1</sup>

Determined to prevent the triumph of “evil,” the state government closed the “modern schools” of João Penteado and Adelino de Pinho,<sup>2</sup> deported national “agitators” to Rio Grande do Sul, and easily persuaded the justice minister that “the recent agitations” justified the expulsion of dozens of “foreigners.”<sup>3</sup>

Everardo Dias was seized on October 27 and driven to Santos with two native labor leaders: young José Righetti and João da Costa Pimenta, secretary general of the São Paulo Union of Graphic Workers.<sup>4</sup> “You cannot imagine,” Everardo Dias wrote, “what I suffered in Santos.” Naked, he, Righetti, and Pimenta were put in a small, filthy cell. When Dias was taken from the cell on October 29, he was given twenty-five lashes on his back. “Imagine! After three days and two nights without eating, without drinking, nude, with a horrible cold (for in Santos it rained continually), burning with a fever, my mouth pasty, unable to cry, unable to speak, beaten like a vagrant or a thief.”<sup>5</sup>

Later that day Dias was taken to São Paulo City. From there he and ten other prisoners, guarded by twenty-five soldiers, went by train to Rio. In cells at Rio’s central police building, where the prisoners awaited deportation, food and water were furnished after Dias faintly informed an inspector that he and his companions had had no water, food, or sleep “for four days and nights.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isaltino Costa, “A Última Greve,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 7, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> *Spártacus* 1, no. 18 (November 29, 1919).

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 1, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, who had been organizing graphic workers’ unions in Santos, São Bernardo, Jundiaí, and Campinas, was arrested at a railroad station on October 25, 1919, when returning to São Paulo after visiting his family in Rio (see “João Jorge da Costa Pimenta,” *A Plebe* 4, no. 48 [December 27, 1919]).

<sup>5</sup> “Uma Carta de Everardo Dias,” *A Plebe*, November 22, 1919 (*Numero Extraordinario*).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

Pimenta and Righetti were kept in jail in Santos for a month and then sent to Rio Grande do Sul. "Where is Pimenta?" *A Plebe*, *Spártacus*, and labor union organs asked. *O Grito Operario*, Deoclécio Fagundes's new organ for the São Paulo Liga Operária da Construção Civil, published a note telling of the assassination of the tortured João Pimenta before dawn on November 11 in a scene "so barbarous that it even shocked two secret police agents."<sup>7</sup>

The true fate of Pimenta and Righetti was learned in December and January when their letters from Rio Grande do Sul were published in *A Plebe* and *Spártacus*. Righetti's letter to his mother told of five days without food or water; Pimenta wrote of "indescribable tortures," during which he was forced to promise never to return to São Paulo.<sup>8</sup> In another letter from Rio Grande do Sul, Ricardo Bernassi, an editor of *O Grito Operario*, told of his arrest in São Paulo with four companions who were deported to Italy.<sup>9</sup>

On October 31 São Paulo students rallied in protest against *A Plebe*'s editorials, critical of students who had helped keep streetcars running. Shouting "Down with *A Plebe*!" they marched to the newspaper plant, attracting a large following. The crowd broke the door of the plant and destroyed all the furniture and printing type.<sup>10</sup> By the time Assistant Delegado Rudge Ramos arrived with soldiers, the crowd was on its way to attack the *Diario Hespanhol* (Spanish Daily), which shared *A Plebe*'s view about student activities during the strike. The crowd ignored one student's warning that an assault on the *Diario Hespanhol* might have unfortunate diplomatic consequences. What saved the *Diario Hespanhol* was a contingent of police cavalry.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *O Grito Operario* 1, no. 1 (São Paulo, December 7, 1919).

<sup>8</sup> *A Plebe* 4, no. 48 (December 27, 1919); *Spártacus* 1, no. 24 (January 10, 1920).

<sup>9</sup> *O Grito Operario* 1, no. 4 (December 28, 1919); *A Obra* 1, no. 2 (São Paulo, May 13, 1920); *Spártacus* 1, no. 17 (November 22, 1919). The *Indiana*, which picked up the four São Paulo anarchists in Santos early in November 1919, received two anarchist shoemakers when it stopped in Rio before going to Europe. In Italy the deported anarchists were jailed.

<sup>10</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 1, 1919. Gigi Damiani, in Italy at the time of the episode, later told his biographer: "The students who were on the government's side started a demonstration that developed, like the fascist demonstrations, into sacking and looting" (see Ugo Fedeli, *Gigi Damiani: Note biografiche: Il suo posto nell'anarchismo*, p. 28).

<sup>11</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 1, 1919.

*A Plebe*, "Spokesman for the Oppressed," was not published during the first three weeks of November. When it did reappear, full of articles about "police atrocities," it was as a weekly rather than a daily.

Seeking to explain reverses suffered by the labor movement, *A Plebe* mentioned that João da Costa Pimenta, representing the Federação Operária, had negotiated with the Antarctica bottling works, whose products workers were boycotting. Why, *A Plebe* asked, had Antarctica withdrawn from the negotiations just when the parties were reaching an agreement "which would dignify the working class?"<sup>12</sup> *A Plebe* blamed intervention by the Light and Power Company, the "odious Canadian gang of law-breakers."

According to *A Plebe's* story, the Light and Power Company "brayed with rage" when it discovered that "its slaves" were organizing. "With hands full of money, this devil" went to the authorities, and a plan was developed: company workers would be encouraged to strike so that their "executioners" could handle them. Workers were offered the backing of the Força Pública if they would strike. After this deceitful offer by *agentes provocadores* was rejected, the "oppressors" tried to provoke a strike by having the police invade *A Plebe* on October 16 and 17. But *A Plebe* reacted "with serenity" and no strike materialized. "Days passed and a bomb exploded providentially . . . , the best pretext for deceiving public opinion and for giving the coup de grâce to labor organizations." The police reaction, *A Plebe* concluded, moved the workers to strike, and it all ended as the Light and Power Company and authorities had planned, with the "establishment of a regime of violence against those who do not attend the Mass of the Centro Operário Católico."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *A Plebe*, November 29, 1919.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

## 7. The Deportation of Everardo Dias

In Rio on the evening of October 30, 1919, Everardo Dias and twenty-two other prisoners were put in police cars for the trip to the docks. Hundreds of curiosity seekers watched while the anarchists, who had recovered their voices, sang "The International."

Of the twenty-three to be deported on Lloyd Brasileiro's *Benevente*, eighteen were from the state of São Paulo, three from the Federal District, and two from the state of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>1</sup> The police list, showing them to be Spaniards or Portuguese, was challenged. The Santos author, Afonso Schmidt, declared that Manuel Perdigão Saavedra was a native of Santos. After a Spanish consul interrogated the "Spanish anarchists" in the Rio police station, the Spanish minister insisted that several of them were not Spanish.<sup>2</sup> While the prisoners waited at the dock and Everardo Dias pleaded for a doctor, Spanish diplomats conferred with the Brazilian foreign minister, Police Chief Geminiano da Franca, and Third Delegado Auxiliar Nascimento Silva.<sup>3</sup> Finally, police distributed clothing and money to the prisoners<sup>4</sup> and put all twenty-three aboard the *Benevente*, despite the Spanish consul's refusal to issue visas for Everardo Dias, Manuel Perdigão Saavedra, and Francisco Ferreira, a painter from Rio.<sup>5</sup>

When the *Benevente* stopped at Bahia, letters from several deportees were posted. In one of them Manuel Gama described Everardo Dias, "sad and pensive, dragging his cross to the Calvary."<sup>6</sup> Everardo Dias's letter told of his tribulations in Santos and of his deportation "for having attacked the government of São Paulo! What a great and unpardonable crime! I lost ten years of life. I am more dead than alive. . . . I think I have tuberculosis. Oh! It is horrible!"<sup>7</sup>

Everardo Dias's letter was read in the Chamber of Deputies by his fellow Mason, Maurício de Lacerda.<sup>8</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, commenting in *Spártacus* on the letter from his future father-in-law, wrote that Everardo Dias had published *O Livre Pensador* for fifteen years and served as chief proofreader of *O Estado de S. Paulo*. "Noble, courageous, loyal, ideal-

<sup>1</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 1, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Everardo Dias, "Memórias de um Exilado, III," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 17 (February 23, 1920). See also Everardo Dias, *Memórias de um Exilado: Episódios de uma Deportação*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 1, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> *Memórias de um Exilado*, p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> Manuel Gama, letter from the *Benevente*, in *A Plebe* 4, no. 44 (November 29, 1919).

<sup>7</sup> "Uma Carta de Everardo Dias," *A Plebe*, November 22, 1919.

<sup>8</sup> After reading the letter in the Chamber, Maurício de Lacerda asked the government to furnish full information about every individual deported (see *Spártacus* 1, no. 16 [November 15, 1919]).

istic, he . . . fought for his ideals with the fearlessness and unselfishness of an apostle."<sup>9</sup>

A habeas corpus petition told of Everardo Dias's thirty-two years of residence in Brazil, his citizenship by naturalization, his six Brazilian daughters, and his work as bookkeeper in a commercial firm. It stated that he was "only anticlerical" and not an anarchist.<sup>10</sup> His articles in *A Plebe*, it said, had been interpreted falsely.<sup>11</sup>

On November 6, two days before the Supreme Court was to rule on the Everardo Dias case, the São Paulo police reported the discovery of "a large arsenal of infernal machines" (explosives and parts for making time bombs) at a small house in the Belenzinho district, east of Brás.<sup>12</sup> Two victims of the explosion of October 19 (Joaquim dos Santos Silva and Belarmino Fernandes) were said to have had a hand in building up this arsenal. Photographs of rooms of the Belenzinho house and of destruction wrought by the October explosion illustrated antianarchist articles in the press.

The Supreme Court denied the petition presented on Everardo Dias's behalf. Muniz Barreto, one of the judges, declared that constitutional provisions allowing foreigners to come and go "do not mean that it is lawful for them to come, or remain, as an enemy of the social organization and in full subversive activity, dedicated to propaganda and carrying out criminal assaults."<sup>13</sup> Minister Viveiros de Castro asserted that the anarchists were engaged in a "declared war" against the state and therefore could not rely on the constitution to protect them.<sup>14</sup> He added that Everardo Dias was a "confessed anarchist."

Guimarães Natal, another Supreme Court judge, stated that if he had to resolve the problem of anarchism he would not resort to the law. This opinion, one commentator said, "seems to mean that it is unnecessary to amend the constitution" in order to deal with the anarchists.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, "Miseria das Miserias!" *Spártacus* 1, no. 17 (November 22, 1919).

<sup>10</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 9, 1919.

<sup>11</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 9, 1919.

<sup>12</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 7, 1919.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, November 9, 1919.

<sup>14</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 9, 1919. See also, *Spártacus* 1, no. 16 (November 15, 1919).

<sup>15</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 9, 1919.



## 8. The Odyssey of Everardo Dias

Most of the *Benevente's* passengers were Germans who had been interned in Brazil when German ships had been seized in 1917.<sup>1</sup> Returning home in accordance with terms of the Paris Peace Treaty, their mood contrasted with that of the deportees. Manuel Perdigão Saavedra and Everardo Dias were sick and particularly sullen.

When the *Benevente* spent three days in Recife, the twenty-three deportees were held in three Recife jail cells, each with wooden bunks for only three. A small package, donated by local comrades, brought them money and copies of *A Hora Social*.<sup>2</sup>

While the *Benevente* made its way to the Madeira Islands, dissensions among the deportees ended the commune they had formed for assigning chores. The commune broke into three groups: men from Santos, from Rio, and from São Paulo.<sup>3</sup>

On November 24, 1919—after one deportee had escaped at the Madeira Islands—the *Benevente* reached Lisbon. There the police took the “Portuguese anarchists” ashore for imprisonment and made such a poor impression on the “Spanish anarchists,” who had to remain on the ship, that Everardo Dias was filled with loathing for the “liberal, democratic” Republican government of Portugal that he had long defended in the Brazilian press.<sup>4</sup> A crew member brought the “Spaniards” some Lisbon newspapers and these, they were surprised to discover, published imaginary accounts of a “sinister” plot allegedly devised by the deportees and the Germans to seize the Brazilian ship.<sup>5</sup>

In Vigo, Spain, on November 29, the journey ended for all but three of the remaining deportees. Everardo Dias, Manuel Perdigão, and Francisco Ferreira, told to remain on the ship, begged to go ashore. They ex-

<sup>1</sup> Everardo Dias, *Memórias de um Exilado: Episódios de uma Deportação*, p. 43. Regarding the repatriation of 1,040 Germans taken from German ships (which were incorporated into Lloyd Brasileiro), see *Correio da Manhã*, May 14, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Dias, *Memórias de um Exilado*, pp. 52–54. This book is dedicated to Congressmen Maurício de Lacerda and Nicanor Nascimento, and Tomás Cavalcânti, grand master of Brazilian Masonry.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

plained that they were Brazilians and would leave Spain when they received money from Brazil. Although their plea was supported by the ship's commander and the Brazilian consul, the police chief of Vigo rejected it.<sup>6</sup> Desolate, they contemplated passing the winter aboard the *Benevente* without money or sufficient clothing.

Early in December at Le Havre, France, it was so cold that the three men without a country sent a request for clothing to the Brazilian consul. This brought no reply. But kindhearted crew members with warm quarters insisted that the deportees spend daytime hours in them, an offer especially welcome to Perdigão, who was feverish with bronchitis. Everardo Dias, observing French stevedores working under no pressure and only six hours a day, thought of the difficult working conditions at the Santos docks.<sup>7</sup>

The *Benevente* delivered its Germans at Rotterdam and returned to Vigo, where Perdigão and Ferreira were taken ashore and jailed. The São Paulo government had acceded to the Brazilian federal government's request that it reconsider its stand on Dias,<sup>8</sup> and so Dias learned that he was to return to Brazil.<sup>9</sup>

The *Benevente* reached Recife on January 25, 1920, bringing a sunburned Dias to a warm welcome. First he was visited aboard ship by representatives of *A Hora Social* and of all the local worker associations. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Union of Civil Construction Workers for a "session of rejoicing" at his return. He learned of speeches given on his behalf in Congress and of steps taken by his eldest daughter, Inês, aged seventeen. Speaking to the Recife workers, Dias attributed his sufferings to antigovernment articles he had written for *A Plebe*, and he blamed Ibraim Nobre for the thrashing he received in Santos. He denounced the treatment given to Manuel Perdigão, "native-born Brazilian."

During his three days in Recife, Dias was honored at union meetings where Antônio Bernardo Canelas, Professor Joaquim Pimenta, and Cristiano Cordeiro spoke. He spent nights at the home of Cordeiro, director of an *escola do sindicato de resistência dos trabalhadores*. At this informal school Cordeiro gave elementary education and political ideas to workers—among them future Communist leaders José Caetano Machado, a baker, and José Francisco de Oliveira, a coal loader.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 77.

<sup>8</sup> *A Plebe* 4, no. 48 (December 27, 1919).

<sup>9</sup> Dias, *Memórias de um Exilado*, p. 82.

<sup>10</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interview, October 28, 1967.

Everardo Dias liked Recife and formed a good opinion of its press. Above all, he came to share the esteem for northeastern workers that he had heard José Elias da Silva express in 1919. "This working class," Dias wrote, "is entirely national and shows more awareness and enthusiasm than the 'foreign' laboring force of São Paulo! This, for me, was a revelation."<sup>11</sup>

The *Benevente* was off again on January 28, 1920. On February 5, Dias was greeted in Rio by friends.

<sup>11</sup> Dias, *Memorias de um Exilado*, pp. 86-87.

## 9. *Voz do Povo* Brings the Voice of Maurício de Lacerda

Early in 1920, *Spártacus* was replaced by a daily "Organ of the Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro and the Proletariat in General." To help finance the daily, Astrogildo Pereira contributed money won in a lottery.<sup>1</sup> During January 1920 additional funds were raised by the sale of stock to thousands of workers. Portuguese influence was evident when the stockholders, called together to name their newspaper, favored *O 1º de Janeiro*.<sup>2</sup> Further meetings, called by those interested in a more appropriate name, resulted in *Voz do Povo*. With veteran Carlos Dias its director, the first number appeared on February 5, 1920.

Afonso Schmidt, who became secretary of *Voz do Povo*, tells of the old equipment, installed on the ground floor of a tumbledown apartment house on Avenida Rio Branco, and of the editorial offices in two rooms on the second floor—noisy enough to annoy boarders in adjoining rooms.<sup>3</sup> Schmidt writes that when some of these boarders did not move out at the first opportunity, *Voz do Povo*'s staff surmised that they were police agents, "planted to make out reports for the Third Delegacia at Tiradentes Square."

<sup>1</sup> José Oiticica, *Ação Direta*, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> Afonso Schmidt, *Bom Tempo*, p. 302. *1º de Janeiro*, name of a "great and old" newspaper founded on December 1, 1868, in the Portuguese city of Oporto, commemorates a public manifestation held on January first, 1868, against an excise tax law. The law was repealed six days after the manifestation.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 302-303. Avenida Rio Branco was then called Avenida Central.

Curious workers crowded around the type metal furnace and the old rotary printing press. Carlos Dias asked them to leave and learned that they were stockholders. Some of the stockholders appointed a commission to object to advertisements of places that featured gambling, a vice good anarchists sought to stamp out. Carlos Dias, burdened by stockholders' interference, ill health, and the need of holding another job to keep his family alive, stepped aside as director on February 24 and was replaced by Schmidt (who continued to accept the controversial advertising for the sake of the Saturday pay envelopes).

Naming its collaborators in a notice in *Germinal* (Agripino Nazaré's socialist magazine in Bahia), *Voz do Povo* placed Maurício de Lacerda at the head of the list.<sup>4</sup> The eldest of the three sons of jurist Sebastião de Lacerda, Maurício was born in Vassouras, Rio de Janeiro State, in 1888. During his political career he orated sensationally, gaining the fanatical devotion of great masses,<sup>5</sup> and he conspired at the side of the military. He built up a reputation of being "adored by women." While studying law, he was a delegate to an international student congress in Montevideo.<sup>6</sup> Then, late in 1909, he joined soldiers in a plot to "throw out the professional politicians."<sup>7</sup> President Afonso Pena, who was to be overthrown, died before the plot materialized.

From 1910 to 1912 Maurício de Lacerda served in the office of President Hermes da Fonseca, who appointed his father to the Supreme Court. Starting in 1912, he was elected to three consecutive three-year terms as federal congressman from his home state. Like Hermes da Fonseca, he favored military men who opposed oligarchies. In 1915 he conspired unsuccessfully with sergeants to place the presidency in the hands of General Emílio Dantas Ribeiro,<sup>8</sup> who, with Hermes da Fonseca's help in 1911, had ended the twenty-year political reign of the Rosa e Silva oligarchy in Pernambuco. The conspirators hoped to establish a new republic, the República Parlamentar. But the government learned of the plans and, after completing an investigation, named Maurício de Lacerda, Agripino Nazaré, Maurício de Medeiros, and Alexandre José Barbosa Lima among the civilian plotters.<sup>9</sup> It charged that workers had been assigned a role in

<sup>4</sup> *Germinal* 1, no. 2 (Bahia, April 3, 1920).

<sup>5</sup> José Oiticica, *Ação Direta*, p. 137.

<sup>6</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, handwritten autobiographical notes at *O Estado de S. Paulo*.

<sup>7</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Entre Duas Revoluções*, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> Abílio de Noronha, *Narrando a Verdade: Contribuição para a História da*

the uprising and that Sebastião de Lacerda had allowed "politicians" to conspire at his Vassouras home.

In 1920 Maurício de Lacerda, serving the last year of his third term in Congress, contributed steadily to *Voz do Povo*. In an article about the Washington Labor Conference, he noted that Afrânio de Melo Franco had assured his international colleagues at the conference that foreigners in Brazil enjoyed the same guarantees as Brazilians. "There is no doubt," Lacerda wrote, "that they have the same rights. For are not Brazilians also deported, jailed, and beaten in the bastilles of Santos?"<sup>10</sup> The Washington conference, Lacerda wrote, was made up of men "coming from a society that is in moral and political ruin." He likened it to the Latin American Police Conference in Buenos Aires, where Nascimento Silva, "the leading light on deportations and the greatest glory of Epitácio," met with others to agree on how to combat Russian ideas, whose "incontestable prestige is revealed in their victory of today."<sup>11</sup>

Lacerda denounced the expulsion from Brazil of "sixty foreigners" and the use of "whips in prisons" and "swords in the streets." Foreseeing changes favorable to labor, he wrote that the government's "inept" role increased the likelihood of the changes being made by revolution, rather than peacefully. The forthcoming Third Brazilian Labor Congress, he said, would decide which path would be taken. But, whatever the path, he insisted that the laboring class follow it in a united way. "Organize! Organize in order to destroy or reconstruct, but organize in order to be a force."<sup>12</sup>

Lacerda also used *Voz do Povo* to assail the management of the English-owned Leopoldina Railway, whose line terminated in Rio. Workers and passengers alike were vexed with the railway, which sought Brazilian government approval of rate increases and new loans to solve its problems. So wretched was the service that suburbanites, expressing their feelings in a spontaneous wave of vandalism, assaulted trains and burned down railroad cars and station houses.<sup>13</sup>

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*Revolta em São Paulo*, pp. 9-17. Barbosa Lima denied being involved (see *ibid.*, p. 154).

<sup>10</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, "A Conferencia de Washington, II," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 11 (February 16, 1920).

<sup>11</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, articles on the Washington Conference and Buenos Aires Conference, *Voz do Povo* 1, nos. 10, 11, 13 (February 15, 16, 18, 1920).

<sup>12</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, "O Congresso Operario," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 9 (February 14, 1920).

<sup>13</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, August 5, 1919.

Lacerda explained that, as the railway required daily work of "twelve to fourteen hours or more," he had proposed an amendment in Congress that would deny rate increases or loan authorizations to the Leopoldina unless it adopted the labor practices recommended in the Versailles Peace Treaty. "The government, however, rejected this amendment—the government of the same gentleman who has announced that he participated in making that Treaty."<sup>14</sup> Lacerda concluded that the nation should not condemn the Leopoldina's workers for striking.

<sup>14</sup> Mauricio de Lacerda, "No Eito da Leopoldina," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 16 (February 22, 1920).

## 10. The Leopoldina Strike

On March 7, 1920, a recently organized association of Leopoldina Railway workers (the Liga Operária de São José de Além Paraíba) issued a manifesto asking for a wage increase, double pay for work beyond eight hours daily, and "justification" in cases of dismissal.<sup>1</sup> As the company hired many workers on a day-to-day basis (with an eye to avoiding burdens that future labor legislation might impose),<sup>2</sup> the manifesto called for contracts to give formal employee status to such workers who had been in service for over six months.

The railway management did not reply by March 15, the deadline set by the manifesto, thus provoking "one of the most important labor movements in the history of Brazil."<sup>3</sup> Thousands of Leopoldina workers left their jobs. Hundreds of new, unskilled workers, hired by the company, tried to assist nonstriking workers, who, sometimes with insufficient training, were promoted to engineers. The authorities mobilized municipal workers and Navy engineers to help the company and sent soldiers to protect train crews. The Light and Power Company furnished forty conductors.<sup>4</sup> Strikers and the press called attention to train accidents.

<sup>1</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Na E. F. Leopoldina, em 1920."

<sup>2</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 15, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Na E. F. Leopoldina, em 1920."

<sup>4</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 19, 1920.

On March 23 the Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro and the Federação dos Condutores de Veículos announced that a general strike would start the next day in support of the Leopoldina workers. President Epitácio Pessoa therefore declined an invitation to arbitrate, arguing that he did not wish to appear to be yielding to pressure. Transport Minister José Pires do Rio told Maurício de Lacerda that the government could not act in the face of the "ultimatum."<sup>5</sup>

The authorities, expecting the general strike to fail, were surprised by its strength and shocked by depredations and the use made of bombs.<sup>6</sup> The press, which had praised the Leopoldina workers' orderly behavior and upheld their complaints, turned against the labor movement.<sup>7</sup>

Metalworkers, Centro Cosmopolita members, tailors, bakery employees, stokers, taxi drivers, and many construction workers struck on March 24; textile workers and other groups reportedly made plans to strike. At a huge street rally, a bakery worker said that all workers should publicly present their complaints and demands.<sup>8</sup>

Strikers, seeking to halt all traffic, attacked streetcars. They stoned the automobiles in which two cabinet members were riding. Police saved the foreign minister's chauffeur from a mob that tried to persuade him to join the strike.<sup>9</sup>

On March 25, street cleaning, garbage collection, and bread deliveries ended. Textile workers, shoemakers, and Lloyd Brasileiro employees announced their adherence to the strike.<sup>10</sup> The Light and Power Company sought police protection for its workers. *O Paiz* detected a dangerous "solidarity" among labor organizations and advised the government to face it "with boldness."<sup>11</sup>

After Epitácio Pessoa came from Petrópolis and met with his ministers,

<sup>5</sup> *O Paiz*, March 24, 1920.

<sup>6</sup> In *Bom Tempo* (pp. 311-315) Afonso Schmidt writes that the explosion of bombs, some of them sending railroad cars off of tracks, became a chief topic of conversation and inspired a song "whose beat imitated the explosion of bombs." According to *O Paiz* (March 29, 1920), one bomb, found on a streetcar track, was traced to "a Portuguese anarchist," a member of the Union of Civil Construction Workers, whose home contained a revolver and "Maximalist books."

<sup>7</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, "A Gréve da Leopoldina," *Voz do Povo*, April 5, 1920. On March 16, before the general strike in Rio, *Correio da Manhã* complained that the Leopoldina management remained deaf to the workers' needs.

<sup>8</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 25, 1920.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; *O Paiz*, March 25, 1920.

<sup>10</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 26, 1920.

<sup>11</sup> *O Paiz*, March 25, 26, 1920.

the cabinet issued a statement asking the people to keep away from places where strikers gathered; the strike in Rio, the cabinet said, was provoked by "foreigners, most of whom were expelled from their own countries for bad conduct."<sup>12</sup>

The police, instructed to invade the striking labor organizations' headquarters and arrest everyone in them, overcame resistance by strikers at the Praça da República, where the Federação dos Trabalhadores and several unions were located. Arrested strikers, stuffed in police vans, yelled "Long Live the Revolution!" The haul, estimated by the police at sixteen hundred strikers,<sup>13</sup> and by the press at eighteen hundred,<sup>14</sup> was more than the jails could accommodate, and so a warehouse at the docks was turned into a prison.<sup>15</sup> The director of the Casa de Detenção announced that prisoners would be "carefully identified and photographed, in order to make a meticulous separation of the good people," misled by "bad advice," from "the foreigners, many of them unemployed, carriers of dangerous ideas."<sup>16</sup>

Geminiano da Franca denied that his orders contained "any coercive steps against *Voz do Povo*."<sup>17</sup> But many of its collaborators were arrested: Mâncio Teixeira Monteiro, Fábio Luz, José Oiticica, Otávio Brandão, and Professor Álvaro Palmeira, a member of the Masonic Order who was influential among construction workers.<sup>18</sup>

When law students came to *Voz do Povo* in search of someone to explain the strikers' views at a student assembly, Afonso Schmidt could find none of the newspaper's intellectuals—only José Elias da Silva, in his blue denim trousers and wooden-soled sandals. Although Schmidt considered José Elias "a man for another setting," he sent him to address the assembly. "Do you know," students afterwards told Schmidt, "that you have a great orator in your midst? Imagine! He replied to those who opposed him not with lyricisms, or with easy evasions. No, sir! He argued with the lessons of our teachers of yesterday and today. A jurist could not have acted with greater skill, or more brilliance! When he left us it

<sup>12</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 26, 1920.

<sup>13</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Na E. F. Leopoldina, em 1920."

<sup>14</sup> *O Paiz*, March 27, 1920.

<sup>15</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 27, 1920.

<sup>16</sup> *O Paiz*, March 27, 1920.

<sup>17</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 25, 1920.

<sup>18</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 257; *O Paiz*, March 28, 1920; Otávio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968.



was in a tempest of applause, and he took with him our unanimous declaration of solidarity."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Schmidt, *Bom Tempo*, p. 313.

## 11. A Victory for Yellow Leaders

Early in the Leopoldina strike, Petronilho Montes and other leaders of maritime labor associations met with Transport Minister Pires do Rio and formed a commission to end the strike.<sup>1</sup> These leaders were union officers who enjoyed good relations with the government and the police, and who were therefore called Yellow labor leaders by those who considered themselves Red.<sup>2</sup>

The commission of nineteen Yellow leaders, headed by Petronilho Montes, called on President Epitácio Pessoa on March 27. By then the general strike was showing signs of weakness. Carpenters had wired the police chief that they would return to work, and the Association of Employees in Commerce had declared that the Leopoldina strike was being used as a "pretext for suspect agitations."<sup>3</sup> Although the Textile Workers' Union had set its strike for the twenty-seventh, few textile workers supported it. América Fabril, whose six plants made it the largest textile company in Rio, reported that all five thousand of its workers were on the job.<sup>4</sup>

Petronilho Montes told the president that he and his companions had asked the Leopoldina to readmit workers still on strike; further, a Leopoldina director had replied that, subject to the approval of his colleagues, he would "continue" to readmit all who presented themselves, "excepting only the very few who, before the strike, showed themselves

<sup>1</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Na E. F. Leopoldina, em 1920."

<sup>2</sup> In Rio de Janeiro, at the time of the Leopoldina strike, the unions with Yellow leadership in the maritime area were those representing, or claiming to represent, caulkers, painters, coal shovelers, dock workers, machinists, maritime motorists, boilermakers, electrical motor workers, and polishers (see *Correio da Manhã*, March 28, 1920).

<sup>3</sup> *O Paiz*, March 27, 1920.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, March 28, 1920.

incompatible with the service of the company." Petronilho called this statement to step forward, and made two requests of Epitácio Pessoa: liberty for jailed workers who had committed no illegal acts, and the reopening of labor associations that had been closed. The president was agreeable.<sup>5</sup>

On March 28, the Leopoldina announced that it would readmit all but those "who, by proven personal acts, made themselves incompatible with the company's service, order, and discipline."<sup>6</sup> Third Delegado Nascimento Silva and his staff reviewed the prisoners' records and released the large majority—those without "compromising backgrounds."<sup>7</sup> Many returned to their jobs. Weakening the general strike further, the Sociedade de Tecelões (weavers) declared that its members would go back to work on the twenty-ninth.<sup>8</sup>

*Correio da Manhã* hailed the "spontaneous, generous, and disinterested" intervention of the Yellow leaders.<sup>9</sup> But anarchists called them "traitors" for seeking a settlement that ignored the deplorable conditions of the Leopoldina workers. The "Marítimos," the anarchists pointed out, had consulted neither the Federação dos Trabalhadores nor the unions of Leopoldina workers.<sup>10</sup>

Of these new and inexperienced unions, the União dos Empregados da Leopoldina (Union of Leopoldina Employees) at Olaria station was geographically the closest to the railway's management in Rio and had expected to negotiate the strike settlement. With the settlement out of its hands and with many railway workers returning to work, the union at Olaria station authorized its vice-president, Luís Palmeira (brother of *Voz do Povo's* Álvaro Palmeira), to meet on March 28 with the União dos Foguistas (stokers) to decide what to do.

Addressing three hundred stokers, who had been on strike since March 24, Palmeira said that if the Leopoldina Railway should violate the recent agreement by taking out vengeance against strike leaders, "our men will be disposed to abandon work again." José Domingos Alves, the stokers' spokesman, declared that the "commissions" that had negotiated with the Leopoldina and the government represented neither the strikers

<sup>5</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 28, 1920.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, March 29, 1920.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*; *O Paiz*, March 29, 1920.

<sup>8</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 29, 1920.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Na E. F. Leopoldina, em 1920."

nor a majority of the maritime societies; "they even included representatives of the navigation companies' managements," he said. Nevertheless, Palmeira was told, the stokers would return to their jobs because the Leopoldina workers had "abandoned the strike."<sup>11</sup>

To celebrate the end of the Leopoldina strike, Yellow leaders and maritime workers called on Epitácio Pessoa on March 30. The president told them that it was more important than ever for "honest workers" to keep away from anarchists.<sup>12</sup> In Salvador, Bahia, transport workers who had struck on March 29 to support Leopoldina workers returned to their jobs. With misleading news about the "victory of our companions in Rio," Agripino Nazaré and the Federação dos Trabalhadores Bahianos called off plans to have factory workers strike.<sup>13</sup>

In *Voz do Povo* Astrogildo Pereira analyzed the defeat. He wrote that the switch by the "bourgeois press" to an antilabor position on March 24 taught an important lesson: "the interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are opposed, irreducible, and irreconcilable. . . . There is only one way for us to win. We must become stronger. The great law of the world is iron and force—and all else are illusions or dangerous deceits."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 29, 1920.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, March 31, 1920.

<sup>13</sup> "Os Acontecimentos do Rio," *Germinal* 1, no. 2 (Bahia, April 3, 1920).

<sup>14</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "A Gréve da Leopoldina," *Voz do Povo*, April 5, 1920.

## 12. The Bloody Mojiana Strike

A São Paulo version of the Leopoldina strike began on March 23, 1920, in the repair shops of the Mojiana Railroad Company, whose lines ran north from the state capital. When this strike spread beyond the repair shops to workers on the Mojiana's trains and at its stations, Police Chief Tirso Martins found his hands increasingly full, because the Mojiana strike coincided with a textile strike in the state capital and with the declaration, by the Federação Operária de São Paulo, of a general strike in the city to back the textile workers.<sup>1</sup>

The Mojiana strike gave a violent character to this brief flare-up of

<sup>1</sup> *Voz do Povo*, April 3, 1920.

labor unrest in São Paulo. It was described as "one of the most serious, if not the most serious," strike in the state's history "on account of its frankly revolutionary and anarchist quality."<sup>2</sup> Maurício de Lacerda explained that "the Mojiana strike is intense because the recent Leopoldina strike has convinced the workers that peaceful strikes only serve to assure the victory of the company owners."<sup>3</sup>

The Mojiana Railroad Company, however, resolved "not to cede one step in the face of the workers' demands." "To prevent the sacrifice of the collective interest by the caprice of the strikers," the company dismissed employees whose "disorderliness" was "well-known."<sup>4</sup>

While the company operated a few heavily guarded trains, strikers seized control of stations and cut telegraph lines.<sup>5</sup> At São Simão station, police arrested eighteen "Portuguese workers" for "pulling up rails." In the eyes of the company, the violent strike was part of an "anarchist" plan of "the incendiary and dreadful União Operária Primeiro de Maio" to "implant its ideas of subversion and vandalism."<sup>6</sup>

Shooting, sometimes fatal, occurred at several stations.<sup>7</sup> At the Casa Branca station on March 31, police soldiers fired on over two hundred strikers because they refused to leave.<sup>8</sup> Four strikers were killed and several were injured.<sup>9</sup>

Stores closed in Casa Branca to protest what Everardo Dias has called the slaughter of peaceful and totally unarmed people.<sup>10</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo* wrote that the shooting was provoked by an excited striker, who aimed a rifle at the soldiers.<sup>11</sup> *Correio Paulistano*, ardent defender of the police, published a different account. According to this version, before the shooting the strikers threw a switch, piled up rocks, and took other steps to derail an incoming train, but were thwarted in their evil designs because a solitary, "less fanatical," worker managed, unseen(!), to undo

<sup>2</sup> *Correio Paulistano*, April 5, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> *Voz do Povo*, April 10, 1920.

<sup>4</sup> *Correio Paulistano*, April 2, 1920.

<sup>5</sup> The depredations (tearing up track, cutting telegraph lines, and assaulting buildings) are mentioned in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 31, 1920. Even *Voz do Povo* reported (on April 2, 1920) that the strikers "engaged in depredations."

<sup>6</sup> *Correio Paulistano*, April 2, 1920.

<sup>7</sup> *Voz do Povo*, April 2, 1920; Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 307.

<sup>8</sup> *Correio Paulistano*, April 2, 1920.

<sup>9</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 6, 1920.

<sup>10</sup> Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais*, p. 308.

<sup>11</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 6, 1920.

all these preparations.<sup>12</sup> *Correio Paulistano* added that, with the train's arrival, the strikers attacked its unarmed passengers. In telling of the dead and wounded, *Correio Paulistano* concluded that "the armed strikers, more than two hundred strong, are entirely responsible."<sup>13</sup>

The police prevailed. By April 5 the Mojiana strike was over and *delegados* in the state capital and Campinas were preparing to deport "foreigners" who had participated in "the recent depredations . . . , especially those involved in the lamentable occurrences in Casa Branca, Moji-Mirim, Cascavel, and São Simão."<sup>14</sup>

In a telegram to Governor Altino Arantes, the president of the Mojiana Railroad Company praised "the always prompt, vigorous, prudent, and wise action of Police Chief Tirso Martins and his *delegados*." The Centro Operário Católico Metropolitano issued a new warning against "bloody fantasies" from Europe, and the Comissão da Confederação Católica dos Centros Operários appealed to all workers to free themselves from "bloody and pernicious elements carrying Bolshevik propaganda."<sup>15</sup>

The "general strike" in the state capital lasted until April 6, when the Federação Operária de São Paulo issued a bulletin recognizing "the failure of the agitation to reach the desired proportions." It added that "the uncertainties, the failures, and the hesitations should stimulate us to redouble our efforts" and not be "a reason for discouragement."<sup>16</sup>

Deploring the situation in São Paulo, Maurício de Lacerda wrote that, "in just one day" there, he had witnessed "the prohibition of the right to strike or to hold meetings."<sup>17</sup> According to his account, men, women, and children who did not submit to the prohibitions were jailed without cause and given corporal punishment. From Rio, Everardo Dias wrote to *O Combate* to say that "if I were to return to São Paulo I would at once be treasonably jailed, as were Edgard and Florentino, . . . and would have to pay my tribute in the cells of Brás or Moóca—because, unfortunately, São Paulo today is this: a fief of the Holy Inquisition."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Correio Paulistano*, April 2, 1920.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, April 5, 1920.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, April 6, 1920.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> "O Fim da Greve de São Paulo," *Voz do Povo*, April 7, 1920.

<sup>17</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, article in *Voz do Povo*, April 10, 1920.

<sup>18</sup> "Everardo Dias ante a Ameaça de Novas Torturas," *Voz do Povo*, April 18, 1920.

### 13. The Third Brazilian Labor Congress (1920)

Deoclécio Fagundes, publisher of *O Grito Operario*, "suffered horribly" for twelve days in a cell in Santos and was deported to Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>1</sup> He reached Porto Alegre in time to give the opening address at the Regional Labor Congress of Rio Grande do Sul on March 21, 1920.<sup>2</sup> There, during a discussion about the relations between unions, federations, confederations, and the Communist International, he heard the resonant voice of Abílio de Nequete, a barber who had immigrated from Lebanon.<sup>3</sup> Nequete, an admirer of Bolshevism, presented a controversial organizational plan.

Fagundes and five Gaúchos went to Rio de Janeiro in April for the Third Brazilian Labor Congress (Terceiro Congresso Operário), where organizational matters and the Communist International were also to be discussed. Despite hopes that this national congress would strengthen the labor movement, it marked the beginning of a period of weakness and disunity.

At a preparatory meeting, attended by 116 delegates at the Rio Textile Workers' Union on the night of April 23, a commission was named to "coordinate" the themes for the regular sessions: Edgard Leuenroth, José Elias da Silva, Alberto Lauro, José Alves Diniz, and João da Costa Pimenta.<sup>4</sup> Pimenta was chosen to preside at the inaugural session on April 25. Approval was given to a proposal of São Paulo delegates to allow representatives of the proletarian press to participate in discussions but not to vote. This motion made it possible for Astrogildo Pereira, representative of *Voz do Povo*, to express his views.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D. Fagundes, "Carta a Bordo do Sirio," *A Plebe*, March 20, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Comissão Executiva do 3º Congresso Operario, *Boletim* 1, no. 1 (August 1920), 21-22.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*; interview, Edison Curie de Nequete, October 30, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Comissão Executiva do 3º Congresso Operario, *Boletim* 1, no. 1, 6-7. The *Boletim* mentions 111 delegates at the preparatory meeting, but Terceiro Congresso Operario Brasileiro, "Registro de Presença," shows 116. Leuenroth represented the Federação of São Paulo, José Elias the shoemakers of the Federal District, Lauro the Federação of Rio Grande do Sul, Diniz the Federação of Pernambuco, and João Pimenta the printers of São Paulo.

<sup>5</sup> Representatives of four proletarian publications were frequently present at the regular sessions: *Voz do Povo*, *Germinal* (of Salvador), *A Hora Social* (of

The six regular sessions, also held in the Textile Workers' Union, and usually attended by about 135 delegates, lasted for five days.<sup>6</sup> Like the first (1906) and second (1913) labor congresses, the third decided on a loose "federative method" of organization—the "only" one "compatible with the irrepressible spirit of liberty."<sup>7</sup>

The Liga Operária da Construção Civil of São Paulo, represented by Deoclécio Fagundes and Teófilo Ferreira, proposed that the congress adhere to the Communist (Third) International. But Edgard Leuenroth said that the Communist International "is not a genuinely syndical organization." Astrogildo Pereira backed Leuenroth, and José Elias backed Astrogildo.<sup>8</sup> Instead of adhering to the Communist International, the Third Brazilian Labor Congress expressed its warm good wishes for the Communist International, "whose general principles correspond truly to the aspirations of liberty and equality of the workers of all the world."<sup>9</sup>

Past labor congresses had looked to the Confederação Operária Brasileira (COB) to carry on between congresses. This time the congress formed the Comissão Executiva do Terceiro Congresso (CETC) to "coordinate" the work of executing resolutions adopted at the meetings, and with a mandate lasting until the Fourth Brazilian Labor Congress, planned for 1921.<sup>10</sup> The CETC, to be supported by contributions from associations adhering to the third congress, was to receive reports according to an elaborate scheme. In Rio it was to have a "general secretariat": a secretary-general (Edgard Leuenroth), a treasurer, and sectional secretaries and traveling secretaries responsible for five geographical sections covering Brazil.

Recife), and *O Graphico* (of Rio de Janeiro). Astrogildo Pereira attended all the regular sessions.

<sup>6</sup> Terceiro Congresso Operario Brasileiro, "Registro de Presença" (loose pages in handwritten book), gives the following statistics:

<i>State Federation</i>	<i>Associations Represented</i>
Rio Grande do Sul	34 (13 in Porto Alegre)
Federal District	23
São Paulo	17 (11 in the state capital)
Bahia	15
Pernambuco	14
Pará	10
Paraná	8
Minas Gerais	8
Rio de Janeiro State	5

<sup>7</sup> Comissão Executiva do 3º Congresso Operario, *Boletim* 1, no. 1, 20.

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, February 5, 1970.

<sup>9</sup> Comissão Executiva do 3º Congresso Operario, *Boletim* 1, no. 1, 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

The traveling secretaries were: Domingos Passos (Central Section), José Elias da Silva (Northern Section), Jorge Adalberto de Jesus (Extreme North), Teófilo Ferreira (South), and Alberto Lauro (Extreme South).

One resolution called on the CETC to reach understandings whereby associations of maritime and railroad workers would refuse to transport workers being deported.<sup>11</sup> Other resolutions instructed the CETC to bring about a South American Labor Congress "in the shortest possible time," and to establish relations with international federations that agreed with the orientation of the Third Brazilian Labor Congress. The Washington Labor Conference was declared to be "repudiated by all the workers of the entire world."<sup>12</sup>

The resolution that expressed preference for industrial unions over trade unions was considered of great importance.<sup>13</sup> Industrial unions, the congress declared, "avoid the exclusionisms of class, without preventing that different categories, which meet in the same industrial syndicates, take up separately particular questions appropriate to them."<sup>14</sup>

Besides creating the CETC, the organization-minded Third Brazilian Labor Congress tried to end confusion in the Rio area, where it found four labor federations and many autonomous associations, all without relations with each other. The solution, ineffective in practice, was to establish still another body, the Conselho Geral dos Trabalhadores (CGT—General Council of Workers) of the Federal District and state of Rio, as an "organ of understanding among all these organizations . . . without in any way harming the autonomy or orientation of each one."<sup>15</sup> The new CGT was to consist of one member of each autonomous association and three members of each of the federations: the Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro, the Federação dos Trabalhadores dos Transportes Terrestres (land transport), the Federação dos Portos, Marítimos e Fluviais (port, maritime, and river workers), and the Federação Operária do Estado do Rio (Rio State).

Following the congress, the CETC met with representatives of *Voz do Povo*<sup>16</sup> and the Federação Operária do Estado do Rio to plan an *excursão de propaganda* by Domingos Passos in the state of Rio. Armed with an appropriate credential, Passos, a leader of Rio construction workers, set

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *A Plebe*, May 8, 1920.

<sup>13</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 308.

<sup>14</sup> Comissão Executiva do 3º Congresso Operário, *Boletim* 1, no. 1, 20.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Álvaro Palmeira had become director of *Voz do Povo*.



A EMANCIPAÇÃO  
DOS TRABALHADORES  
HA DE SER OBRA DOS  
PROPRIOS TRABALHADORES.

QUEM NÃO  
TRABALHA  
NÃO COME

BOLETIM  
DA

COMISSÃO EXECUTIVA DO 3º CONGRESSO OPERÁRIO



SUMMARY:

Surgindo.

A greve dos marítimos.  
Comissão Executiva do 3.º C. O.  
A proposito da organização de  
um partido operário.

Em prol dos deportados.  
Normas de organização da C. E.  
Demonstração Graphica da C. E.  
O que se passou no 3.º C. O.  
A perseguição ao proletariado.  
Pareceres e conclusões.  
Recordação Imperível (cliché).  
Primeira excursão.  
Violencias, sempre violencias!  
A fundação do syndicato.  
Relatorios apresentados ao 3.º C.  
Democracia e syndicalismo.  
O sinete confederal (cliché).  
Affirmação de principios.

Conselho G. dos Trabalhadores.  
O operariado do Brazil e a situa-  
ção internacional proletaria.  
O proletariado e a Revolução  
Russa.

Inicio dos trabalhos da C. E.  
Pela confraternização do opera-  
riado de Pernambuco.  
Methodos de organização.  
Congresso Operario Regional do  
R. G. do Sul.  
A lei sclerada contra o opera-  
riado.  
Pelo Congresso Proletario Sul-  
Americano.  
Pelo Brazil proletario.  
O fallecimento do camarada Pla-  
cido de Albuquerque.  
Informações indispensaveis.

Anno I @ Agosto da 1920 @ N.º 1

Endereço: Edgard Leuenroth - Caixa Postal, 1336  
S. PAULO (BRAZIL).

O HOMEM LIVRE  
SOBRE A TERRA  
LIVRE

UM POR TODOS,  
TODOS POR UM.

PAZ ENTRE NÓS.  
GUERRA AOS  
SENHORES!

out in July; but early in August he was arrested by the Rio state police. "Violence, Always Violence!" said the first (and only) number of the *Boletim* of the CETC.

Leuenroth, the CETC's general secretary, had a breakdown and went to Teresópolis for a complete rest. José Elias da Silva, named to serve in his place, was particularly interested in raising funds for the defense of labor leaders, among them Manuel Perdigão Saavedra, who were still in prisons in Spain and Portugal.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *A Plebe* 4, no. 85 (October 9, 1920). The Supreme Court acted favorably in the case of Perdigão on October 4, 1920, but Brazilian authorities in Vigo gave him passport difficulties (*Voz do Povo*, November 14, 1920).

The case of Rio civil construction worker Antônio Silva, deported to Três Lagoas, Mato Grosso, also excited the proletarian press in October 1920. After a year in Mato Grosso, he returned to Rio.

#### 14. The Santos Dock Strike (December 1920–February 1921)

The year that followed the Third Brazilian Labor Congress saw "a general collapse of labor organization."<sup>1</sup> When Edgard Leuenroth, José Elias da Silva, Astrogildo Pereira, and others met in May 1921 to analyze the collapse, they cited "the strong police reaction" and the failure of labor to understand the purpose of federation.<sup>2</sup>

They might also have mentioned what *O Estado de S. Paulo* called "the extremely sad economic and financial situation into which Brazil fell after a short period of enormous and deceptive prosperity."<sup>3</sup> The coffee quotation, which had been 18\$8000 early in September 1919, declined steadily thereafter, reaching 8\$600 at the end of February 1921.<sup>4</sup>

As Azis Simão has expressed it: "The frustration of the expectations of the proletariat, after the efforts expended in the strikes of 1917 and 1919,

<sup>1</sup> *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 42 (June 3, 1921); *A Plebe* 5, no. 119 (May 28, 1921).

<sup>2</sup> *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 42 (June 3, 1921).

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, "Notas e Informações," January 15, 1921. On January 10, 1921, *Diario Hespanhol* described the condition of Brazilian commerce and industry as "desperate and critical." See also, "Cuestiones Económicas," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 12, 1921.

<sup>4</sup> Prices per ten kilograms of Santos No. 4 coffee at Santos.

must be related to the situation of the labor market."<sup>5</sup> Trotsky described the Brazilian situation accurately when he wrote about the depression that began in Russia in 1907: "far from inspiring the workers to engage in a new fight, [it] dispersed them and weakened them more than ever. Under the blows of lockouts, unemployment, and poverty, the weary masses became definitely discouraged."<sup>6</sup>

During the twelve months dolefully reviewed by the labor leaders in May 1921, President Epitácio Pessoa promulgated two laws to deal with the "anarchist threat." In this period, two important but unsuccessful strikes were undertaken, one by Santos dock workers, and the other by Rio maritime workers.

The first of the two laws, Law 4247 of January 6, 1921, was the work of Arnolfo Azevedo, a congressman from São Paulo. One of its clauses stipulated that foreigners who had resided in Brazil for less than five years could be expelled if they conducted themselves in a manner "considered harmful to public order or national security."<sup>7</sup>

Law 4269 of January 17, 1921, the new Adolfo Gordo Law, was designed, its title said, to "Regulate the Repression of Anarchism." It listed jail sentences to be applied in the case of crimes designed to "subvert the present social organization." The law would also punish those who instigated such crimes by addressing groups or issuing propaganda. Article 12 empowered the authorities to close, "for a specified amount of time, *sindicatos* and civil societies when they engage in acts harmful to the public good."<sup>8</sup>

The Arnolfo Azevedo Law, regulating expulsions, was first used<sup>9</sup> during the strike that was started in December 1920 by Santos dock workers, who were unhappy because they received only 5\$000 for nine or ten hours of heavy work.<sup>10</sup> Ibraim Nobre made arrests, not overlooking Deoclécio Fagundes and Florentino de Carvalho, and prepared to deport foreign anarchists. His heart was especially set on deporting Manuel Campos, despite the fact that Campos had been in Brazil since his infancy. After Campos was arrested in São Paulo on December 29, 1920, he was, on Nobre's orders, moved to a Santos jail, beaten, and left incommunicado much of

<sup>5</sup> Azis Simão, *Sindicato e Estado*, p. 110.

<sup>6</sup> Leon Trotsky, *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence*, p. 126.

<sup>7</sup> "A Lei Arnolfo Azevedo," *O Combate* (São Paulo), January 7, 1921. See also *O Combate*, January 18, 21, 1921.

<sup>8</sup> Decree 4269 of January 17, 1921.

<sup>9</sup> *O Combate*, January 21, 1921.

<sup>10</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 310.

the time.<sup>11</sup> A judge, after studying a habeas corpus petition submitted on behalf of Campos and two others, ordered that they be transferred in accordance with a clause in the Arnolfo Azevedo Law which specified that foreigners, prior to expulsion, be held in jails that were not occupied by prisoners guilty of common crimes.<sup>12</sup>

Mystery about the disappearance of Deoclécio Fagundes was dispelled when *A Vanguarda*, a new proletarian newspaper in São Paulo, reported that "Fagundes, seriously ill, and Aranda, are imprisoned in Santa Catarina." Fagundes had written from the south: "Never did I believe such horrors would befall me. . . . We were shipped on the *Itauba*. . . . I, as a prisoner, had been savagely beaten, put in a dark, damp cell, where I remained eleven days, entirely nude, and obliged to sleep on the cement!"<sup>13</sup>

Manuel Campos, before his imprisonment, had been helping João da Costa Pimenta organize *A Vanguarda*, but he was never able to participate in the publication of the new daily. Early in March 1921, he was put aboard the *Avon*, to go to Spain. In a habeas corpus petition, Benjamim Mota mentioned Campos's long residence in Brazil and asked whether he was being expelled because he was an anarchist, or because he had been an administrator of *A Plebe*, or because he had participated in strikes.<sup>14</sup> By the time the *Avon* reached Recife,<sup>15</sup> Benjamim Mota's petition had been rejected by a federal judge in Pernambuco.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of strikebreakers, the Santos dock strike was effective as long as it lasted. Shortly before the stevedores capitulated in the middle of February 1921, Lloyd Brasileiro's management contemplated bringing to Rio vessels that had long been in Santos, their merchandise for São Paulo still unloaded. From Rio the merchandise was to be shipped by the Central do Brasil Railroad to São Paulo.<sup>17</sup>

Several explosions of dynamite were reported in Santos in January. *O Combate* suggested that the explosions, which were innocuous, were "inventions of the police" to justify the rough treatment of strikers.<sup>18</sup> On

<sup>11</sup> According to *O Combate* (January 18, 19, 1921), Manuel Campos was so severely beaten that when visitors were able to see him they were horrified at his condition.

<sup>12</sup> *O Combate*, January 21, 1921.

<sup>13</sup> *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 22 (March 23, 1921).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, no. 11 (March 10, 1921).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, no. 15 (March 15, 1921), reporting on a news item given in *O Estado de S. Paulo*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, no. 17 (March 17, 1921).

<sup>17</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 14, 1921.

<sup>18</sup> *O Combate*, January 29, 1921.

the other hand, *O Estado de S. Paulo* blamed the strikers, and reported that "two assaults with dynamite were made, one against a worker who did not obey the strikers' orders, and the other against one of the authorities" of Santos.<sup>19</sup>

Ibrahim Nobre named an investigating commission to determine who was responsible for "the grave occurrences." One of the conclusions, given in the two large volumes that the inquiry produced, stated: "In all labor agitations there is always a hidden, anonymous, and directing source of action, which is called a 'committee' of one sort or another. . . . This time it was the Comitê Central de Defesa da Greve, which revealed itself in bulletins and manifestoes and also in threatening letters."<sup>20</sup>

Nobre listed sixteen men who he insisted should be jailed, among them João Perdigão Gutierrez, João Domingos Gonçalves, and the editor of *Gazeta do Povo*. All sixteen, Nobre said, had been implicated in attempts to murder three people. Heading Nobre's list of sixteen was Antônio Julião, Portuguese-born professor of a Modern School. Nobre described him as the mysterious, secret brain behind "the grave occurrences," and accused him of having organized five "committees" to carry out his revolutionary work. Julião himself, Nobre said, seldom left his home.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 23, 1921.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *O Combate*, February 23, 1921.

## 15. The Dreadful Knife of José Leandro

Astrogildo Pereira has written: "The strike of the maritime workers at the end of 1920, when the strike wave was entering into decline, failed miserably; but, in spite of everything, it constituted an unquestionable demonstration of combativity on the part of the mass of maritime workers."<sup>1</sup>

The strike broke out against Lloyd Brasileiro, which the government had recently transferred from the status of a federal bureau to that of a corporation.<sup>2</sup> Workers of other steamship companies in Rio joined the

<sup>1</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 20, 1921.

strike, and it was supported by maritime workers in Recife and in the south.<sup>3</sup> From time to time Rio workers in other occupations gave demonstrations of solidarity.

The strike in Rio gave rise to the long-drawn-out case of José Leandro da Silva, a young and fearless Negro from the backlands of Pernambuco, who, as a striking ship's cook, spent his time at the Rio docks persuading other maritime workers to join the strike. Early on February 4, 1921, a police agent prohibited him from going aboard the *Ceará*, a Lloyd vessel tied up at the docks, and told him to leave the docks altogether. José Leandro drew out his large cook's knife. Retreating, the police agent fired two shots and fell into the water.<sup>4</sup>

As other police agents, guards, and soldiers shot at Leandro and tried to capture him, he fled, using his knife to wound seriously four of his would-be captors. After he entered a warehouse, a hail of shots brought him down. One of the shots killed a warehouseman.<sup>5</sup>

Leandro, recovering in prison, was given a thirty-year jail sentence. This decision provoked a storm in the proletarian press and led to the formation of a Comitê Pró-Liberdade José Leandro da Silva to sponsor legal work on his behalf.

The Associação dos Marinheiros e Remadores (Association of Sailors and Rowers) made a hero out of José Leandro and used threats to keep the strike alive. One of its members, suspected of wanting to return to work, was marched into the association's headquarters, submitted to blows, forced into kitchen and cleaning work, and then told, in the presence of two hundred members, that all of them had knives ready to kill him if he should desert the strike.<sup>6</sup>

Many maritime workers, who neither belonged to the association nor supported its strike, remained at work<sup>7</sup> in spite of threats and supplications. Helped by the condition of the labor market, Lloyd Brasileiro was able to find replacements after it fired crew members it considered responsible for acts of indiscipline on the *Sirio*. Thus the strike already

<sup>3</sup> In Salvador, Bahia, at this time, dock workers and textile workers struck. After strikers reportedly tried to dynamite a Salvador bakery, the Bahia police carried out large-scale arrests. Agripino Nazaré was put on a vessel going south (*O Combate*, February 1, 1921).

<sup>4</sup> "O Caso José Leandro da Silva," *A Plebe* 6, no. 221 (October 27, 1923); *Correio da Manhã*, February 5, 1921.

<sup>5</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 221; *Correio da Manhã*, February 5, 1921.

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 5, 1921.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, February 10, 1921.

seemed a failure on February 7, when the leaders of the Union of Civil Construction Workers decided on a strike to support the Association of Sailors and Rowers.

## 16. Assault on the Union of Civil Construction Workers

The Rio police had been keeping a close watch on the Union of Civil Construction Workers. It regarded the union as the citadel of anarchism and headquarters of professional agitators, "80 percent" of them "foreign," whose "real" objective was to stir up disorders. When "wild subversive cries" and "revolutionary songs like 'The International'" broke out at the Association of Sailors and Rowers, the police blamed these "agitations" on "incitement" by leaders of the Union of Civil Construction Workers.<sup>1</sup>

To surprise the construction workers when they held a "secret meeting" on the morning of February 8, 1921, to declare themselves on strike, Nascimento Silva brought up security agents and police soldiers. The construction workers refused admittance to these authorities, and so Nascimento Silva sent for a fire brigade contingent. When members of the fire brigade climbed up a ladder and tried to force an opening, shooting broke out. Nascimento Silva called for a cavalry unit, but the conflict ended, with three reported injuries, before the cavalry could reach the scene.

In spite of orders to arrest all who had been in the union headquarters, Nascimento Silva's forces only caught twenty. They were described as "mostly Portuguese" and were locked up at the central police building with a "Spaniard" who had been arrested while urging a general strike in a speech at Praça 11 de Junho.

A search at the Union of Civil Construction Workers reportedly yielded two revolvers, five knives, thirty bullets, Mauser rifles, and many stones.<sup>2</sup> Among the papers and bulletins was a "very badly written" manuscript listing the points of the program of anarchist communism.

<sup>1</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 10, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Upon releasing its text, Geminiano da Franca and Nascimento Silva declared that the meeting had been part of a "seditious movement."<sup>3</sup>

Construction worker leaders got permission from the Chauffeurs' Association to use its headquarters, and so the interrupted meeting was resumed at noon. Nascimento Silva arrived, this time with twenty-four infantry soldiers and twenty cavalymen, and after some delay the union door was opened. Addressing the one hundred workers he found there, Nascimento Silva said that the police force was maintaining order and persecuting no one. He added that the Chauffeurs' Association would be closed if its directors ever again used it for a meeting of strikers who were determined to oppose order and public peace. Then he told his audience to withdraw, and it obeyed.

In the Chauffeurs' Association, the police found the draft of a strike call, addressed to the proletariat in general and the civil construction workers in particular. It spoke of the "most miserable and cowardly attack against our liberty. Like bandits, with arms in hand, they assaulted our headquarters." Police reported that this strike call instructed the workers to remain away from work and to be firm "until your headquarters are returned to you. The Committee will tell you the hour and day when you should return to work. The moment is one of struggle. Our solidarity with the maritime workers must be made effective against the will of our adversaries. We must reveal the strength of our organization to those who still dominate Brazil. We must go to the end, to the victory of the proletariat! We must go to revolution, to the destruction of all that prevents our freedom."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 10, 1921.

<sup>4</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 10, 1921.

## 17. The End of the Maritime Strike

At 3:00 A.M. on the next morning, February 9, 1921, a bomb went off at the iron-grilled door of the Stock Exchange building, wrecking furniture and windows. Nearby offices were damaged. As policemen began an investigation, a second bomb exploded at the entrance of Itamarati



Palace (the Foreign Ministry). The hand of a streetcar conductor was injured in the blast.

Later that morning, the Rio construction workers went on strike and their leaders declared that, in view of recent occurrences, their union would by no means be responsible for the "revolutionary excesses" of some of its members. The police attributed the explosions to the "terrorist plans of striking workers."<sup>1</sup>

In Petrópolis Epitácio Pessoa conferred with his cabinet and Police Chief Geminiano da Franca. After he told Justice Minister Alfredo Pinto of his desire to see much energy exerted in putting down disorders,<sup>2</sup> Pinto promised "the greatest possible rigor" and told the press that charges would be brought against those who, while living at the Union of Civil Construction Workers' headquarters, had "threatened the safety of the institutions."<sup>3</sup> On the next day Pinto, citing the new Adolfo Gordo Law, petitioned for a six-month shut-down of the union.<sup>4</sup>

The authorities appeared to have everything under control. Newspapers featured pictures of the armored cars that General Silva Pessoa, commander of the military police, was prepared to use. Another front-page photograph—notable for self-assured facial expressions—showed General Pessoa at the side of the justice minister.<sup>5</sup> Policemen rounded up two Spaniards and two Brazilians, who, they said, were preparing to dynamite the Santa Teresa water reservoir.<sup>6</sup> The report said that anarchist pamphlets and brochures had been found on them.

On the night of February 13, leaders of the *Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro* called for a general strike on the fifteenth to back "maritime workers who have been replaced in the Lloyd."<sup>7</sup> Construction worker leaders, furious at "traitors," met in secret to promote a "determined struggle" against all who were returning to work without the permission of the Committee to Defend the Right to Strike and to Act on Behalf of Those Jailed for Social Questions. Already, the Association of Sailors and Rowers had announced that its fight was to achieve not

<sup>1</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 10, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 10, 1921.

<sup>4</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 11, 1921.

<sup>5</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 11, 1921.

<sup>6</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 17, 1921 (dateline Rio de Janeiro, February 10).

<sup>7</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 15, 1921.

only wage increases and the eight-hour day, but also "the disembarkation of all traitors of the movement and the reembarkation of the strikers."<sup>8</sup>

On February 14 the authorities ordered the commander of the naval battalion to use severe measures to repress "the aggressive attitude of the strikers" at the Rio docks.<sup>9</sup> They also prepared for the general strike by making arrests. In front of the new headquarters of the União dos Empregados em Padaria (Union of Bakery Employees), twenty-five bakery workers were arrested for "persuading their companions to leave work."<sup>10</sup>

The general strike of February 15 was a brief, bad failure. Some associations affiliated with the Federação refused to adhere,<sup>11</sup> and many members of associations that did adhere chose to remain at their jobs. The Union of Bakery Employees, although not very homogeneous,<sup>12</sup> was expected to give vitality to the strike, for it included a good many ardent anarchists. However, less than one-third of those who worked for Rio's 350-odd bakeries joined the strike, and they succeeded in closing down only 11 bakeries.<sup>13</sup> According to *O Panificador* (The Baker, a proletarian organ), solidarity strikes, such as those for the Leopoldina and maritime workers, "brought about a certain indifference in some of the companions" who worked for the bakeries.<sup>14</sup>

Another dramatic bomb explosion, this on the night of February 15, helped assure the anarchist strikers of an unsympathetic public. It occurred at the entrance of the Naval Club. Authorities rushed to the scene, among them Colonel Bandeira de Melo, commander of the Second Battalion of the Força Militar and a veteran fighter against anarchism. They found the streets covered with glass from the windows of the Naval Club and the nearby Municipal Theater.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, February 10, 1921.

<sup>9</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 15, 1921.

<sup>10</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 15, 1921.

<sup>11</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo* reported (February 15, 1921) that "only twenty" of the "thirty-six associations affiliated with the Federação dos Trabalhadores" agreed to adhere to the movement. It is doubtful that as many as thirty-six associations were affiliated with the Federação (see Book III, Chapter 13, n. 6). It is doubtful that as many as twenty adhered to the general strike.

<sup>12</sup> Differences often arose between those who worked at the ovens and those whose job was to deliver bread to homes.

<sup>13</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 15, 1921; *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 15, 1921.

<sup>14</sup> *O Panificador* 2, no. 10 (Rio de Janeiro, May 20, 1922). Four members of the Union of Bakery Employees who supported the maritime strike were deported.

<sup>15</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 16, 1921; *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 16, 24, 1921.

On February 16 the promoters of the "general strike" decided to postpone it "until better times."<sup>16</sup> On the next day, Lloyd Director Buarque de Macedo made a proposal that the Association of Sailors and Rowers rejected. When reconciliation appeared impossible, he simply declared that no strike existed at the Lloyd.<sup>17</sup> All the fleet was operating, and a majority of the sailors were said to be in disagreement with the association's leaders.

Early in March, the *Demerara* put to sea with ten "anarchists"—five Spaniards and five Portuguese—accused of being dynamiters involved in "recent labor agitations."<sup>18</sup> At the same time, sensational "anarchist bomb" stories filled the press. Nine bombs, seventy-four cartridges, a large picture of Kropotkin, and "propaganda" brochures were reportedly found in the home of Alexandrino Valente Coutinho, secretary of the Union of Bakery Employees and head of its Strike Committee.<sup>19</sup>

Although in February 1921 Buarque de Macedo had unilaterally declared the end of the maritime strike as far as Lloyd Brasileiro was concerned, some maritime workers kept on striking until June 1921, when a settlement brought the movement to a more formal conclusion. The settlement prompted a group of maritime workers—sailors, stewards, rowers, and maritime cooks and bakers—to complain that they had not participated in the negotiations and had received "only a few betterments." They added that the machinists and stokers, "who got less than we did," were so badly deceived by false (Yellow) leaders that they were induced to thank Eptácio Pessoa for the settlement.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 17, 1921.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, February 18, 1921.

<sup>18</sup> *O Combate* (São Paulo), March 9, 1921; *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 8, 1921.

<sup>19</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 4, 8, 1921. *O Combate* (March 9, 1921) reported that Coutinho, an anarchist of long standing, had named his two-year-old son Lenine.

<sup>20</sup> "O Fim Desastroso da Greve dos Maritimos do Rio," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 45 (São Paulo, June 23, 1921).

## 18. Decline of the Proletarian Press (Early 1921)

Before returning to São Paulo from Teresópolis at the end of 1920, Edgard Leuenroth visited Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais. There *O Proletario*, organ of the Federação Operária Mineira, extolled the "valorous polemicist" for having developed, in *A Plebe*, "so formidable a campaign that the bastions of capitalism in São Paulo felt themselves seriously threatened." Speaking to Minas workers, the convalescent warned against the "modern Pharisees, the hypocrites who call themselves messengers of Christianity but who live always at the side of the powerful."<sup>1</sup>

In São Paulo, Leuenroth joined the *cooperativa* that João da Costa Pimenta, undaunted by the demise of *Voz do Povo* late in 1920, organized for publishing *A Vanguarda*. Afonso Schmidt, another member of the *cooperativa*, has written that Pimenta bought, "on credit, a Linotype, an Alauzet press, and boxes of fancy type," and installed them in a shed in Brás.<sup>2</sup>

Before *A Vanguarda* published its first number, the congressional elections of February 20, 1921, were held. The conservative governments of the ruling states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo had no difficulty placing their men in the federal legislature. Adolfo Gordo, running in São Paulo for reelection to the Senate, was awarded 30,828 votes to his opponent's 1,271.<sup>3</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, beaten in Rio State, spoke about contesting the "victory" of his "officially backed" opponent;<sup>4</sup> but the contest was hopeless, and he turned to newspaper work.<sup>5</sup> Nicanor do Nascimento was reelected congressman from the Federal District, where the lack of overpowering state political machines allowed oppositionists occasional victories. Nicanor was also helped by Lacerda's decision to withdraw from

<sup>1</sup> *O Proletario* 1, no. 30 (Juiz de Fora, December 26, 1920).

<sup>2</sup> Afonso Schmidt, *Bom Tempo*, p. 350.

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 22, 1921. On January 7, 1921, an article in *O Combate* said that Adolfo Gordo would find it difficult to get reelected.

<sup>4</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 28, 1921.

<sup>5</sup> Maurício de Lacerda has described himself as director of three Rio de Janeiro newspapers: *O Avante* in 1921, *A Tribuna* in 1922, and *A Nação* in 1923 and 1924. He became a member of the legislature of the state of Rio de Janeiro in 1922 (see autobiographical notes in the collection of *O Estado de S. Paulo*).

the Federal District in his favor.<sup>6</sup> But Nicanor, who had attacked President Epitácio Pessoa's ethics, was prevented from occupying his seat by a decision of the administration-controlled majority of congressmen.

The appearance of the long-heralded daily, *A Vanguarda*, starting on February 25, 1921, reduced *A Plebe* to a modest status. *A Plebe*'s business manager, Rodolfo Felipe, took over *A Plebe*'s editorial direction and published weekly issues. A typical number consisted of one sheet featuring an article by Astrogildo Pereira or "Professor C. C." (Professor Coelho Cintra), both of whom had collaborated with *Voz do Povo*.<sup>7</sup>

*A Vanguarda* denounced the "white terror" in Rio and gave considerable attention to European events that seemed important to its editors: civil war and intervention in Russia and the "first communist revolution in Germany." But neither this reporting, nor novels of Fábio Luz and Afonso Schmidt in serial form, attracted much interest. At the start of April 1921, after little more than one month, *A Vanguarda* became a weekly.

The weekly *A Vanguarda* concentrated on Brazilian affairs. It assailed the justice minister for denying a petition in which the Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio asked that the headquarters of the Union of Civil Construction Workers be opened so that workers could turn it into a "school of primary education."<sup>8</sup> Everardo Dias used *A Vanguarda* to warn that agents of the French government were planning to arrange the shipment to Brazil of "dozens of thousands" of Russian mercenary soldiers who had fought, under General Wrangel, against the Bolshevik revolution. Dias, more apprehensive than developments were to justify, wrote that "probably the Brazilian government will give asylum to these fifty thousand men . . . a sort of white guard, capable of all sorts of bravura against the working class. . . . Soldiers—adventurers—Wrangelites. What a lovely gift from the Greeks."<sup>9</sup>

Both *A Vanguarda* and *A Plebe* attacked the two presidential candidates, Artur Bernardes and Nilo Peçanha. *A Vanguarda* called them representatives of the reaction.<sup>10</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, writing in *A Plebe* about

<sup>6</sup> Mauricio de Lacerda, Declaration, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 28, 1927.

<sup>7</sup> Otávio Brandão states that Coelho Cintra was "a small-bourgeois liberal" who collaborated with *Voz do Povo* in 1920 and disappeared from the labor movement soon after *Voz do Povo* ended (letter, February 5, 1970).

<sup>8</sup> *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 45 (June 23, 1921).

<sup>9</sup> Everardo Dias, "Presente de Gregos," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 35 (April 13, 1921).

<sup>10</sup> *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 47 (July 16, 1921).

"The Quadriennial Farce," called for the complete overthrow of the regime.<sup>11</sup>

For *A Plebe* June 1921 was a difficult month. It committed a *faux pas* when it published an article by "Professor C. C.," which anarchists condemned. *A Plebe's* management admitted that the appearance of the article, defending the administration of Marshal Hermes da Fonseca (1910-1914), constituted "a glowing absurdity," and attributed the publication to "a truly regrettable oversight."<sup>12</sup> Worst of all, the lack of interest in *A Plebe* forced it to announce on June 30 that it could no longer appear regularly.<sup>13</sup> Three and one-half months of silence followed.

In July 1921 *A Vanguarda* told of meetings at which "friends of *A Plebe*" tried to raise funds to resurrect the well-known anarchist newspaper. By this time *A Vanguarda* was appearing only twice a month.

"The workers of Brazil," Astrojildo Pereira wrote, "do not understand" the importance of sustaining the proletarian press, which "is poor and modest, but clean and superior, at the service of the ideal."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, "A Farça Quadriennial," *A Plebe* 4, no. 119 (May 28, 1921).

<sup>12</sup> "Uma Explicação," *A Plebe* 5, no. 122 (June 18, 1921).

<sup>13</sup> *A Plebe* 5, no. 124 (June 30, 1921).

<sup>14</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, "Essa Grande Imprensa," *A Plebe* 5, no. 124 (June 30, 1921).

BOOK IV: *The Ideological Problem, 1920–1922*

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## 1. A Warning by Florentino de Carvalho

In February 1920, *Voz do Povo* carried Trotsky's assurance that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is almost entirely a consequence of the war in which we are engaged," and that, "as soon as the conflict ends, liberty of the press and all the other liberties will be reestablished."<sup>1</sup> Brazilian anarchists gave more credence to this affirmation than to reports about conflicts between anarchists and Bolsheviks in Russia.

Early in 1920 Florentino de Carvalho was the only well known Brazilian anarchist to attack the Russian Bolsheviks. In March he wrote in *A Plebe*: "It is not true that the anarchists are supporters of dictatorship, the law, and the state. In Russia, for example, they are so opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat that they have reached the point of carrying out, against the Maximists, real battles in the streets of Petrograd and Moscow."<sup>2</sup>

Most Brazilian anarchists felt that the stories of these "battles" were "distortions" by the "bourgeois press." After Florentino de Carvalho's article appeared, *A Plebe* hastened to publish an editorial that praised the

<sup>1</sup> Trotsky interview (in *Chicago Daily News*) as reported by *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 11 (February 16, 1920).

<sup>2</sup> Florentino de Carvalho, "Falencia do Anarquismo?!" *A Plebe* 3, no. 57 (March 20, 1920).

Russian Bolsheviks for having established "a new order of things, just and beneficent."<sup>3</sup> Anarchists were told not to collaborate with the foes of the Russian social revolution. Like *A Plebe*, they were to follow, "overcome with emotion," the "heroic epic" of the Bolsheviks, hopeful that the Bolsheviks would "continue marching along roads ever more glorious" until attaining anarchist communism, "the ultimate stage to which history and humanity ascend." In *Voz do Povo*, Oiticica's articles, critical of Western European workers for accepting small concessions from governments and socialist leaders, likewise praised "victorious Russia."<sup>4</sup>

Florentino de Carvalho founded his own "weekly," *A Obra*, in May 1920, and used it to contribute to a debate about anarchism and syndicalism. *Voz do Povo* had explained that anarchists fought capitalism and the state, which they considered the two causes of evil, whereas syndicalists fought only capitalism, in the belief that the state was a consequence of capitalism.<sup>5</sup> An article in *A Obra* ("Syndicalism is not Marxism") asserted that "syndicalism—which must open the doors of Anarchy if it is to fulfill its historic mission," could "in no way make use of the state as does 'Marxism.'" *A Obra's* readers learned that the dictatorship of the proletariat, even if temporary, was guilty of "making use of Tyranny," and that "the revolution which is to come to our country cannot . . . reduce its mission by following the path provided by the supporters of Lenin."<sup>6</sup>

The definitive word about Bolshevism was given by the CETC (Comissão Executiva do Terceiro Congresso—Executive Commission of the Third Brazilian Labor Congress). In its August 1920 *Boletim*, the Executive Commission defended the Russian revolution "through everything and against everyone." The authors of these words declared themselves willing to be called Bolsheviks (a term that they said was used by the bourgeoisie when referring to enemies of the bourgeois society), and

<sup>3</sup> "Anarquismo e Bolchevismo," *A Plebe* 3, no. 58 (March 27, 1920).

<sup>4</sup> José Oiticica, "Mau Caminho, III," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 5 (February 10, 1920). See also José Oiticica, "Sempre O Mesmo," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 28 (March 5, 1920). Oiticica's articles, "Mau Caminho," were not (as stated in [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 273) expressions of "his dissatisfaction with the paths of the Russian revolution." He assailed workers fooled by parliaments.

<sup>5</sup> "Que é o Syndicalismo?" *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 12 (February 17, 1920).

<sup>6</sup> Arnaldo Danel, "Definindo Principios: O Syndicalismo Não É Marxista," *A Obra* 1, no. 13 (São Paulo, September 15, 1920).

had two further observations. One concerned adopting the Russian model. Its adoption was not recommended because social movements "have different characteristics in different countries." For example, the CETC wrote, the Russian Bolshevik revolution had broken out before the Russian *sindicatos* had been properly developed and therefore the cry in Petrograd and Moscow had been "All Power to the Soviets" instead of "All Power to the Syndicates." The other observation concerned reports of "crimes" in Russia. It was impossible, the CETC said, to comment on the reports because of the difficulty of knowing what was really happening in Russia.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "O Proletariado e a Revolução Russa," in Comissão Executiva do 3º Congresso Operário, *Boletim*, 1, p. 16.

## 2. A Political Party? The Coligação Social

It worried the CETC to know that there were labor leaders, some of them inspired by the success of the Russian Bolsheviks, who spoke of forming a political party for labor. In its August 1920 *Boletim*, the CETC declared that such a party would divide the workers, get involved in "electoral intrigue," and assume tendencies "alien to the life of the workers." The Brazilian proletariat was advised to reflect on the "failures" of labor parties in other countries.<sup>1</sup>

But with the February 1921 congressional elections only six months away, the forbidden fruit looked attractive to Álvaro and Luís Palmeira. The Palmeiras tempted Mâncio Teixeira, one of their associates at *Voz do Povo*, and discussed the matter with Congressman Nicanor do Nascimento, who wanted the political support of labor. Most of the editors of *Voz do Povo* opposed the political ideas of the Palmeiras. Therefore Álvaro Palmeira, who had succeeded Afonso Schmidt as the newspaper's director in May 1920, had to turn over the directorship to Astrogildo Pereira on August 8, 1920.

In September 1920 Florentino de Carvalho denounced "militant lib-

<sup>1</sup> "A Proposito da Organização de um Partido Operário," by N. V., in Comissão Executiva do 3º Congresso Operário, *Boletim*, 1, p. 5.

ertarians in Rio" who, he said, proposed the formation of a "Socialist-Maximalist party" to use the polls to replace "the bourgeois state" with a "Bolshevik state." He explained that he had trustworthy documents to demonstrate that the Russian regime, as he had suspected, "is essentially against our principles." His information, he said, revealed that a Bolshevik state in Brazil would be "an absurdity. . . . Like the Bolsheviks, we want to overthrow the bourgeois state; but we also want to overthrow the Bolshevik state." In conclusion, Florentino de Carvalho declared that the desire of Rio militants to form "a socialist or Maximalist" party would be a retraction of principles already adopted, and would cause a schism and be "a treason against the cause of human emancipation."<sup>2</sup>

The Coligação Social, which the Palmeira brothers tried to launch as the "party of the vanguard,"<sup>3</sup> became just another short-lived political movement—a supporter of the reelection of Nicanor do Nascimento. But for a moment, while Álvaro Palmeira used his rhetoric and his influence among construction workers on its behalf,<sup>4</sup> and while Everardo Dias prepared to help it, the Coligação Social stirred up ill feelings in anarchist circles and inspired an outburst of statements.

Manuel Campos wrote scornfully in *A Plebe* on October 23, 1920, about the "ex-anarchists." "Men can pervert themselves, but ideas remain. To the anarchists of yesterday, politicians today, we give our sincere condolences; they commit suicide, spitting on their past struggles and glories."<sup>5</sup>

Everardo Dias, who had been mentioned by name in Manuel Campos's article, took exception to being called "a deserter, spitting on my past," by a man he had formerly considered calm and sensible. Dias's words "for everyone, especially Manuel Campos," appeared in *Voz do Povo* and *A Plebe*. He said that he continued in the libertarian camp, but that, unlike many anarchists, he supported the idea of a transitory dictatorship of the proletariat. He believed a certain amount of discipline and orientation to be necessary for the working classes, "on their certain march to emancipation." Defending the Coligação Social, he described it as "an organism

<sup>2</sup> Florentino de Carvalho, "O Bolchevismo: Sua Repercussão no Brasil," *A Obra* 1, no. 13 (São Paulo, September 15, 1920).

<sup>3</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 285.

<sup>4</sup> *A Plebe* 4, no. 87 (October 23, 1920), tells of "public lectures" by "ex-anarchist Álvaro Palmeira."

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, no. 87 (October 23, 1920). On the same day (October 23) *Voz do Povo* carried José Elias da Silva's letter condemning anarchists who adhered to the new party.

able to bring together all of the various tendencies in which socialism subdivides itself." It was, he said, a school for training members of the proletariat and not a political party.<sup>6</sup>

Otávio Brandão, who was running a pharmacy in Rio, called Lenin a "buffoon" and Trotsky a "coarse officer."<sup>7</sup> He told friends that Álvaro Palmeira was violating all good principles by conniving with bourgeois petty politicians. Palmeira, upset by attacks he felt were made behind his back, issued a "challenge" to Brandão. But Brandão refused to accept it. Among Brandão's reasons, listed in *Voz do Povo* on October 29, 1920, were his opposition to disputes among comrades and his lack of any further interest in Palmeira's views about the social question. "Leave me in peace," Brandão concluded, "because the mission of *Voz do Povo* is not to publish infantile challenges."<sup>8</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira, distressed to find Rio shoemakers attracted to "parliamentarianism," expressed his belief that they were following "a false and dangerous path." But he was careful not to attack their "personal honesty." Instead, he reiterated his own anarchist position. "I remain intransigent in my libertarian point of view and I shall combat, with whatever force I have, the opportunistic, moderate, parliamentarian tendencies that some comrades want to impress on proletarian action."<sup>9</sup>

Anarchist warnings against working with "bourgeois politicians" were heeded by Mâncio Teixeira. In mid-November 1920 he issued a statement saying that he had, until then, been loyal to the Coligação Social in spite of "vague information" about Nicanor do Nascimento's offering to serve on its executive committee, but that now he had decided to withdraw if Nicanor should play any part in the Coligação's affairs. When Teixeira did withdraw, almost immediately after making this statement, Álvaro Palmeira described Teixeira's step as "too tropical."<sup>10</sup> Teixeira, who published *Renovação* after *Voz do Povo* died, found it necessary to deny rumors that his new fortnightly newspaper was connected with the Coligação Social. It "is not even indirectly" related, he wrote.<sup>11</sup>

Maurício de Lacerda did not join the Coligação Social. Bearing in mind

<sup>6</sup> *A Plebe* 4, no. 88 (November 6, 1920).

<sup>7</sup> *Voz do Povo*, October 26, 1920.

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Ao Camarada Palmeira," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 263 (October 29, 1920).

<sup>9</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "A Moção dos Sapateiros," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 270 (November 5, 1920).

<sup>10</sup> *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 281 (November 16, 1920).

<sup>11</sup> *Renovação* 1, no. 2 (Rio de Janeiro, January 1, 1921).

his forthcoming electoral contest in the state of Rio de Janeiro, he announced in a speech at the Centro Cosmopolita that he would be a part of no party other than the Republican party of that state (the Partido Republicano Fluminense). He also said that government persecution of labor leaders would turn labor to acts of terrorism, and he added that terrorism in Brazil was not likely to succeed.<sup>12</sup>

His remarks brought a stinging reply from Florentino de Carvalho, who advocated a violent revolution and who compared the "grandeur of the anarchist cause with the glorious action of the knights of old."<sup>13</sup> In his opinion, Lacerda's partiality to "legal, reformist, electoral action" made his work "more dangerous to our cause than the vandalic action of Geminiano da Franca." Florentino de Carvalho called Lacerda the representative of a political party "which accepts and defends the prevailing political tyranny, the system of private property and capitalist exploitation." Although Lacerda was on the worst possible terms with the federal regime,<sup>14</sup> he was described by Florentino de Carvalho as a "mandarin" of that regime.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 279 (November 14, 1920).

<sup>13</sup> *A Plebe* 4, no. 88 (November 6, 1920).

<sup>14</sup> Mauricio de Lacerda, *Entre Duas Revoluções*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>15</sup> Florentino de Carvalho, "A Lição dos Factos," *Voz do Povo*, November 14, 1920. Earlier, in *A Obra* (July 14, 1920), Florentino de Carvalho declared that Mauricio de Lacerda was "more than any other government functionary, giving outstanding and incomparable services to the state, to the conservative classes."

### 3. A Brief Anti-Bolshevik Flurry

Some anarchists who attacked the Coligação Social for being reformist felt that Russian Bolshevism suffered from the same disease. One of these anarchists—a writer fond of using the words "fundamentally reformist" in describing Bolshevik methods—complained that the Bolsheviks had simply replaced the tsar with a president and caused the revolution to degenerate into a process of introducing reforms.<sup>1</sup>

When *Voz do Povo* featured the translation of an article in which

<sup>1</sup> A. Correia, "A Influencia Bolchevista," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 267 (November 2, 1920).

Charles Rappoport attacked the unrevolutionary behavior of socialists in parliaments,<sup>2</sup> it explained (inaccurately) that the article was "an attack on the Bolshevik thesis." Because of Rappoport's long experience as a militant in France, his "attack" seemed especially important to *Voz do Povo*.

To charge the Russian Bolsheviks with reformism and parliamentarianism was to take issue with the bourgeoisie. To charge them with despotism would mean agreeing with a view of the bourgeoisie. Few Brazilian anarchists cared to do this until November 1920, when it became clear to them that no less a figure than Errico Malatesta agreed with Florentino de Carvalho. Malatesta had declared: "Those socialists—the Bolsheviks, the same Marxists as ever—seek to make a strong, centralist, despotic government."<sup>3</sup> Brazilian anarchists became less willing to be called Bolsheviks than they had been in August.

On November 20 *Voz do Povo* carried a mild article maintaining that Lenin was mistaken in believing that dictatorship and centralism "permit the creation and development of communism."<sup>4</sup> A week later, financial difficulties forced *Voz do Povo* to close down, leaving it up to *A Plebe* to guide Brazilian anarchists—at least until *A Vanguarda* appeared.<sup>5</sup>

*A Plebe's* spirited anti-Bolshevik campaign opened on November 27, 1920, with a prominent article, "For the Anarchist Revolution: Against the Bourgeoisie and against Bolshevism." *A Plebe* explained that anarchist support for the Bolshevik revolution had led to confusion between Bolshevism and anarchism. *A Plebe* added that, "although it is late," the anarchists were at last reacting against the confusion.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Charles Rappoport, "Communismo e Parlamentarismo," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 270 (November 5, 1920).

<sup>3</sup> "A Opinião de Malatesta sobre o Movimento Internacional," *A Plebe* 4, no. 89 (November 13, 1920). Malatesta's interview, written for *El Libertario* of Buenos Aires, was translated to Portuguese and published in *A Comuna* of Oporto, Portugal, and later in *Voz do Povo* and *A Plebe*.

<sup>4</sup> Augustin Hamon, "A Situação Politico-Social da Rússia Bolchevista," *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 285 (November 20, 1920).

<sup>5</sup> Asked why *Voz do Povo* died, Otávio Brandão replied (interview, June 27, 1971) by citing: "(1) official pressure (for example when Albert, king of the Belgians, visited Rio, the police blocked off *Voz do Povo* for four days and arrested hundreds); (2) anarchist tendencies; (3) lack of funds; and (4) divergences." On the other hand, José Oiticica (*Ação Direta*, p. 110) has blamed "dictatorial Russian politics" and has written of "the disorganization of our daily *Voz do Povo*, sabotaged by Astrogildo and the graphic workers."

<sup>6</sup> "Pela Revolução Anarquista: Contra a Burguezia e Contra o Bolchevismo," *A Plebe* 4, no. 91 (November 27, 1920).

*A Plebe's* reaction in December 1920 was to publish sensational anti-Bolshevik stories. Headlines told of "The Bolshevik Terror in Russia" and of "Peter Kropotkin, the Old Libertarian, Reduced to Misery." *A Plebe* explained that when it had received the first news of "the war between the Bolsheviks and anarchists," it had been careful, knowing that the wire services were creatures of the bourgeoisie. Now, however, it printed "an eloquent document against Bolshevism," which it considered dependable, for it was from a Viennese newspaper run by an anarchist. The document described the Bolshevik prisons as "stuffed full of anarchists" and told of the "real terror carried out by Lenin's government against the anarchists and revolutionaries."<sup>7</sup>

In an article written shortly before his arrest and deportation, Manuel Campos declared that "if the government of Lenin orders the disarming of all the anarchists and seeks to strangle—in the recesses of the jails, or with bullets—those who thirst for justice, we declare war on this additional enemy. . . . Forward for Anarchy!"<sup>8</sup>

But the Bolsheviks had their defenders, making it appear, in January 1921, that what remained of the Brazilian labor movement and proletarian press might be damaged by an anarchist-Bolshevik struggle. In Rio one supporter of Bolshevism wrote that anarchism consisted of a multiplicity of conflicting doctrines and would never succeed because it lacked "a chain of transformers operating on a single current."<sup>9</sup>

On March 5, 1921, an early number of *A Vanguarda* carried an article in which Lenin's critic in *Voz do Povo* warned against the "autocratic communism" of the Bolsheviks. He argued that the Communist International sought to intervene so completely in the lives of national parties adhering to it that the European socialist masses could not possibly accept its twenty-one conditions with the intention of executing them honestly.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *A Plebe* 4, no. 92 (December 4, 1920).

<sup>8</sup> Manuel Campos, "A Nossa Atitude em Face da Revolução Russa e do Governo de Lenine," *A Plebe* 4, no. 93 (December 11, 1920).

<sup>9</sup> Correia de Melo, "As Transformações do Anarquismo," quoted in part in article by A. de P. in *O Proletario* 1, no. 34 (Juiz de Fora, January 23, 1921). A. de P. replied that the triumph of anarchism was "never so close at hand."

<sup>10</sup> Augustin Hamon, "A Internacional Comunista de Moscovo e a Sua Autocracia," *A Vanguarda*, March 5, 1921. In July–August 1920, at its Second World Congress, the Communist International listed twenty-one conditions to be accepted by all Communist parties of the world. They called for iron discipline, and made the parties "sections" of the International. The "sections" were to accept all decisions of the Executive Committee of the International and publish all its important documents.



As an indicator of *A Vanguarda's* role, this article could not have been more misleading. Edgard Leuenroth felt that the search for a better path for labor should not be made in a ruinous climate of accusations. He came to feel that if any Brazilian anarchists turned to Bolshevism they would not attack old companions; they would, he expected, behave differently from the European Bolsheviks, who had a socialist background.<sup>11</sup> João da Costa Pimenta was inclined to play down ideological matters if they seemed to interfere with labor unity. *A Vanguarda*, seeking a solid front against the bourgeoisie, became the Soviet Union's staunch defender in Brazil.

After *A Vanguarda* became pro-Soviet, *A Plebe* ceased attacking the Bolsheviks. Instead, it carried articles in which Astrogildo Pereira stressed the need for a careful study of the unsatisfactory situation in Brazilian labor circles. Astrogildo, the "intransigent libertarian" of November 1920, became attracted to Bolshevism early in 1921.

<sup>11</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "Os Bolchevistas," *A Plebe*, no. 196 (November 18, 1922).

#### 4. *A Vanguarda* and the "Traveling Salesman"

On February 6, 1921, Peter Kropotkin died in Russia. Reporting this event on March 17, *A Vanguarda* made it clear that it favored no clash between anarchists and Bolsheviks: it stressed that Kropotkin, in spite of his anarchist views, had helped the Russian "Communist Party, recognizing the preponderant role that the Party played in the social revolution."<sup>1</sup>

While publishing an occasional article praising the fight of Errico Malatesta and Gigi Damiani against the Italian "fascist scum,"<sup>2</sup> *A Vanguarda* dedicated most of its efforts to combatting "the offensive of lies against the Soviets." It displayed a picture of Maxim Gorky above a caption mocking the bourgeois press for having announced his "assassination" by Bolsheviks "in order to furnish steaks for the Chinese who traf-

<sup>1</sup> *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 17 (March 17, 1921).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, no. 31 (April 2, 1921).

fic in human flesh in Petrograd.”<sup>3</sup> After *O Dia* wrote that Soviet Russia was turning to capitalist formulas and processes, *A Vanguarda* exclaimed: “The bourgeois press has not yet exhausted its resources of slander, lies, and defamations against Soviet Russia.”<sup>4</sup> *A Vanguarda* described the Soviet commissars as men of great souls, of intellectual superiority, with honorable and worthy pasts, completely dedicated to revolutionary propaganda.<sup>5</sup>

Everardo Dias, advocate of a transitory dictatorship of the proletariat, used the columns of *A Vanguarda* to hail the Russian Soviets’ “formidable victory” in negotiating the Anglo-Soviet Trade Treaty. The Soviets, he wrote, had succeeded in ending the blockade against Russia and had checkmated the designs of the “reactionary French government.”<sup>6</sup>

In its story about the funeral of Karl Liebknecht, German Communist leader murdered in Berlin in 1919, *A Vanguarda* reported that “the Communist fire spreads all over Germany.”<sup>7</sup> According to *A Vanguarda*, the Communist Republic of Hungary had fallen because the Maximalists there had been the victims of traitors and Jesuits.<sup>8</sup>

Such were the articles being turned out in a room in Brás, behind the shed where João da Costa Pimenta had installed the printing equipment. When *A Vanguarda* was a daily, the room, as described by Afonso Schmidt, was a busy place—except “when midday struck on the wall clock, and typographers, journalists, printers, and helpers left for lunch.”<sup>9</sup>

One day, after the midday exodus, Schmidt was lunching alone in the room, when a stranger, carrying a leather briefcase, entered and asked (in good Castilian):

“Is the owner here?”

“Excuse me but this is a libertarian cooperative and has no owner.”

“I want the person in charge here.”

“Here no one is in charge, because, as I said . . .”

“The oldest one, who has experience.”

“Ah! That is Comrade Edgard.”

Schmidt said that Leuenroth would not return until two or three

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, no. 28 (March 30, 1921).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, no. 31 (April 2, 1921).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, no. 44 (June 16, 1921).

<sup>6</sup> Everardo Dias, “O Accordo Anglo-Bolchevista,” *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 28 (March 30, 1921).

<sup>7</sup> *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 29 (March 31, 1921).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, no. 35 (April 13, 1921).

<sup>9</sup> “O ‘Cometa’ de Manchester,” in Afonso Schmidt, *Bom Tempo*, pp. 350 ff.

o'clock. The stranger, remarking that Leuenroth should look him up about a matter "of greatest importance," left his visiting card on a table. After he departed (losing himself "in the sun-filled street, where workers were eating, seated in shady places"), Schmidt glanced at the card. It showed that the visitor, the representative of a textile firm of Manchester, England, was stopping at a good hotel in São Paulo.

Edgard, Schmidt continues, returned from lunch and, as usual, began cleaning the room. Whenever he entered the office, Edgard took the duster and cleaned the table, carefully blowing, and scraping any spots left behind. Thus, he found the card. After some hesitation, Edgard decided to look up the salesman in the evening, once pages two and three of *A Vanguarda* had been printed and combined with the first and fourth pages, printed in the morning. Then, writes Schmidt, one would hear the first cries of the newsboys: "*Olha, Vanguarda. Jornal dos operários.*"

On the next morning a nervous Edgard Leuenroth came to the room in Brás, used the duster, put papers "terribly in order," and reprimanded Schmidt and a typographer for having used precious newsprint for blankets when they slept on benches in the room during the night. But soon Edgard was more interested in telling Schmidt about his visit to the hotel on the previous evening. The English "salesman" had revealed that he worked for the South American Propaganda Bureau of the Third International and was therefore residing in Buenos Aires; traveling in Brazil, he had been surprised to find no Communist Party there.

"Why don't you found the Partido Comunista do Brasil?" the Englishman had asked Leuenroth.

"Because I am not a Bolshevik," Edgard had replied.

"In that case, tell me who might be able to."

After thinking for a moment, Edgard had named Astrogildo Pereira, saying he lived in Rio.

"It is urgent that I speak with him."

A meeting was arranged. A few days later Astrogildo reached São Paulo's North Station, and that evening Edgard introduced him to the Englishman. "The two understood each other very well."<sup>10</sup> Then Astrogildo returned to Rio to engage in his new work.

From Schmidt's account,<sup>11</sup> the "salesman's" visit to *A Vanguarda*

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Schmidt's account was confirmed by Leuenroth in his last years (see [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 290). But it is not possible to

appears to have occurred when *A Vanguarda* was a daily, between February 25, 1921, and the first few days of April 1921.

agree with Schmidt's statement that *A Vanguarda* was started "around the end of 1921."

A more recent account of this episode is given in Edgar Rodrigues, *Nacionalismo & Cultura Social, 1913-1922*, pp. 403-406. Rodrigues, relying on recollections provided by Leuenroth before his death in 1968 and on accounts given by persons with whom Leuenroth had spoken, states that the "salesman" who met Leuenroth in the São Paulo hotel room was "Ramison Soubiroff, delegate of the Soviet Government to South America" and that his "credentials of delegate of the Bureau of the Communist International for South America" were signed by Lenin. (One might have expected that the credentials of a delegate of the Communist International would have been signed by one or more of the International's officers, such as G. Zinoviev, president, or Karl Radek, secretary. As for the name, Ramison Soubiroff, it is interesting to note that when Nereu Rangel Pestana wrote in *O Estado de S. Paulo* in May and June 1919 he signed his articles "Ivan Subiroff, Delegate of the Republic of the Russian Soviets in São Paulo.")

## 5. Astrogildo Hails the IWW

On May Day 1921 São Paulo workers shouted enthusiastically at a soccer game in the Parque Antártica. Only a few of them went to labor union meetings.<sup>1</sup> Discouraged by this lack of interest, labor leaders were inclined to agree with Deoclécio Fagundes when he said that "a new direction" was needed in labor organization. Fagundes argued that old, anachronistic forms of struggle, concerned with immediate economic betterment, had incurred great sacrifices but produced no results. He wanted a labor movement of wider scope, one that would reflect the "historic destiny" of the social movement, and he wanted labor organizations to become schools of revolutionary education.<sup>2</sup> José Elias da Silva criticized a favorite anarchist principle: the loose, unautocratic federation. It did not work, he said. "No one understands that the federation is supposed to federate."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "A Comemoração do 1º de Maio," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 38 (May 5, 1921).

<sup>2</sup> D. Fagundes, "A Missão do Sindicato Operario," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 37 (April 27, 1921).

<sup>3</sup> *A Plebe* 5, no. 119 (May 28, 1921); *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 42 (June 3, 1921).

Joaquim Pimenta, the northeastern socialist law professor, called for a political party of the workers. He argued that the betrayal of workers by men like Clemenceau was insufficient reason for the working class to flee from the ballot boxes.<sup>4</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira, no admirer of the socialism of men like Joaquim Pimenta and Nicanor do Nascimento, argued against precipitous action.<sup>5</sup> Admitting that new paths were needed, he initiated a series of articles in *A Plebe* and *A Vanguarda* by telling of the organizing congress of the Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern), opened in Moscow on May 1, 1921. There, he said, Russian labor was represented by the Russian General Confederation of Labor, and United States labor by the International Workers of the World (IWW). "Of the great nations, perhaps the only one missing in Moscow is Brazil. But we are there in spirit."<sup>6</sup>

In another article, Astrogildo wrote that in Brazil the labor movement had for over twenty years been characterized by cycles of organization, disorganization, reorganization, and collapse.<sup>7</sup> In still another, he criticized past organizational methods, citing the large number of scattered, unconnected groups and "the general weakness of the federations in the face of the compact and aggressive force of the enemy."<sup>8</sup> "Our force," he wrote, "must be a single one."

When militants met in Rio on May 18, 1921, Leuenroth defended old principles and José Elias da Silva attacked them.<sup>9</sup> Astrogildo Pereira pulled out some papers and, reading aloud, gave a description of the organization of the IWW. He praised it for being "one single, large union of all the workers, with a single secretariat, a single source of propaganda,

<sup>4</sup> *O Combate* 1, no. 1 (Fortaleza, Ceará, June 12, 1921), reprinting an interview with Joaquim Pimenta in *O Rio Jornal*.

<sup>5</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Nada de Precipitação," *A Plebe* 5, no. 120 (June 4, 1921). Astrogildo Pereira, "Problemas de Reorganização," *A Plebe* 5, no. 121 (June 11, 1921).

<sup>6</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "A Internacional Syndical Vermelha," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 40 (May 18, 1921).

<sup>7</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Novos Rumos," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 40 (May 18, 1921).

<sup>8</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Problemas de Reorganização," *A Plebe* 5, no. 121 (June 11, 1921).

<sup>9</sup> *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 42 (June 3, 1921). Leuenroth insisted that the principles themselves were fully correct and that the "general dismantlement of labor organization" was due to "organic error, insufficient resources," and "police reaction."

a single coordinating center."<sup>10</sup> On the same day *A Vanguarda* carried his article explaining of how the IWW grouped twenty-nine great industrial unions into six departments. Astrogildo concluded that the IWW in the United States, together with IWW's that were being organized in Canada, Mexico, Australia, and Chile, would develop into one immense world union.<sup>11</sup>

The IWW suddenly became the great model. It was discussed in labor union meetings.<sup>12</sup> *A Vanguarda* ran a series of articles, calling it "a great proletarian organ" and explaining its objectives and methods. Was the IWW unpatriotic? *A Vanguarda* asked, and then answered the question indirectly by quoting the IWW as favoring "universal fraternity."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 42.

<sup>11</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Novos Rumos," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 40 (May 18, 1921).

<sup>12</sup> At a meeting of the "Revolutionary Vanguard" at the headquarters of the Rio textile workers, "companion Passos explained the methods of organization of the IWW of North America, demonstrating the advantage of the union of all the workers around one single revolutionary banner" (*A Vanguarda* 1, no. 43 [June 9, 1921]).

<sup>13</sup> "Uma Grande Organização Proletaria," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 47 (July 16, 1921). This article cites earlier articles on the IWW.

The IWW was about to reject participation in the Profintern, and collapse (see Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the IWW*, pp. 463-465).

## 6. Astrogildo Attacks the Brazilian Grupo Clarté

Long before the Brazilian proletarian press discovered the IWW, it was publishing releases sent from Paris by another of its international favorites, the Groupe Clarté. With a "small show of pride," in February 1920 *Voz do Povo* declared that "we, coarse workers," give the Brazilian intellectuals the opportunity to learn about this International of Thinkers, or Intellectuals, and, through it, the possibility of rising "above the nauseating swamp of national and nationalistic petty politics."<sup>1</sup> *Voz do Povo* published statutes drawn up in Paris and listed twenty-six thinkers who made up the original Directing Committee of the Groupe Clarté. Headed

<sup>1</sup> "A Internacional do Pensamento: O que É e o que Pretende O Grupo 'Clarté,'" *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 5 (February 10, 1920).

by Henri Barbusse, the list included Anatole France, Charles Gide, Thomas Hardy, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, Upton Sinclair, H. G. Wells, and Stephan Zweig. Soon it was reported that national sections of the group, which had to have the approval of this committee, had been formed in Belgium and then in England, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy.<sup>2</sup>

When the Groupe Clarté met at the Syndical Building in Paris on January 15, 1920, to observe the first anniversary of the assassinations of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, the discussion concerned the establishment of relations with the Third International of Moscow. Charles Rappoport and the other speakers, some calling themselves adherents to the Third International, argued that the French Socialist party should follow the example of the Italian Socialist party and adhere.<sup>3</sup>

In October 1920 Mário Barrel wrote from Paris to "comrade" Maurício de Lacerda, sending him a copy of a book by Henri Barbusse and praising Lacerda's "courageous" defense of international ideas. In a reference to the Groupe Clarté, Barrel advised Lacerda that "in Argentina we have the satisfaction of counting on the support of the eminent sociologist, José Ingenieros, but I think our ideal remains completely unknown in Brazil."<sup>4</sup>

After *Voz do Povo* ceased appearing, *A Vanguarda* praised *A Batalha*, of Juiz de Fora, for telling of "the noble efforts" of Anatole France and Henri Barbusse, who "seek to harmonize, in a sort of International of Thought, all the free intellects in the entire world on behalf of the propaganda of new ideas which will bring better days for men."<sup>5</sup> *A Vanguarda's* readers became familiar with the picture of the nude girl receiving rays from the sun: "This is the emblem of the great universal intellectual organization with headquarters in Paris. Its program is purely communist. It is made up of the greatest celebrities of the world. All cultured nations are represented in Clarté. The only missing one is Brazil."<sup>6</sup>

To remedy this lack, a Brazilian Grupo Clarté was founded by Nicanor do Nascimento with assistance from Maurício de Lacerda, Evaristo de

<sup>2</sup> *Voz do Povo* 1, no. 38 (March 15, 1920).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Letter dated Paris, October 7, 1920, published in *Voz do Povo*, November 3, 1920.

<sup>5</sup> "Os Intelectuaes Mineiros e o Grupo Clarté," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 15 (March 15, 1921), quoting *A Batalha* of Juiz de Fora.

<sup>6</sup> "CLARTÉ: A Internacional Vermelha dos Intelectuaes," *A Vanguarda* 1, no. 13 (March 12, 1921).

Morais, Luís Palmeira, Agripino Nazaré, Everardo Dias, Antônio Correia da Silva, Alcides Rosa, A. Cavalcânti, Teresa Escobar, Vicente Perrota, and Francisco Alexandre.<sup>7</sup> Everardo Dias has written that over thirty persons, some of them labor leaders, joined. Among the Paulistas were Nereu Rangel Pestana, F. de Campos Andrade, Martim Francisco, Ribeiro de Andrade, and Antônio Figueiredo; Pernambucanos included Professors Joaquim Pimenta and Raul Azedo; Cariocas included Leônidas de Resende and Professor Luís Carpenter.<sup>8</sup>

In September 1921 the first issue of the Brazilian group's magazine, *Clarté*, condemned Italian fascism, Argentine nationalism, and South American police forces. It denounced the "malicious elimination of Nicanor do Nascimento and Maurício de Lacerda from the National Congress of Brazil, on account of their advanced ideas."<sup>9</sup>

In November 1921, when Nicanor do Nascimento, Joaquim Pimenta, Everardo Dias, and other Grupo *Clarté* members prepared to form a Partido Socialista Brasileiro,<sup>10</sup> *A Plebe* published Astrogildo Pereira's article, "'Clarté' of Bad Birth" (Nascimento being the Portuguese word for birth).<sup>11</sup> In this article Astrogildo revealed a devotion to iron discipline and a readiness to attack publicly those he considered unfit, which would characterize his future articles in proletarian newspapers.

Astrogildo explained that he had declined Luís Palmeira's invitation to join the Grupo *Clarté*, not because he did not favor having a Brazilian "section," but because of the deficiencies of Nicanor do Nascimento and many of his associates. Nicanor was described as a bourgeois politician who had supported Hermes da Fonseca's administration and Epitácio Pessoa's candidacy, and had later broken with Epitácio for "bourgeois-political" reasons. His "socialism is dust thrown into the eyes of fools."

Astrogildo pointed out that the international Groupe *Clarté* was not a federation of autonomous national groups, but a single organization of sections, all subordinate to the Central Directing Committee, and none able to exist without the authorization of that committee. He maintained

<sup>7</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 106.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108. See also [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 288.

<sup>9</sup> From *Clarté*, September 1921, as given in Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais*, p. 107.

<sup>10</sup> Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais*, p. 109. See also "1º Congresso do Partido Comunista do Brasil," *Estudos* 1, no. 2 (March 1971): 86.

<sup>11</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "'Clarté' de Mau Nascimento," *A Plebe* 5, no. 126 (November 5, 1921).



that "the so-called Brazilian Grupo Clarté" had not received that authorization and would never receive it if the Central Directing Committee were properly informed about the founders of the Brazilian effort.

Astrogildo wrote that Alcides Rosa and Antônio Correia da Silva, former editors of Recife's *A Hora Social*, were two "little chiefs" of the Grupo Clarté who had "descended into ignominy." He went on to condemn other associates of the Grupo. Augusto Leite, he said, "is an authentic scoundrel. A scoundrel and a jackass." José Pereira de Oliveira ("Zé Doutor"), he wrote, "has always been an element of confusionism, disturbance, and intrigue" among the textile workers.<sup>12</sup>

"It is a shame that the initiative of giving support in Brazil to the already glorious action of the Barbusses of Europe and America has come to a standstill in the hands of a Nicanor, a Correia, an Alcides, a Leite, a Zé Doutor."

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## 7. The *Grupos Comunistas*

During the last half of 1921 labor leaders learned that "a great tragedy, a veritable catastrophe," had befallen the Russian people. "Ten provinces in the regions of the Volga and the South—the most fertile in agricultural production—have been scourged by a severe drought."<sup>1</sup> In response, in September 1921 Astrogildo Pereira became secretary-general of the Comitê de Socorro aos Flagelados Russos (Committee to Aid the Russian Victims), the Brazilian wing of a movement that listed Albert Einstein, George Bernard Shaw, and Upton Sinclair among its sponsors. In October 1921, at the height of the campaign in Brazil, Astrogildo's Comitê de Socorro published what it announced was the one and only number of its newspaper, *Solidariedade*. *Solidariedade* carried an appeal to Brazilian workers that had been drawn up in Paris in August by Antônio Bernardo Canelas, supposedly on his way to learn about Russia first hand. The appeal warned that "the Republic of the Soviets, the glory and hope of the universal proletariat, is seriously threatened." The catastrophe, Canelas

<sup>1</sup> *Solidariedade* (editado pelo Comitê de Socorro aos Flagelados Russos), Rio de Janeiro, October 12, 1921.

said, gave the Brazilian workers an opportunity to help—an opportunity they had lacked in the recent past, when Russia had been invaded by reactionary armies and blockaded.<sup>2</sup>

Although Brazilian anarchists engaged in ideological arguments with those who were becoming attracted to Bolshevism, some of them joined the campaign to raise funds for the starving Russians. Anarchist Fábio Luz became treasurer of the Comitê de Socorro.

Professor Oiticica, another who remained faithful to anarchism, was less cooperative. At a fund-raising meeting conducted by Astrogildo at the Rio Union of Bakery Employees, Oiticica and his friends "gave no respite to Astrogildo, making it clear to him that we did not fool ourselves about Lenin, Trotsky, and such 'revolutionaries'."<sup>3</sup>

A few days later Oiticica returned to the Union of Bakery Employees and found Astrogildo at the head of a table, reading some papers to others in his usual quiet manner. José Elias da Silva asked: "Gildo, don't you think it would be best to tell Oiticica what is going on?" Astrogildo agreed, and Elias, using the language of a former sailor, explained to Oiticica: "Now we are on the *exata* (right course)."

"I know. You are Bolsheviks!" After they confirmed this, Oiticica walked out, annoyed that Astrogildo had been carrying on what he felt was "subterranean action, undermining unions, spreading the virus of iron discipline and of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the *exata* of Elias."<sup>4</sup>

As far back as the middle of 1921,<sup>5</sup> a series of meetings of labor leaders had been initiated by Astrogildo Pereira and a few who agreed with him that anarchism was "theoretically, politically, and organically incapable of resolving the problem of directing a revolutionary movement of historic scale."<sup>6</sup> At these meetings, "innumerable documents had been read and discussed; the problems of the world revolution, in the light of events in Russia, had been warmly debated."<sup>7</sup>

After a few months it seemed useless to the supporters of Moscow to continue with the debates. By then participants had assumed either pro-

<sup>2</sup> Antonio Canellas, "Pela Russia!" (dated Paris, August 15, 1921), *Solidariedade*, October 12, 1921.

<sup>3</sup> José Oiticica, "Brandão e Gildo!!" *Ação Direta* 10, no. 115 (March 1957).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> A Comissão Central Executiva, "Nosso Congresso," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 7 (June 1922): 177 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> A Comissão Central Executiva, "Nosso Congresso."

or anti-Bolshevik positions.<sup>8</sup> Astrogildo, who reported that the pro-Bolshevik faction was the larger group, decided that the time had come to act. Therefore he and eleven others, meeting at the Centro Cosmopolita on November 7, 1921 (fourth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution), established the first Bolshevik-oriented "Grupo Comunista" to back the program of the Third International. The founders of this Grupo Comunista do Rio de Janeiro—none of whom had been involved with the Brazilian Grupo Clarté—were Astrogildo Pereira, Antônio Branco, Antônio Cruz Júnior, Aurélio Durães, Francisco Ferreira, João Valentim Argolo, José Alves Diniz, Luís Peres, Manuel Abril, Olgier Lacerda, and Sebastião Figueiredo.<sup>9</sup>

The Rio *grupo* contacted other proletarian centers in Brazil, informing them of the twenty-one conditions for admission to the Third International, and urging that they also form *grupos comunistas*. Thus within the next two months similar groups were formed in Recife (Pernambuco), Juiz de Fora (Minas Gerais), and Cruzeiro (São Paulo).<sup>10</sup> In Recife on January 1, 1922, Cristiano Cordeiro gathered about thirty persons in his home, among them two workers to whom he had given elementary education: José Caetano Machado, the baker, and José Francisco de Oliveira, the coal carrier.<sup>11</sup> After the Third International's twenty-one conditions had been read aloud, Cordeiro asked for a show of hands by those accepting the conditions. All accepted.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 290. Four months after the founding of the Grupo Comunista do Rio de Janeiro, Sebastião Figueiredo wrote that he was an anarchist, adhering to the Third International and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat because he believed centralization and discipline necessary for "the realization of the anarchist ideal" (see "1º Congresso do Partido Comunista do Brasil," *Estudos* 1, no. 2 [March 1971]: 88). In the same article (p. 86) *Estudos* corrects a statement by Edgard Carone to the effect that a wing of the Grupo Clarté organized the Grupo Comunista do Rio de Janeiro. *Estudos* writes that some elements of the Grupo Clarté took the initiative of preparing the organization of a Socialist party, which died before it was born. "As for the other part of the Grupo Clarté, it had nothing to do with the creation of the Grupo Comunista do Rio de Janeiro."

<sup>10</sup> A Comissão Central Executiva, "Nosso Congresso."

<sup>11</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interviews, Recife, October 27, 28, 1967. Other founders of the Recife *grupo* were José Cavalcânti (worker in commerce), José Bezerra da Silva (coal carrier), and Joaquim Francisco (stevedore). See also José Francisco de Oliveira, "O Surgimento do Partido Comunista em Pernambuco e as Lutas da Classe Operária," *Novos Rumos* (Suplemento Especial), March 23-29, 1962.

<sup>12</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interviews, October 27, 1967; October 12, 1968. Cordeiro

In contrast, early in 1922, when Astrogildo Pereira went to São Paulo City to organize a *grupo* there, no more than six people registered for the meeting.<sup>13</sup>

The oldest Bolshevik association in Brazil was the small União Maximalista de Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul. At the time of its organization, November 1, 1918, it had issued a manifesto calling on the workers to emulate the Russian Bolsheviks and to seize what clothing, food, and housing they needed "because they are the products of your labor."<sup>14</sup>

The founder and sustainer of the União Maximalista, which began with about ten members and never grew,<sup>15</sup> was Abílio de Nequete, a man of compassion, an idealist who believed so strongly that no human being should be subservient to another that he refused ever to sit in a shoeshine chair. Nequete was born in Lebanon in 1888 and given the name Abdo Nakt. Turkish persecution of Arabs in his homeland brought him to Brazil in 1903. After earning a living as a peddler in Rio Grande do Sul, he became a barber in Porto Alegre. He named his first son Lenine Nequete and was active during Rio Grande do Sul's general strike of 1919.

Known for his Bolshevik views at a time when the anarcho-syndicalist current was strong among Brazilian labor leaders, and living close to the South American Propaganda Bureau of the Third International, Nequete was named a representative of the Third International. As such he went to Montevideo for a meeting of the South American Propaganda Bureau, and there he was authorized to found the Communist Party in Brazil.<sup>16</sup> After he got in touch with Astrogildo Pereira, the União Maximalista de Porto Alegre became known as the Grupo Comunista de Porto Alegre.

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points out that several left the Communist movement soon after accepting the twenty-one conditions.

<sup>13</sup> *Estudos* 1, no. 2 (March 1971): 83, quoting Afonso Schmidt.

<sup>14</sup> "Manifesto da 'União Maximalista' aos Operários," in *O Ano Vermelho*, by Moniz Bandeira et al., pp. 363-367.

<sup>15</sup> Edison Curie de Nequete, interview, Rio de Janeiro, October 30, 1968.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

## 8. Defining Positions

The self-imposed restraint on published polemics between anarchists and pro-Bolsheviks, begun early in 1921, lasted for over a year. In January 1922, while the truce was still in effect, *Movimento Comunista*, the monthly published by the Grupo Comunista do Rio, carried articles by José Oiticica and Otávio Brandão, who did not care for the Third International. Oiticica told of a "War Plot," and Brandão wrote "In Favor of Famished Russia."<sup>1</sup>

In this January 1922 number, its first, *Movimento Comunista* described itself as the organ of the *grupos comunistas* and explained that its purpose was "to defend and spread the program of the Communist International." It declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat did not imply party domination over the proletariat, but was the "concrete result" of the need to organize against capitalist reaction. Centralization and discipline were praised. "We want centralization by mutual agreement, and by discipline we understand responsibility for agreements entered into." Arguing against fragmentation, *Movimento Comunista* advocated "a united combat front of the proletariat of the entire world under the revolutionary flag of the Red International of Labor Unions."<sup>2</sup>

In the second number of *Movimento Comunista* in February 1922, Astrogildo Pereira forecast the victory of the official candidate, Artur Bernardes, in the presidential election of March 1, 1922, and repeated that the election was of no interest to the proletariat because either candidate would be "president of a bourgeois republic."<sup>3</sup> The author appealed again for a strong united labor organization, "putting aside small personal questions and overcoming doctrinary and sectarian divergences."

The great public debate between anarchists and Communists, as the pro-Bolsheviks called themselves, opened in March 1922 on a high plane that was not maintained. Astrogildo Pereira published his article, "We

<sup>1</sup> José Oiticica, "A Trama Guerrista," and Octavio Brandão, "Em Prol da Rússia Faminta," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 1 (January 1922).

<sup>2</sup> *Movimento Comunista* platform as given in [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, pp. 292-293.

<sup>3</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "O Dever Mais Urgente," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 2 (February 1922): 37-38.

Are Not Afraid of the Debate," in the March 1922 number of *Movimento Comunista*, at the same time that *A Plebe*, with Edgard Leuenroth's name again on its masthead, published a manifesto in which São Paulo anarchists "defined their positions."

With the formation of the Third International, Astrogildo wrote, the European Socialist parties broke up, with the leftist wings joining the new International and the rightists acting as "the mounted guard of the dead body of the Second International." But in Brazil, he added, a "unique" situation existed because the proletarian movement there had been "almost exclusively" under anarchist influence. He said that the "crisis" or "present clamor" had developed because the establishment (planned for late March 1922) of a Communist Party—made up, "almost in its entirety, of elements of anarchist formation"—was forcing "the camps to define themselves." This he found very healthy. Asserting that it would be impossible to coexist amidst confusion that was as "pernicious" as it was misleading, he concluded with an exhortation: "Let us not be afraid of the debate."<sup>4</sup>

The anarchist manifesto, published on March 18, 1922, was signed by Leuenroth, Rodolfo Felipe, Antonino Domingues, Ricardo Cípola, Antônio Cordon Filho, Emílio Martins, João Peres, José Rodrigues, and João Penteadó.<sup>5</sup> It stated that nothing in the principles of anarchism needed revision. Its signers explained that they were anarchist-communists, and that, as communists, they wanted a property-less society "in which work, satisfying the needs of individuals, will be selected by each individual and organized by the workers themselves." As anarchists, or libertarians, they rejected electoral and parliamentary action, "which only serves to reinforce the state" and "atrophy the force" of individuals and groups. Instead, they advocated "direct action," which "tends to arouse initiative, decision, courage, and the spirit of spontaneity, teaching the popular mass to act on its own account, to unite, and live without tutelage."

Past failures were attributed to a "lack of methodical and systematic propaganda and organization." To deal with these deficiencies and to prevent the anarchist movement from becoming "a philosophical discussion of dilettantes roaming through the flowery fields of theory," the São Paulo anarchists urged the immediate formation of libertarian groups,

<sup>4</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Não Nos Assustemos com o Debate," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 3 (March 1922): 69–70.

<sup>5</sup> "Os Anarchistas no Momento Presente; Definindo Atitudes: Aos Anarchistas, aos Sympathizantes do Ideal Libertario, ao Proletariado," *A Plebe* 5, no. 177 (March 18, 1922).



The struggle of the proletariat. (*A Plebe*, March 18, 1922)

which, it was planned, would later join together in regional federations. Past experience prompted the manifesto writers to warn that members of the libertarian groups should be "carefully selected" to avoid the troubles that nonanarchists and *agentes provocadores* could cause.

The manifesto described anarchists as having been "at the front" when capitalism had been overturned in Russia. Unfortunately, it added, the revolution there occurred before the proletariat had been properly organized, and so the Marxists were able to establish the dictatorship of their party and use force to prevent the development of federalist, libertarian tendencies.

The São Paulo anarchists expressed a liking for the Red International of Labor Unions and proposed to support its work of preparing the world proletariat for revolution. But they regretted that unions associated with

it adhered to the authoritarian Third International. They said they would not fight the Third International but would back its revolutionary work and hope that it would find, through experience, the need to reorganize along federalist-libertarian lines.

In conclusion, the São Paulo anarchists expressed solidarity with the Anarchist International Secretariat of Sweden, organized at the International Anarchist Congress of Berlin in September 1921, and with an anarchist international federation expected to be formed in Uruguay.

### 9. Founding the Partido Comunista (PCB)

In February 1922 the Grupo Comunista de Porto Alegre advised the Rio Grupo Comunista of the need to hold a party-organizing national congress promptly, so that the new party could be represented at the Fourth World Congress of the Third International.<sup>1</sup> The Rio *grupo* consulted other *grupos* and then arranged for the national congress to be held in Rio on March 25, 26, and 27.

When the congress met at a labor union in Rio, the movement had seventy adherents throughout Brazil.<sup>2</sup> They were represented by nine delegates from Porto Alegre, Recife, São Paulo, Cruzeiro (São Paulo State), Niterói, and Rio. (The *grupos* in Santos and Juiz de Fora were unable to send delegates.) Besides representing the Porto Alegre Grupo Comunista, Abílio de Nequete represented the Communist Party of Uruguay and the South American Propaganda Bureau of the Third International.<sup>3</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira had been worried about the police—so much so that for a while he had disguised himself with a Nicholas II beard and a cape.<sup>4</sup> During March 25 and 26 he came to feel the need of a safer meeting place, and so on the twenty-seventh the last two sessions were held in his father's house in Niterói, where two of his elderly aunts were living. Cristiano Cordeiro, who was secretary of the congress and therefore bears the minute

<sup>1</sup> A Comissão Central Executiva, "Nosso Congresso," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 7 (June 1922): 177 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Astrogildo Pereira (*Formação do PCB*, p. 46 n.), and *Estudos* 1, no. 2 (March 1971): 89, mention seventy-three members.

<sup>3</sup> *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interview, October 12, 1968.



book in the photograph of the delegates, tells of how Astrogildo urged one delegate to sing "The International" with less gusto in the Niterói home. Astrogildo had not told his aunts what was going on.

The seven Brazilian-born delegates were Astrogildo Pereira, journalist from Rio State, Cristiano Cordeiro, clerk from Recife, João da Costa Pimenta, printer from São Paulo, José Elias da Silva, the Pernambucano who had made shoes in Rio,<sup>5</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, tailor in Rio, Luís Peres, broom-maker in Rio, and Hermogênio Silva, electrician and railroad worker from Cruzeiro, São Paulo State.<sup>6</sup> In 1917 Hermogênio Silva had founded the União Operária Primeiro de Maio, described as "incendiary and dreadful" by the *Correio Paulistano* during the Mojiana strike of 1920.

Foreign-born delegates were Abílio de Nequete, the Porto Alegre barber born in Lebanon, and Manuel Cendon, a tailor born in Spain.<sup>7</sup> Cendon had come to Brazil from Argentina, bringing experience gained in struggles there, and, more important, ideas of Marx, which had been given greater attention in Argentina than in Brazil.<sup>8</sup>

At the meeting on March 25 four matters were placed on the agenda: examination of the twenty-one conditions for admission to the Third International, Party statutes, the election of the Central Executive Commission, and action on behalf of Russians afflicted in the Volga region.

The twenty-one conditions were examined and accepted by all. Party statutes, based on those of the Communist Party of Argentina, were elaborated, discussed, and on March 27 accepted on a provisional basis.<sup>9</sup> They stated that the purpose of the Communist Party, Brazilian Section of the Communist International, was to promote understanding and interna-

<sup>5</sup> Germinal Leuenroth (note of February 1971) lists José Elias da Silva as a teacher of workers in the Federal District. José Elias, who had represented the Aliança dos Trabalhadores em Calçado (shoemakers) at the Third Brazilian Labor Congress (April 1920), is listed as a civil construction worker in "10 Congresso do Partido Comunista do Brasil," *Estudos* 1, no. 2: 89.

<sup>6</sup> Germinal Leuenroth and Joaquim Barbosa, notes, February 1971.

<sup>7</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, introduced to Cendon, said he was pleased to meet a Spaniard "without a Don" (*sem Don*), but it seems that Cendon was sometimes called "Dom Cendon."

<sup>8</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview, November 19, 1970. Barbosa says that when Brazilian Communist intellectuals read Marx, they found confirmation of teachings given them earlier by Cendon. Leôncio Basbaum states (*História Sincera da República*, II, 314) that Cendon was the only delegate without a background in the anarcho-syndicalist movement. Cendon died in 1927 (Otávio Brandão, letter, March 11, 1971).

<sup>9</sup> *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 7.

tional action among the workers and build up a class party "for the conquest of power and the consequent political and economic transformation of the capitalist society into a communist society." The Central Executive Commission, the statutes said, was to consist of five members and five alternates and was to maintain "the most rigorous political control over all the organizations of the party."<sup>10</sup>

*Movimento Comunista* reported that elections to the Central Executive Commission posts took into consideration the residence of each person and were carried out "with a perfect spirit of cordiality."<sup>11</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, who felt that the Porto Alegre Grupo Comunista had "contributed in large measure to the founding of the Party,"<sup>12</sup> suggested that Abílio de Nequete be secretary-general.<sup>13</sup> Although some may have shared Joaquim Barbosa's sentiment that "all that was done to found the PCB was done by Astrogildo,"<sup>14</sup> the delegates accepted Astrogildo's suggestion. Nequete's contacts with the movement in Uruguay and the South American Propaganda Bureau of the Third International were considered important.<sup>15</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira, Antônio Bernardo Canelas, Luís Peres, and Antônio Gomes Cruz Júnior were chosen to work with Nequete on the Central Executive Commission. Cristiano Cordeiro, Rodolfo Coutinho, Antônio de Carvalho, Joaquim Barbosa, and Manuel Cendon became alternates.

Among the youngest were Luís Peres and Rodolfo Coutinho. Coutinho, the Recife student who had helped his cousin, Cristiano Cordeiro, establish the *Círculo de Estudos Marxistas* in Recife, had never been an anarchist. Another youth, the twenty-three-year-old Canelas, was writing antianarchist articles in Paris, where he had gone in September 1920. His election to the Central Executive Commission and selection to represent the PCB at the Fourth World Congress were met with reluctance by some of the PCB founders but were successfully backed by his friend, Astrogildo Pereira.<sup>16</sup> The PCB, lacking the funds to send anyone from Brazil

<sup>10</sup> From statutes, given on page 6970 of the *Diário Oficial* of April 7, 1922, as quoted in [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, pp. 294-296.

<sup>11</sup> *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 51 n.

<sup>13</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interview, October 11, 1968.

<sup>14</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview, November 19, 1970.

<sup>15</sup> Cordeiro, interview.

<sup>16</sup> *Estudos* 1, no. 2: 91.

to Moscow,<sup>17</sup> planned to be represented at the World Congress by Canelas and Mário Barrel, a Brazilian in Paris who belonged to the French Communist Party.<sup>18</sup>

Joaquim Barbosa, twenty-five years old, became treasurer of the PCB. He practiced tailoring at his home and spent evenings organizing tailors and establishing a union section of *costureiras*—women dressmakers who toiled long hours in small shops. Occasionally Barbosa brought the tailors together to fight for economic betterment; artisan in spirit, they were seldom well organized.<sup>19</sup>

Turning to the fourth matter on the agenda, the PCB's founders decided that the Central Executive Commission should work to have more people, regardless of ideologies, serve on the Comitê de Socorro aos Flagelados Russos, already made up of Communists, anarchists, and syndicalists.

Finally the congress voted a series of resolutions, such as those extending warm greetings to the Third International, the Russian revolution, victims of capitalist reaction, comrades of the South American Propaganda Bureau, and comrades of the Communist parties of Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. Before a closing rendition of "The International," a *viva* was expressed for the "union of South American workers adhering to the Communist International."

<sup>17</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview.

<sup>18</sup> *Estudos* I, no. 2: 93.

<sup>19</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview.

## 10. Nequete "Gives Up"

Abílio de Nequete, invariably quoting Lenin and disparaging anarchism, made a poor impression on Otávio Brandão. Nequete, Brandão has said, would introduce himself, "I am Abílio de Nequete, secretary-general of the Communist Party," when calling on militants in Rio. He would ask them if they had read Lenin and would receive a negative reply. He would ask what they were doing. They would speak of difficulties caused by the police and tell of having made strikes, "as never before," from 1917 to

1920. Nequete, interested in the present, often said "you are anarchists," and "you don't do anything."<sup>1</sup>

Rio militants were not, however, so sure that Nequete had done much. Brandão has written that the União Maximalista never had more than six or seven members and "vegetated as a sect, without any repercussion, until it associated itself with the Communist Group of Rio de Janeiro."<sup>2</sup> He points out that Nequete arrived in Rio "without ever having been in jail in Porto Alegre."<sup>3</sup>

It would not have been easy for anyone from the outside to assume the leadership of men who were experienced at dealing with the Rio police. But, in the opinion of Joaquim Barbosa, a new setting was not the only cause of Nequete's troubles. "Nequete," he says, "was enthusiastic, but did not have the qualities to be secretary-general."<sup>4</sup>

On July 5 and 6, 1922, discontented young Army officers (mostly *tenentes*—lieutenants) led an uprising at Fort Copacabana in Rio.<sup>5</sup> This unsuccessful revolt, on behalf of the Army's "honor" and a change in electoral practices, led the government to enact a state of siege, or martial law, in the Federal District and the state of Rio de Janeiro, and to arrest those it considered subversive. Maurício de Lacerda, after telephoning the Supreme Court about the habeas corpus petitions he was forwarding on behalf of journalists and others who were in jail, was himself jailed and held several days.<sup>6</sup>

Nequete carried on as though the situation were normal and the Communist Party legal. When police interrupted a meeting attended by him and a dozen Communists, Nequete said: "I am secretary-general of the Communist Party. I'll answer for these people." Nequete, whose features suggested Syrian origin,<sup>7</sup> gave his name, whereupon a police agent called him a Turk. Nequete considered this an insult and denied it. The police

<sup>1</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 5, 1968; August 30, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Combates da Classe Operária," *Revista Brasiliense*, no. 46 (March–April 1963), p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview, November 19, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> The uprising has become known as the rebellion of "the Eighteen of the Fort." Uprisings also occurred at Realengo Military School and at an Army unit in Mato Grosso.

<sup>6</sup> While in jail, Maurício de Lacerda was elected alderman of Vassouras. Maurício de Lacerda, *Entre Duas Revoluções*, pp. 94–111; Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 168.

<sup>7</sup> Although born in Lebanon, Nequete was known as a Syrian and called himself a Syrian.

agent shouted at him, calling him "a pest of a Turk," and took him off to prison.

On the following day Nequete dropped in at Brandão's pharmacy. "I'm dead," Nequete lamented. The police, he explained, had treated him "terribly." They had told him "to get out of Rio with your tail between your legs" or expect worse treatment.<sup>8</sup> Nequete took a boat to Porto Alegre, and Astrogildo Pereira, who remarked to comrades that "our secretary-general has given up,"<sup>9</sup> was chosen to replace him.

Brandão writes that Nequete was "a charlatan, coward, and braggart (there is proof of this, even in prison)," and that only after he was "expelled from the Party as a traitor" was there "progress in Porto Alegre."<sup>10</sup> Those more sympathetic to Nequete explain that he "drifted away" from the Party, convinced that the working class lacked the force to make the revolution. The revolution, he came to feel, would be made by technicians. Nequete, a poor and kind man of many interests, who often seemed to think a perfect world was near at hand,<sup>11</sup> began writing about technocracy.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 5, 14, 1968; August 30, 1970.

<sup>9</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interviews, October 11, 12, 1968.

<sup>10</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Combates da Classe Operária," p. 75.

<sup>11</sup> Edison Curie de Nequete, interview, October 30, 1968.

<sup>12</sup> Nequete's pamphlet, *Tecnocracia ou o V Estado*, written in 1924, criticized Marx for not having studied "the progress of military technique" (see *Estudos* 1, no. 2: 92).

## 11. The Conversion of Brandão<sup>1</sup>

In June 1919, after coming from Alagoas to Rio, the dionysian Brandão met the serene and beautiful Laura da Fonseca e Silva, a twenty-eight-year-old poetess and the author of four books. In love with Brandão from

<sup>1</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Na Luta pelo Petróleo" (4-page pamphlet); Octavio Brandão, "Combates e Batalhas" (September 1968); Barreto Leite Filho, "A Vida de um Militante Proletário," *O Jornal*, July 19, 1929; A Família de Laura Brandão, "Repatriação dos Restos Mortais de Laura Brandão" (4-page pamphlet); Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 5, 9, 14, 1968; August 30, November 19, 1970; Octavio Brandão, letter, May 30, 1972; Octavio Brandão, "A Poetisa Laura Brandão: Trecho da Biografia."

the start, she comforted the exile from Alagoas and showed him the beauties of Rio. She listened with fascination when he told of his book, *Canais e Lagoas*, published in 1919, and when he spoke of social, scientific, and philosophical problems. Brandão and Laura were married in April 1921.

In his first years in Rio, before he opened his pharmacy, Brandão was often unemployed. He studied, gave talks on petroleum at the Geographic Society and National Library, and wrote verse and prose for the proletarian press.<sup>2</sup> Brandão and Laura, both romantic, set out to fight at the side of the proletariat. Frequently they addressed workers. Laura, in a white-and-blue cape, became a favorite. Workers liked to help her distribute propaganda, and sometimes they protected her from the police.

In 1920 Brandão was disappointed in the Bolsheviks because of what he called the hypertrophy of the government in Russia, the existence there of an army, and the continuing use of money.<sup>3</sup> Brandão was also influenced by great hopes for Nestor Makhno, the Ukrainian anarchist whose forces were attacked by the Bolsheviks, and by dislike of the Coligação Social, whose political ways reminded him of Bolshevism.

When Brandão criticized the Bolsheviks in an article in October 1920, he added: "Certainly those who know me will not confuse my anti-Leninism with that of bourgeois hacks who are paid a certain price for each line they write against the Marxist Mongol. There is a profound difference: they attack Lenin because he is a revolutionary; I attack him because I consider him a defective revolutionary."<sup>4</sup>

Brandão was shocked by the setback suffered by the Brazilian strike movement in 1921. Seeking reasons for the "total defeat," he tried to learn about Marxism. But the people with whom he spoke could not help him.

With the founding of the Partido Comunista in March 1922, Brandão was disturbed by the hatred that old companions came to feel for each other. In speeches at the Union of Civil Construction Workers and in Petrópolis, he suggested a united front of anarchists and Communists. He published his plea in a special number of *Voz do Povo*, issued by the Rio Federation of Workers on May 1, 1922.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> One of Brandão's poems opened with the line: "Between God and Satan, I prefer Satan." An article concluded that "Comrade Christ lacked originality" (see *A Obra*, May 1, June 1, 1920).

<sup>3</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Excesso de Puritanismo," *Voz Cosmopolita* 2, no. 15 (February 1, 1923).

<sup>4</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Relampagos no Chaos," *Voz do Povo*, October 26, 1920.

<sup>5</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, March 4, 1970.

Anarchists rejected the plea. In *A Plebe*, Pinho de Riga described Brandão's ideal as "the conciliation between Marx and Bakunin, between Lenin and Kropotkin, between centralism and federalism." Declaring that Brandão wanted to "conciliate the irreconcilable," he reminded *A Plebe's* readers of the intolerance that Marxists had always shown toward libertarian theories, of the "expulsion" of Bakunin and his followers from the First International, and of the persecution of anarchists in Russia by "Lenin and his henchmen." "To speak of conciliating Lenin and Kropotkin, when the former even prevents the publication of the works of the latter, is the acme of naïveté."<sup>6</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira furnished Brandão with books, all in French, which would answer questions Brandão had been asking about Marxism a year earlier. Among them were *The Communist Manifesto*, works by Lenin, *Terrorisme et Communisme* by Trotsky, and *Chez Lenine et Trotski* by A. Morizet.<sup>7</sup> They convinced Brandão that he and others had been wrong in charging, in October and November 1920, that the Russian Bolsheviks were "reformists."<sup>8</sup>

After reading the books, Brandão came to feel that the Coligação Social had had nothing to do with the Bolsheviks, "the pure Marxists," but had been associated with their adversaries, the Social Democrats and Mensheviks. He decided that the setback of revolutionary work in Russia had been due to insufficient help from European proletariat and to the counter-revolution, made by "tsarist bandits" like Kolchak and Denikin, social revolutionaries like Savinkov, "adventurers" like Wrangel, and the Catholic and Protestant democracies of France, England, and the United States. Brandão also concluded that his own puritanism was dangerous, that the work of Makhno lacked the worth he had attributed to it, and that the hypertrophy of the Soviet state and the creation of the Red Army were sad necessities, without which the revolution would have collapsed. He further reflected that if Red Russia should fall, the "bourgeois terror" would prevail everywhere, and this would mean the extermination of Brandão and his associates.<sup>9</sup>

In a letter to the PCB dated October 15, 1922, Brandão expressed these thoughts and gave his support to Russian Communism. He observed that

<sup>6</sup> Pinho de Riga, *A Plebe* 5, no. 182 (May 27, 1922).

<sup>7</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 1968; Octavio Brandão, "Excesso de Puritanismo."

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Excesso de Puritanismo."

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

the unfortunate person was the one who did not renew his ideology from time to time in accordance with his experience.<sup>10</sup>

During the same month Brandão signed a statement accepting the twenty-one points of the Communist International, a step then required for PCB membership. Astrogildo Pereira dated it November 7, fifth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, and on that day announced to workers that Brandão, "a man worth ten," had joined the Party.<sup>11</sup>

Oiticica and Brandão had been close since meeting in Alagoas, and Oiticica felt that he had helped make a militant anarchist out of the "sincere, independent, and kind" Brandão.<sup>12</sup> In Rio Laura helped educate the children of the Oiticicas.<sup>13</sup> Oiticica blamed Brandão's separation from anarchism on the "sly, poisonous, malign intromission of Bolshevism, carried on, without my knowledge or that of the most conscientious anarchists, by the crafty captiousness of Astrogildo Pereira." Oiticica, bitter, saw a great change in Brandão. "Of independent spirit, master of himself, opposed to orders and submission . . . , he unexpectedly passed over to the servility of the Party, saying amen to the impositions from above and dictating assignments and precepts to his subordinates."<sup>14</sup>

Before the end of 1922, Brandão sent a collection of his published works to Lenin. To *Canais e Lagoas*, another book had been added: *Veda do Mundo Novo*, which called for the spiritual emancipation of the Brazilian people.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, August 30, 1970.

<sup>12</sup> José Oiticica, "Bem Feito," *Ação Direta* 10, no. 113 (December 1956).

<sup>13</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 5, 1968.

<sup>14</sup> José Oiticica, "Bem Feito," *Ação Direta* 10, no. 113.

<sup>15</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Combates e Batalhas" (September 1968). In 1966, during a program in observance of Brandão's seventieth birthday, Radio Moscow announced that Lenin had read the works of Brandão.

## 12. The Schism Harms Labor Reorganization

With the formation of the PCB, *Movimento Comunista* became its organ and exchanged fire with *A Plebe*. Some labor union organs participated in the battle of printed words, but many, like *O Panificador*, pre-



ferred to declare themselves "neutral in the struggle in which the Communists and anarchists are joined."<sup>1</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico*, organ of the São Paulo printers, occasionally quoted Lenin but refrained from attacking anarchists.

Most of the unions had so few members that Astrogildo Pereira spoke of general staffs without troops.<sup>2</sup> To make matters worse, the anarchist-Communist schism sometimes split original unions into two new rival unions. A few unions, which had belonged to the venerable Centro Cosmopolita, sought to set up an overall organization in foods, hotels, restaurants, and bars, independent of it.

In April 1922 the break between anarchists and Communists had not yet reached the point of making it impossible for them to plan together for May Day. Communists, reflecting the United Front thesis adopted by the Third International late in 1921, said they welcomed joint planning. They called on workers to reorganize on the basis of programs that were not sectarian or even associated with ideologies.<sup>3</sup> They pictured themselves as broadminded and practical and said that the excessive puritanism and sectarianism of the anarchists stood in the way of a united labor front. Their work with anarchists in the Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro resulted in a surprisingly good turnout at Praça Mauá on May 1, 1922.

During the May Day speechmaking, Rio anarchists and Communists spoke of Sacco and Vanzetti and José Leandro da Silva. "The persecuted and massacred of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, and Spain" were also remembered. At meetings that evening in Rio union headquarters, Astrogildo Pereira and "the tireless" anarchist, Carlos Dias, gave talks that were considered particularly effective.<sup>4</sup>

Rio's May Day demonstration was described as the "most brilliant" since "that of 1919," and was said to "disprove rumors about a profound schism" in the labor movement.<sup>5</sup> *A Plebe*, particularly proud of the showing by anarchist-led Rio civil construction workers, wrote that the rally at

<sup>1</sup> *O Panificador* 2, no. 10 (Rio de Janeiro, May 20, 1922). *O Panificador* (The Baker) called itself the "Organ Defending the Classes in the Food Sector and the Proletariat in General."

<sup>2</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "A Reorganização Syndical," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 6 (Rio de Janeiro, May 1922); also in *O Internacional* 3, no. 31 (São Paulo, June 1, 1922).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> "O 1º de Maio," *O Panificador* 2, no. 10 (May 20, 1922).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Praça Mauá was one to "satisfy the most pessimistic."<sup>6</sup> Astrogildo Pereira regarded it as "evidence of the increase in temperature that has been taking place for several months in our worker movement."<sup>7</sup>

In São Paulo, where the Federação Operária had gone out of existence a year earlier, the 1922 May Day commemoration was disappointing. Labor leaders blamed the poor turnout on police threats.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, *A Plebe* and its local Communist competitor, *O Internacional*, admitted that labor organization in São Paulo was exceedingly weak. They filled their columns with pleas to workers to join unions and with articles on labor reorganization.

*A Plebe* declared that organization by industries, as practiced by the IWW, had some advantages, particularly in the United States, where great development and easy communication existed; however, it censured the "centralized spirit" of the IWW.<sup>9</sup> Anarchists referred to resolutions adopted at the Third Brazilian Labor Congress to show that a loose federation was to prevail in Brazil. But *O Internacional* quoted the carefully worded resolution about the objective of labor organization, adopted at the same congress, and argued that it was not anarchist. The anarchists, *O Internacional* added, were guilty of "deforming the letter and spirit of one of the wisest decisions of the memorable assembly of the militant proletariat of Brazil, which, while adopting an anticapitalist objective, placed the question on a broad and elevated terrain, without specifying doctrinary philosophical schools."<sup>10</sup>

*O Internacional* was supposed to be the organ of São Paulo "workers in hotels, restaurants, cafeterias, bars, cafés, and similar classes,"<sup>11</sup> and seemed therefore to speak for *A Internacional*. But *O Internacional* had fallen under Communist influence, where it remained, whereas *A Internacional* was split and often had proanarchist directorships, which, from time to time, criticized articles in *O Internacional*.

José Gil Dieguez, editor of *O Internacional*, explained that in choosing to support the program of the Third International he had not abandoned

<sup>6</sup> *A Plebe* 5, no. 181 (May 13, 1922).

<sup>7</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "A Reorganização Syndical," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 6 (May 1922).

<sup>8</sup> *A Plebe* 5, no. 181 (May 13, 1922).

<sup>9</sup> Victor Franco, "Metodos de Organização Operaria," *A Plebe* 5, no. 178 (April 1, 1922).

<sup>10</sup> "Afirmção de Principios do Proletariado do Brasil," *O Internacional* 3, no. 33 (São Paulo, July 4, 1922).

<sup>11</sup> *O Internacional* 2, no. 9 (February 16, 1921).

his former principles. He continued, he said, to favor "the complete realization of the anarcho-communist ideal." But he felt that such a society would not suddenly appear after the revolution, especially with education having long been dominated by capitalists. Therefore he felt the need of a transitional period, with the proletariat in the political supremacy, when capitalism would be eliminated and minds prepared for the evolution of humanity. "If it is necessary not to be an anarchist, in order to work for the speediest advent of complete human happiness, I shall not be an anarchist."<sup>12</sup>

*O Internacional*, Astrogildo's chief organ in São Paulo, campaigned for the organization of a powerful successor to the defunct local Federação. It believed that a meeting of representatives of São Paulo labor unions to settle May Day commemoration accounts would lead to the formation of an overall commission, and it looked forward to propaganda by such a commission to attract workers to unions.<sup>13</sup>

But in July 1922, *O Internacional*, which was directing a barrage against the anarchists, became discouraged by the slow pace of recruitment and by the failure of an overall commission to materialize. It expressed indignation when it found that the culinary workers could not unite. "Completely incomprehensible to us is the attitude assumed by some culinary workers, who . . . seek to set up an association apart."<sup>14</sup>

*O Internacional* blamed anarchists for the split among the culinary workers, and it went on to accuse the anarchists of retarding the labor movement in general. Following the line of the PCB, it wrote that those "who judge themselves puritanic revolutionaries" were using "an infantile logic and an excessively narrow standard" to try to show that "organization by industry could bring irreparable ills."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> José Gil Dieguez, "Definindo-me," *O Internacional* 3, no. 31 (June 1, 1922).

<sup>13</sup> "Pró Organização Proletaria," *O Internacional* 3, no. 31 (June 1, 1922): 1.

<sup>14</sup> "Entre Nós: Attitude Incomprehensível," *O Internacional* 3, no. 34 (July 17, 1922).

<sup>15</sup> Adolpho Braga, "Sem Titulo," *O Internacional* 3, no. 35 (August 2, 1922).



BOOK V: *Anarchists versus Bolsheviks, 1922-1924*

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## 1. Canelas Berates Emma Goldman

With sad surprise Leuenroth had to conclude that the Brazilian Bolsheviks, in spite of their anarchist background, showed the same "antianarchist phobia" as Bolsheviks who were socialist in origin.<sup>1</sup>

The antianarchist attack by the PCB began in April 1922 when *Movimento Comunista* published an article in which Canelas said that the anarchists had supported the war<sup>2</sup> and used "arms to defend the tsar, the king of England, and Poincaré." Canelas added that thousands of anarchists, in order to be "stylish," were saying "stupid things about the Russian revolution, many of them copied from newspapers or traitors."<sup>3</sup> Canelas likened such anarchists to coquettes, who wore short or full skirts, large or small hats, according to what was in vogue.

*A Plebe* replied that the revolution against the tsar had been made by all Russian revolutionaries but that with the Bolshevik takeover it had become a fierce instrument of repression in which the anarchists had become the "preferred victims of the bad humors of Lenin and his henchmen, who

<sup>1</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "Os Bolchevistas," *A Plebe* 5, no. 196 (November 18, 1922).

<sup>2</sup> Kropotkin was among the anarchists who supported the war against the German rulers.

<sup>3</sup> Antonio Canellas, "Os Anarchistas e a Dictadura do Proletariado," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 4 (April 1922): 107-109.

thought, in their dull minds, that simply because they had attained the zenith of power, all flags should be rolled up, all resistance broken, all aspirations muffled."<sup>4</sup>

Writers in *A Plebe* suggested that Canelas, still in Paris, had found the coquettes irresistible. They added that if he had gone on to Russia, as planned, he would have been disappointed, as happened to almost all who went to learn of "the revolution" at first hand.<sup>5</sup> Anarchists cited the case of a French "comrade," Mauricius, who published a book about his unhappy visit to Russia.

In its June and July 1922 numbers, *Movimento Comunista* published two articles by Canelas. In one of them Canelas accused a French anarchist, "poor Jean Grave, living on the moon," of having favored participation in World War I, thus preventing an antiwar reaction by the proletariat, "which surely would otherwise have come without fail after six or eight months of war."<sup>6</sup> Canelas's other article served to warn that publications by the American anarchist, Emma Goldman, were not to be taken seriously. Canelas explained that Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and others, expelled from the United States in 1920, had been warmly welcomed in Russia; but, he added, Goldman and Berkman had demanded "privileged positions" for themselves in the Soviet state and had not received them. Such incidents, Canelas wrote, convinced him that the campaign of the anarchists against Russia's social revolution "was motivated by bad faith, snobbishness, and the spirit of imitation." He further asserted, "As for Shapiro and the others who Emma Goldman says were shot, they are alive and well, thank you."<sup>7</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira scored well by publishing a story from *Umanità Nova*, signed by Sandomirskii, a Russian anarchist, who, as Astrogildo pointed out, felt that anarchists should cooperate with Bolsheviks. But Sandomirskii's story was inaccurate, for it described Berkman and Goldman as ignorant of the Russian language and therefore unable to achieve positions they sought in Lenin's government.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Democrito, "Hontem e Hoje," *A Plebe* 5, no. 179 (April 15, 1922).

<sup>5</sup> Adelino de Pinho and Romeu Bolelli, "Os Anarchistas e a Dictadura do Proletariado," *A Plebe* 5, no. 187 (August 5, 1922).

<sup>6</sup> Antonio Canellas, "Duas Grandes Aberrações" (dateline Paris, May 1, 1922), *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 8 (July 1922): 211 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Antonio Canellas, "Uma 'gaffe' dos Integralistas" (dateline Paris, May 2, 1922), *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 7 (June 1922): 192 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Drinnon (*Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman*, pp. 232-239) states that Goldman and Berkman knew the Russian language and disliked what they saw in Russia.



Astrogildo concluded his article with a "friendly piece of advice to our tremulous anarchists, extemporal vestal virgins of the 'pulchritude of ideals.' Deeply examine your consciences and take good note of the counterrevolutionary character that your blind, unjust, coarse campaign is assuming. Make better use of the columns of your newspaper by *combating* the bourgeoisie, the common enemy, and do not aid the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the Russian proletarian government, the bastion of the world revolution."<sup>9</sup>

In August 1922 *A Plebe* explained that Goldman, Berkman, and Alexander Shapiro never sought to serve the Bolsheviks, although Lenin, remarking "Malatesta agrees with us," did invite them. *A Plebe* quoted Goldman and Berkman as believing that "only a new revolution can save Russia."<sup>10</sup>

A month later *A Plebe* featured Emma Goldman's "How Bolshevism Killed the Russian Revolution." Her observation of the tragic situation in Russia, she said, left her more convinced than ever of the logic and justice of anarchism. "The experience of Russia demonstrated, more than any theory and in the clear light of facts, that all governments, whatever their form and programs, are nothing but a dead weight that paralyzes the free spirit and the initiative of the masses."<sup>11</sup>

In October 1922 *Movimento Comunista* published the translation of an article by Juan Andrade that maintained that anarchists were in Russian prisons not because of their ideological beliefs but because of common crimes: banditry and counterfeiting. "The Shapiro-Berkman-Goldman trio," the translation said, "undertook to discredit throughout the world the government of the Soviets. And their diatribes, outrages against Russia, find shelter in the columns of *Der Syndicalista*, *Freedom*, *Le Libéraire*, *Umanità Nova*, and *A Plebe*."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Os Extremos que se Encontram," *O Internacional* 3, no. 34 (July 17, 1922).

<sup>10</sup> "A Verdade sobre a Russia," *A Plebe* 5, no. 189 (August 26, 1922).

<sup>11</sup> Emma Goldman, "Como o Bolchevismo Matou a Revolução Russa," *A Plebe* 5, no. 191 (September 23, 1922).

<sup>12</sup> João A., "Do Sectarismo à Contra-revolução," *Movimento Comunista*, October 1922.

## 2. Quarreling about Foreign Events

The weekly *A Plebe*, supported from time to time by minor publications such as *O Libertario*, also of São Paulo, contended against *Movimento Comunista* of Rio and three newspapers primarily addressed to workers associated with serving foods: the fortnightly *Voz Cosmopolita* of Rio, *O Internacional*, which appeared every two or three weeks in São Paulo, and (starting in 1923) *O Solidario* of Santos, also published once every two or three weeks. In January 1923 the financially successful *Movimento Comunista*,<sup>1</sup> made up in part of articles issued by the Third International, increased its page size and became a fortnightly instead of a monthly.

Fábio Luz, the fifty-eight-year-old novelist, was the leading anarchist polemicist. In 1919, when he retired with a pension from his Rio school inspector's post, he said that he was "an older brother" among the anarchists, one who, having opportunities to study, would transmit his findings to those who had to earn a living.<sup>2</sup>

In attacking Bolsheviks, Luz was assisted by Leuenroth and Oiticica. Other anarchist critics of Bolshevism were Adelino de Pinho (teacher at the school of a weavers' *sindicato* in Petrópolis), Manuel Perdigão Saavedra (who had returned to Santos from Spain), Adolfo Marques da Costa and Domingos Passos (both influential among Rio construction workers), Antônino Domingues (who had come to Brazil from Spain as a youth), and Carlos Dias.

When top Soviet diplomats joined German diplomats in accepting the invitation of England and France to discuss economic matters at the Genoa Conference in April 1922, Brazilian anarchists described the Soviet diplomats as bowing before the power of gold "like a little dog before a sausage in its owner's hand."<sup>3</sup> But the Brazilian Communist press saw the Soviet delegates to the conference as students of commerce<sup>4</sup> who defended the

<sup>1</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Fábio Luz, "Carta Aberta aos Camaradas" (dateline Rio de Janeiro, July 7, 1919), *Spártacus* 1, no. 10 (October 4, 1919).

<sup>3</sup> *O Libertario* (Edição da "Alliança Anarchista") 1, no. 5 (São Paulo, March 11, 1922).

<sup>4</sup> Lenin quoted by Astrojildo Pereira in "A Conferencia de Genova," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 4 (April 1922).

interests of the world proletariat and watched "the bourgeoisie reveal its complete incompetence."<sup>5</sup>

Lenin, according to an article that Oiticica translated from the French, was so eager to attract foreign capital to Russia that he instituted his "New bourgeois Economic Policy" and contemplated recognizing foreign debts incurred by the tsars.<sup>6</sup> However, Antônio Canelas advised the Brazilian proletariat not to worry about "insignificant" concessions being offered by the Soviet government to foreign capitalists. They represented, he wrote, no peril to the development of communism in Russia because the proletariat, in control of Russian political power, could annul the concessions whenever it wanted.<sup>7</sup>

*A Plebe*, which likened Russia to a mother devouring her children,<sup>8</sup> wrote that Makhno had incurred "all the Bolshevik hates and furies" because he had worked for anarchist principles.<sup>9</sup> *Movimento Comunista*, overlooking that Makhno had helped the Red Army defeat the Whites and had tried to bridle the anti-Semitism of his Ukranian peasant followers,<sup>10</sup> described him as "a common delinquent," a killer of Jews, and "the faithful and conscious servant of the white guard of the bourgeoisie."<sup>11</sup>

Adelino de Pinho praised *Au Pays des Soviets*, the book in which Mauricius told of being jailed in Moscow.<sup>12</sup> Astrogildo Pereira's criticism of the book's composition, methodology, and subjectivism appeared in *O Internacional* and may have been too highbrow for the *garçons* (waiters). He was even able to quote some lines by the French anarchist, Jean Grave, to support Trotsky's suspicion that Mauricius might have been a secret agent of the French government.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The Executive Committee of the Communist International, "Os Ensinamentos da Conferencia de Genova," *O Internacional* 3, no. 37 (September 13, 1922).

<sup>6</sup> Francis Delaisi and R. Chenevier, "O Ouro Bolchevista em França" (*Le progrès civique*, November 19, 1921), translated by José Oiticica and published in *O Libertario* 1, no. 5 (March 11, 1922).

<sup>7</sup> Antonio Canelas, "A Política das Concessões," *Movimento Comunista* 2, nos. 18, 19 (March 10, 25, 1923).

<sup>8</sup> Democrito, "Os Infames Processos," *A Plebe* 5, no. 199 (December 30, 1922).

<sup>9</sup> "Makhno," *A Plebe* 6, no. 210 (May 26, 1923).

<sup>10</sup> Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 216.

<sup>11</sup> João A., "Do Sectarismo à Contra-revolução," *Movimento Comunista*, October 1922.

<sup>12</sup> Adelino de Pinho, review of *No País dos Soviets: Nove Mezes de Aventuras* by Mauricius, *A Plebe* 5, no. 189 (August 26, 1922).

<sup>13</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Sobre o Livro de Mauricius," *O Internacional* 3, no. 40 (October 26, 1922).

After Adelino de Pinho wrote that Jean Grave's charge should not be taken seriously, Astrogildo told his readers that Grave's attacks on the Communists had been quoted by anarchists throughout the world.<sup>14</sup> Adelino de Pinho then reminded Astrogildo that Grave constantly "aimed poisonous arrows" at Mauricius because Mauricius, unlike Grave, had opposed the French war effort.<sup>15</sup>

The Brazilian proletarian press turned to Uruguayan publications for ammunition. In Uruguay itself, *A Plebe* complained, the Comité Pro Unidad Obrera, "a Communist organization," had "carried out an act of treason" by using the name of the anarchist-controlled Federación Obrera Regional Uruguaya (FORU) to obtain government permission to hold the 1922 May Day rally.<sup>16</sup>

*O Internacional's* issue of August 22, 1922, published the translation of an interview that José Torralvo, an Argentine admirer of Bolshevism, had given to *A Batalla* of Montevideo. Torralvo expressed a view dear to Communists: old-time "sectarian" anarchism was "comparable to Christian cosmogony"; like "any positive religion," it was lost in its nebulous faith, completely removed from the attributes of man and society. "The metaphysics of the doctrine of anarchism is a kind of myth attached to a vague hope of religiousness, which has no foundation in human realities." Torralvo said that, as this metaphysics made it impossible for anarchism to take hold of the revolutions generated by the war, the role of anarchism had come to be one of combating social revolutions, such as the Russian revolution.<sup>17</sup>

Justifying the combat of Bolshevism, *A Plebe* published the translation of a speech by Fedor Machanowskii, which had appeared in *El Obrero en Madera* of Montevideo. According to the speech, given before the Petrograd Revolutionary Tribunal on December 13, 1922, most of the Russian

<sup>14</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Um, Dois, Tres," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 13 (December 1922): 359-361.

<sup>15</sup> Adelino de Pinho, "Sobre o Livro de Mauricius," *A Plebe* 5, no. 201 (January 27, 1923).

<sup>16</sup> Miguel Silveti, "Notas do Uruguay," *A Plebe* 5, no. 187 (August 5, 1922). Robert Alexander (*Communism in Latin America*, p. 137) describes the F.O.R.U. as "under Anarchist control"; he describes the Comité Pro Unidad Obrera as established by "many unions which were opposed to doctrinaire Anarchism" and as one in which "the Communists were a minority group."

<sup>17</sup> José Torralvo, "No Campo das Doutrinas: Uma Enquête de Actualidade: A Discussão do Anarchismo," *O Internacional* 3, no. 36 (August 22, 1922), translation of interview given to the editors of *La Batalla* (of Montevideo) at Santa Fé, July 1922.

anarchists lost their lives defending the Russian revolution "against the assaults of the counterrevolutionaries and white guards," and those who returned found their organizations and press destroyed by the Bolsheviks. Machanowskii said that in 1920, after many anarchists had been shot, jailed, or exiled, the Russian anarchists broke with the Bolshevik government, which "like any government, afraid of criticism of its dishonest conduct, seeks to deprive human beings of the right to express their opinions."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Fedor Machanowsky, "Enfrentando os Juizes Bolchevistas," *A Plebe* 6, no. 210 (May 26, 1923). See also Fedor Machanowsky, "Ante los Jueces Bolchevistas," *El Obrero en Madera* 5, nos. 23, 24 (Montevideo, May 1923). Machanowskii's defiant speeches before the Petrograd Revolutionary Tribunal are mentioned in Avrigh, *Russian Anarchists*, p. 234.

### 3. Astrogildo Ridicules Fábio Luz

Astrogildo Pereira described Leuenroth as indignantly raising his hands to his head and crying "disloyal!" upon discovering that the translation of Juan Andrade's article in *Movimento Comunista* mentioned *A Plebe* among the international "diatribe"-publishing anarchist newspapers although the Spanish original had not included its name. "Disloyalty against whom?" Astrogildo asked.<sup>1</sup>

The charge of disloyalty was often made by Leuenroth, who could not forget that the Brazilian Bolsheviks, "now more papal than the popes of the Kremlin," had recently been libertarians.<sup>2</sup> Leuenroth charged "Gildo" not simply of "disloyally" failing to consult Andrade about the addition, but also of "a greater disloyalty, a conscious, and for this reason, irritating one: . . . The allegation that we are counterrevolutionaries because we continue to be anarchists is positively disloyal."<sup>3</sup>

Fábio Luz replied to the article in which Astrogildo, "in a friendly

<sup>1</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Um, Dois, Tres," *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 13 (December 1922): 359-361.

<sup>2</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "Pruridos Anti-anarchicos," *A Plebe* 6, no. 238 (May 31, 1924).

<sup>3</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "A Phobia Anti-anarchica dos Bolchevistas," *A Plebe* 5, no. 201 (January 27, 1923).

piece of advice," had asked the anarchists to note the counterrevolutionary nature of their campaign. Referring to Sandomirskii, whom Astrogildo had quoted, Luz wrote that "the anarchists who adhered to Bolshevism had the same *firm* convictions as the present supporters of authority and dictatorship here in Rio, supporters who, until recently, insisted on calling themselves anarchists; they were the ones Lenin well described as radishes—red on the outside and white inside. Good herd sheep."<sup>4</sup> Luz added that Astrogildo (whom he called "turncoat," "ex-comrade," "dictatorial," and "shepherd of the flock") "sent us, out of kindness, paternal advice. . . . We are thankful for the good intentions, but long ago we freed ourselves from tutors and orienting Pharaohs; we do not have, nor do we want, professorial masters. He can . . . use his bishop's staff for his congregation. . . . We ask the adviser to examine his conscience and see whether he is in the position of having thrown the first stone at us. We did not make an alliance with the bourgeoisie. . . . We do not have registered statutes."

In another article Luz wrote about Astrogildo's job in a department of the "plutocratic-republican-bourgeois government." "From the time when he was sucking the teat of the state, in the stable of the National Treasury, there remained on his lips a good liking for the milk." Luz also expressed the hope that "this imprudent controversy" would not put him "in danger of the guillotine" when Astrogildo's dictatorship became established, for he wanted to observe the "scribblers" at their new jobs: drawing up legal documents. "Fortunately one of the top-ranking Bolsheviks has assured me that, as a testimony of the magnanimity of the rulers, my head will not be cut off."<sup>5</sup>

In his reply, "Senilities of Fabian Anarchism,"<sup>6</sup> Astrogildo wrote that Luz, "with all those unctuous manners that he has as titular bishop, is, much to the contrary of appearances, a man of bad liver, acrimonious and cantankerous, and he goes around now furious at us, the Communists, the unfortunate ones expelled from the Holy Anarchy of God, of whose church he is supreme spiritual chief here in Brazil." Astrogildo added that "the papal bulls of excommunication of His Eminence," instead of reforming him, amused him, "for which I thank him very sincerely, for how rare are amusing things in this sad life. *Tante grazie, Monsignor!*"

It amused Astrogildo to find Luz, a man he described as lacking origi-

<sup>4</sup> Fabio Luz, "Similia Similibus," *A Plebe* 5, no. 188 (August 12, 1922).

<sup>5</sup> Fabio Luz, "Rabanetes: Um Bayard—sans peur et sans reproche" (dateline Rio de Janeiro, September 11, 1922), *A Plebe* 5, no. 191 (September 23, 1922).

<sup>6</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Senilidades do Anarchismo Fabiano," *O Internacional* 3, no. 39 (October 5, 1922).

nality, trying to show some spirit by describing the Communists as radishes—using the very term that Lenin had used to characterize the revolutionariness of the anarchists. The revolutionariness of “the venerable Fábio Luz,” Astrogildo wrote, “did not even reach that of a radish. His revolutionariness, vegetarianism, humanism, ‘conciliation of the classes,’ has no defined or definable color.” Its color was likened to that of a fleeing jackass.

Astrogildo explained that, in presenting the friendly advice, he had in mind anarchists at whose side he had fought for over ten years—but not Fábio Luz, “so compassionately interested in the fate of poor little suffering members of the bourgeoisie, threatened by the proletarian scourge,” who “disdains and jeers at my friendly advice,” and “who now goes on to multiply the remains of his senile activity.”

As for Luz’s “venerable figure,” Astrogildo said he had never seen it “in the labor and libertarian struggles in Brazil during the last twelve years.” “Only by mistake could the venerable philanthropist and social-pacifist militate in the revolutionary ranks. Why does he not enroll in the Legion of the Founders of the New Temperance, in the Institute to Protect and Help Infants, in the Vegetarian League, in the Society for the Protection of Animals? There he would be in his true post of knight-errant of humanity in general. The right man in the right place.”

Astrogildo felt that Luz’s “piece of nonsense that ‘We do not have registered statutes’ ” reflected puerility or senility, for Luz himself had registered and legalized his home, his children’s names, and his contracts. In conclusion Astrogildo said he did not have time to comment fully on what Luz had written: “I am not a retired, pensioned officeholder, and I have to earn a living.”

“Uma Comédia,” written by Astrogildo for what turned out to be the last issue of *Movimento Comunista*, that of June 10, 1923, described “a solemn session, promoted by the puritans of intransigent superanarchism, who militate in the Livraria Garnier and in the Construção Civil.”<sup>7</sup> At this session, Astrogildo wrote, the “venerable and venerated” Dr. Fábio Luz,

<sup>7</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, “Uma Comédia,” *Movimento Comunista* 1, no. 24 (June 10, 1923). Livraria Garnier, bookstore and “the great publishing house” of the end of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century, “marked a phase in the history of Brazilian literature.” Garnier published the works of many famous authors, and the bookstore, located in Rua do Ouvidor, was a meeting place for intellectuals and prominent figures of the era (see Nelson Werneck Sodré, *A História da Imprensa no Brasil*, p. 238; and Francisco de Assis Barbosa, *A Vida de Lima Barreto*, p. 156).

"a convinced 'general welfarist'," introduced Dr. Pontes de Miranda, "his colleague of the social battles that are fought daily at the *Livraria Garnier*," to civil construction workers. Pontes de Miranda had represented the Brazilian government at a conference in Chile, and was introduced as the bearer of a "message from the workers of Chile to the workers of Brazil."

According to Astrogildo, Pontes spoke much about himself and his legal studies and called himself "an authentic proletarian, proud to be one, living always and exclusively on his salary. . . . His eminent lordship next expressed the most ardent faith in democracy, whose worthy and devoted servants are President Bernardes and Foreign Minister Pacheco, 'both men made by their work' (Pontes's actual words). 'Both came from where you are, because the president began his career as a worker in commerce, and Felix Pacheco was a newspaper proofreader.'" ("What an honor for the proletarian family!" Astrogildo observed.)

After Dr. Pontes de Miranda delivered the friendly message from the *Asociación de Cuadros Artísticos Obreros de Chile*, which described Pontes de Miranda as an "illustrious thinker and sociologist," Adolfo Marques da Costa, a leader of the Brazilian Union of Civil Construction Workers, interrupted to point out that his union was anarchist and he wanted to know the orientation of the Chileans who had sent the message. Astrogildo described what followed:

In view of Dr. Pontes's inability to answer the question, Dr. Fábio, the intransigent anarchist, acted as intermediary and pointed out that the *Construção Civil* had condescended to receive in its midst a bourgeois like Dr. Pontes.

"Bourgeois, no! I am as proletarian as any of you. I am a wage earner!"

"Excuse me, I didn't mean to offend—."

Dr. Pontes emphasized with a delicious smile:

"I am as bourgeois as my friend here, Dr. Fábio Luz."

The venerable Dr. Fábio Luz did not like the comparison and, red like a radish, stammered:

"The bourgeois—it is you!"

Dr. Miranda shouted, somewhat angered and with an air of self-righteousness:

"You must understand that I, alone, with my books, have done much more for the workers of Brazil than all of you here put together!"

"This is not so!" replied the chief of intransigence.

"But I can prove it."

The wise men's squabble was beginning to degenerate. Marques da Costa, distressed, in a cross fire, wanted to continue but was unable. Dr. Fábio then had a good solution, conciliating spirits at the cost of the Bolsheviks.



"What I mean," he explained, "is that the Bolsheviks affirm that I am an authentic bourgeois—and in this sense you also are a bourgeois."

"Ah! Good!"

And everybody understood one another in a new small united front against Communism.

Astrogildo remained at the meeting long enough to hear the infirm Florentino de Carvalho make some remarks in a feeble voice. These he reported as follows: "Florentino does not permit any kind of dictatorship, even the proletarian one against the bourgeoisie: liberty should be for the whole world and its father. And if liberty should be for all, including the members of the bourgeoisie, they must fight for its coming. Indeed because—he adds—the proletariat is impotent! (Florentino's actual words). Therefore let the bourgeois Dr. Pontes de Miranda be welcome in the libertarian ranks, etc., etc.

"The spectacle was over. . . . What a comedy."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The meeting described by Astrogildo Pereira took place on April 29, 1923. On May 13, 1922, *A Plebe* had written: "Some time back, in Number 4 of *Renovação*, Fábio Luz published an article in which he declared himself an authentic bourgeois, and, priding himself on his libertarian ideas, claimed the right that all have to be anarchists, and protested against the privilege claimed by proletarian classes of being the only ones to be considered anarchist. The notable revolutionary novelist is entirely right in considering anarchism open to all men of good faith, and the social problem one which interests everybody."

#### 4. Canelas in Moscow

Antônio Bernardo Canelas went alone from Paris to represent the PCB at the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow late in 1922.<sup>1</sup> At the congress, which ratified the Kremlin's policy

<sup>1</sup> According to an anti-Canelas article in *Estudos* (1, no. 2 [March 1971]), the PCB was supposed to have been represented by Canelas and Mário Barrel, a Brazilian resident of Paris who militated in the French Communist Party, but Canelas "double-crossed" Barrel and went alone. The report of the Credentials Committee of the Fourth Congress said that the Communist Party of Brazil had about 500 members (twice the correct figure); it stated that "in the case of Brazil, . . . one delegate was invited, one has come, and has been admitted with the

of united fronts (especially with the European Socialist parties), Trotsky and other Russian leaders, concerned about the many Freemasons in high places in the crisis-torn French Communist Party,<sup>2</sup> resolved to "declare an implacable war" against Freemasonry.<sup>3</sup>

Canelas, who had been interpreting documents for the Argentines (due to his knowledge of French), believed that the Argentine group, which included Rodolfo Ghioldi, opposed prohibiting Freemasons from belonging to Communist parties.<sup>4</sup> He himself opposed such a prohibition. Knowing Cristiano Cordeiro and Everardo Dias to be Freemasons,<sup>5</sup> Canelas wrote in *Bolshevik*, organ of the Communist International, that the PCB had "some good Masonic comrades, whose revolutionary action within Masonry is notable and well-known."<sup>6</sup> *Bolshevik* was the publication Trotsky had used to present his anti-Masonry position.

During a discussion Canelas is said to have "corrected" a thesis of Lenin,<sup>7</sup> with the result that Trotsky—who felt that the Communist parties of South America were full of anarchists—dismissed Canelas's observations with a cutting remark about anarchism, "the phenomenon of South America."<sup>8</sup>

Canelas could not remain quiet when the chairman of the Twenty-ninth Session of the Fourth World Congress submitted the "proposition by the Presidium not to open a debate on comrade Trotsky's report on the French question"—that is, the appointment of the new Executive Committee members of the French Communist Party. Although the chairman went on

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right to vote." Altogether, 350 delegates from 61 countries were invited (see *Bulletin of the IV Congress of the Communist International*, no. 13 [Moscow, November 23, 1922]).

<sup>2</sup> Jules Humbert-Droz, *Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz: I, Origines et débuts des partis communistes des pays latins (1919-1923)*, pp. 391-399 and nn.

<sup>3</sup> Leon Trotsky, speech at the Twenty-eighth Session of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, given in *Bulletin of the IV Congress of the Communist International*, no. 28 (December 8, 1922).

<sup>4</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, March 11, 1971; Cristiano Cordeiro, letter, September 20, 1971.

<sup>6</sup> *Estudos* 1, no. 2 (March 1971): 94.

<sup>7</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968. See also Cláudio Kuck, "O Brasileiro Ho: A Longa Viagem do Marinheiro Ho ao Vietname," *O Cruzeiro*, September 14, 1968, p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 407; Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968.

to say that the French question had been discussed "at great length" in the appropriate commission, and that in the congress Trotsky's "elucidation" had been so complete that nothing could be "contributed by the other delegations," Canelas objected. He argued that the "French question" had not been "sufficiently debated" at the congress, that the congress had been given a "one-sided and colored" view, and that some delegates, whose opinions differed from those of the Presidium, had not had a chance to express their ideas. After Canelas announced that the Brazilian delegation would vote against the Presidium, the Presidium's proposition (not to open the debate) "carried unanimously with one opposing vote."<sup>9</sup>

Trotsky then took the floor to urge acceptance of the list of the new Executive Committee members of the French Communist Party, as proposed by "the commission that aided the French delegation in working out" the list. The motion was carried almost unanimously: one delegate abstained; two delegates—Canelas and a delegate from France—voted against it.<sup>10</sup>

In December 1922 the Communist International's Executive Committee issued a report stating that the PCB was not yet a true Communist Party. "It contains residues of the bourgeois ideology, residues sustained by the presence of Masonry and influenced by anarchist preconceptions, which explains the decentralized structure and the confusion about Communist theory and tactics."<sup>11</sup> Canelas was found "not yet free of the ideological confusion reigning in his Party."<sup>12</sup> The International therefore ruled that the PCB be accepted provisionally into the International as a "sympathizing party" and that it learn from the South American Propaganda Bureau of the Third International how to improve itself.

Canelas's written reply to the International's Executive Committee spoke of the "atrocious errors," "nonsense," and "unwarranted judgments" in its report and proposed that the report be modified so that the International not lose prestige among Brazilians.<sup>13</sup>

"The revolutionary workers in Brazil," Canelas wrote, would find the report's reference to "the presence of Masonry" nothing more than "a reason for hilarity." Explaining now that only three Masons belonged to the PCB, he said that they could easily be put out of the Party. Canelas

<sup>9</sup> *Bulletin of the IV Congress of the Communist International*, no. 29 (December 8, 1922).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Estudos* 1, no. 2 (March 1971): 93, 95.

<sup>12</sup> Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, p. 408.

<sup>13</sup> "O Relatório Canelas," in *O Ano Vermelho*, by Moniz Bandeira et al., appendix, pp. 407-418. See especially p. 410.

called the South American Propaganda Bureau of the Third International a "myth" and suggested that he remain in Moscow to clear up misunderstandings.

But the Central Executive Commission (CEC) of the PCB felt that Canelas, who had joined the Party *in absentia*, did not know much about the Brazilian Party,<sup>14</sup> and believed that he should engage in a self-criticism instead of a criticism of the Communist International. The PCB called him back to Brazil. It also took steps requiring Party members to choose between Masonry and the Party.<sup>15</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro and Everardo Dias, the only Masons found within the PCB, chose the Party.<sup>16</sup>

On June 6, 1923, the CEC adopted a resolution that denied the influence of "masonic-bourgeois ideology" in the Party. The resolution asserted that the prominent Party members were totally free of anarchist prejudices, had done their best to give a Communist education to other members, and were presently distributing *Programa Comunista*, the translation of a work by Bukharin.<sup>17</sup> As for the Party's structure, the resolution said that the PCB followed the Argentine model and sought as much centralization as possible, taking Brazil's geography into consideration. The resolution concluded that the Executive Committee of the Communist International had been misled by incomplete and false information and by Canelas's erroneous attitudes and opinions. It added that the CEC looked forward to the visit of an Argentine participant at the Fourth World Congress, who was to advise the International about the PCB.

Otávio Brandão, in charge of studying a report that Canelas submitted about his recent skirmish, concluded at a CEC meeting that, although Canelas had meant well, he had not represented the PCB. At long discussions, held at night by PCB leaders, Canelas went into hysterical fits,<sup>18</sup> and in May 1923 he dramatically walked out of a meeting where he was being criticized.<sup>19</sup> After his suspension from his CEC post in September 1923, he attacked Brandão and other PCB leaders in a daily newspaper,

<sup>14</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968.

<sup>15</sup> *Estudos* 1, no. 2 (March 1971): 94.

<sup>16</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, March 11, 1971. Apparently Everardo Dias, who held no directive post in the PCB, was given some time in which to sever his relations with the Masonic Order (see *Estudos* 1, no. 2 [March 1971]: 94, 96).

<sup>17</sup> *Estudos* 1, no. 2 (March 1971): 95.

<sup>18</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 9, 1968; Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968.

<sup>19</sup> Edgard Carone, *A República Velha: Instituições e Classes Sociais*, p. 329; Octavio Brandão, interview, December 9, 1968.



Benjamim Mota, lawyer and director of the first phase of the anticlerical *A Lanterna*. (Kindness of Germinal Leuenroth)



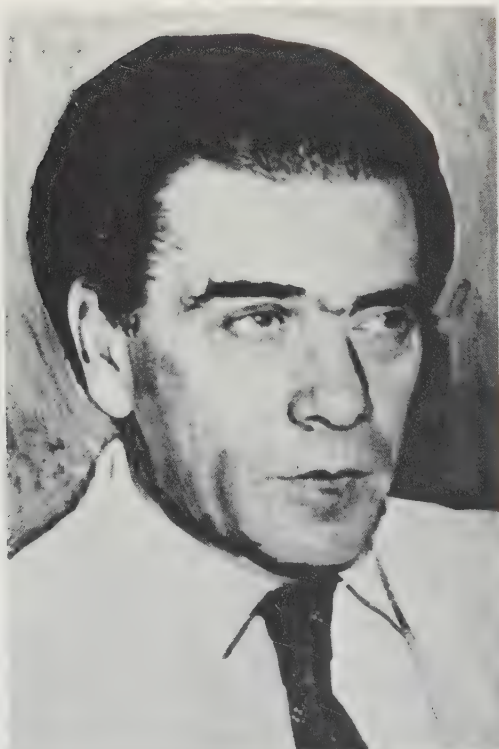
Everardo Dias, director of the anticlerical *O Livre Pensador*. (Kindness of Eponina Dias Alcoforado)



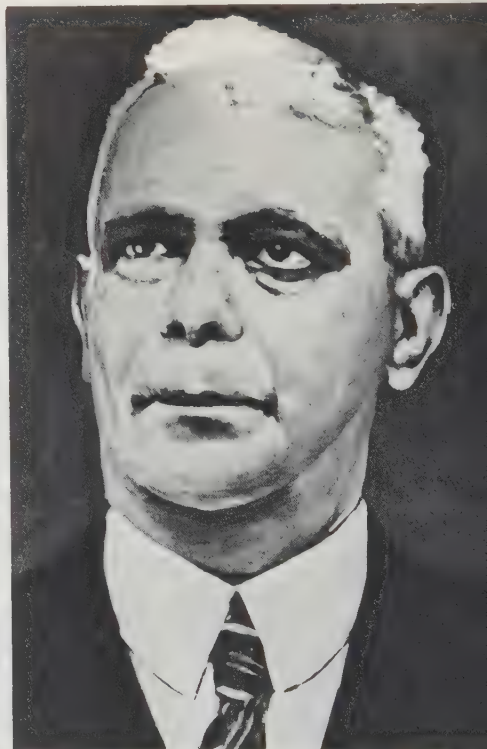
Publishing a proletarian newspaper. Rodolfo Felipe, anarchist, *standing in the center* (appearing as the tallest). (Kindness of Germinal Leuenroth)



The speakers' table at the Centro Cosmopolita in Rio de Janeiro during the opening session of the Second Brazilian Labor Congress, September 1913. (Edgar Rodrigues, *Socialismo e Sindicalismo no Brasil*)



Professor José Oiticica, anarchist director of *Spártacus*. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Fábio Luz, novelist and anarchist. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Fábio Luz. (*Cenit*)



Agripino Nazaré, lawyer in Bahia. Nazaré turned from anarchism to socialism. (*Correio da Manhã*)



José Oiticica, seated, fifth from left, at a meeting. (*O Globo*) .



Evaristo de Morais, 1918. This lawyer and writer in the Federal District defended members of the proletariat and helped found a Socialist Party. (*Manchete*)



Gigi Damiani, holding a child. (*A Plebe*)



Joaquim Pimenta, socialist law professor in Recife who played a leading role in the settlement of the Recife general strike of 1919. (*O Globo*)



The *Curvello*, on which Florentino de Carvalho and other anarchists were deported despite the efforts of Evaristo de Morais. When the ship called at Recife, Florentino de Carvalho and two others escaped by jumping into a basket used for hoisting fish aboard the *Curvello*. They were re-arrested in Recife. (*Correio da Manhã*)





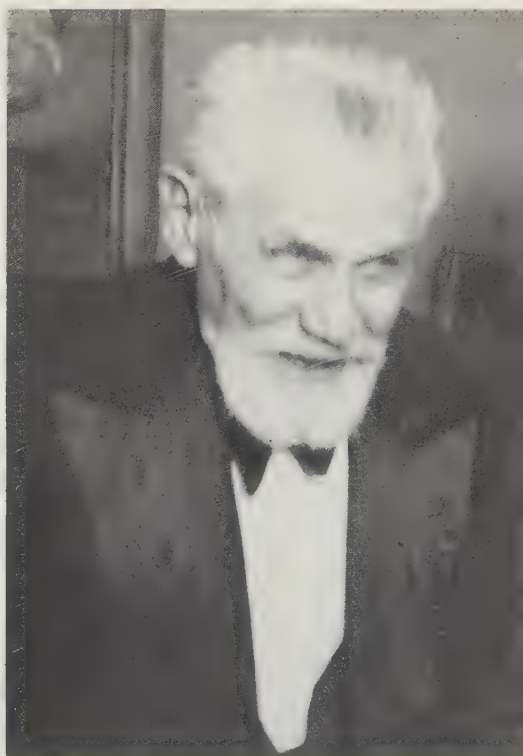
Novelist Afonso Schmidt, *left*, and anarchist Edgard Leuenroth. (Kindness of Germinal Leuenroth)



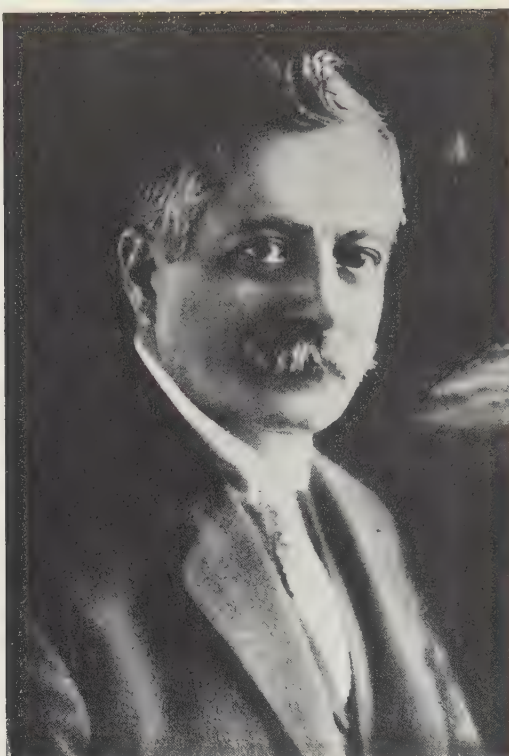
Congressman Maurício de Lacerda. (*Jornal do Brasil*)



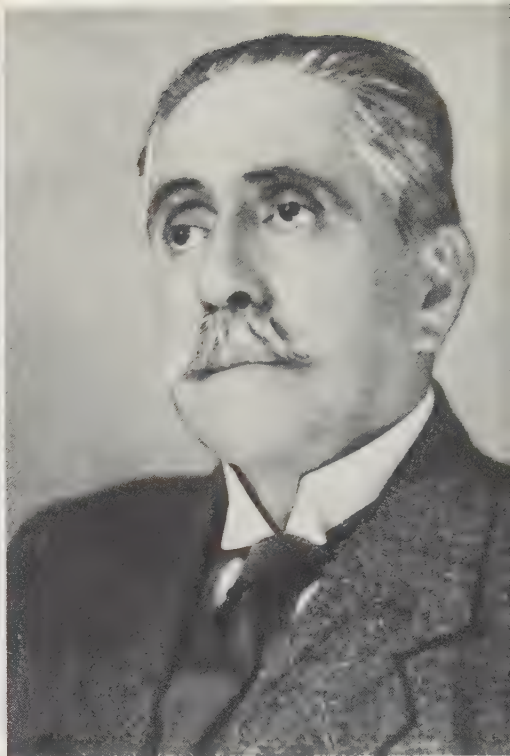
Congressman Nicanor do Nascimento. (*O Globo*)



Antônio Piccarolo. (Kindness of Germinal Leuenroth)



Epitácio Pessoa, president of Brazil, 1919-1922. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Senator Adolfo Gordo, archconservative formulator of the "Gordo Laws." (*O Globo*)

## Heróis de Copacabana



Heroes of uprising at Fort Copacabana, July 1922: *Left*, Eduardo Gomes; *right*, Antônio de Siqueira Campos. Photo taken in military hospital after they had been wounded and some of their companions killed in the revolt of the "Eighteen of the Fort." (*Albertino Cavaleiro*)



Laura and Otávio Brandão, on the eve of their marriage, April 1921. In October 1922 Brandão, who had been an anarchist, announced his conversion to Communism. (Kindness of Otávio Brandão)



Astrogildo Pereira, author and leading organizer of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCB). (Kindness of Eponina Dias Alcoforado)



Antônio Bernardo Canelas, PCB representative at the Comintern's Fourth World Congress (Moscow, 1922). In 1924, after being expelled from the PCB, Canelas began publishing *5 de Julho*. (*O Cruzeiro*)



Founders of the Communist Party of Brazil, March 1922. *Standing, left to right:* Manuel Cendon, Joaquim Barbosa, Astrogildo Pereira, João da Costa Pimenta, Luis Peres, and José Elias da Silva; *seated, left to right:* Hermogênio Silva, Abílio de Nequete, and Cristiano Cordeiro. (Kindness of João da Costa Pimenta)



Artur Bernardes, president of Brazil, 1922-1926. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Residence of Artur Bernardes in Viçosa, Minas Gerais. (*Correio da Manhã*)



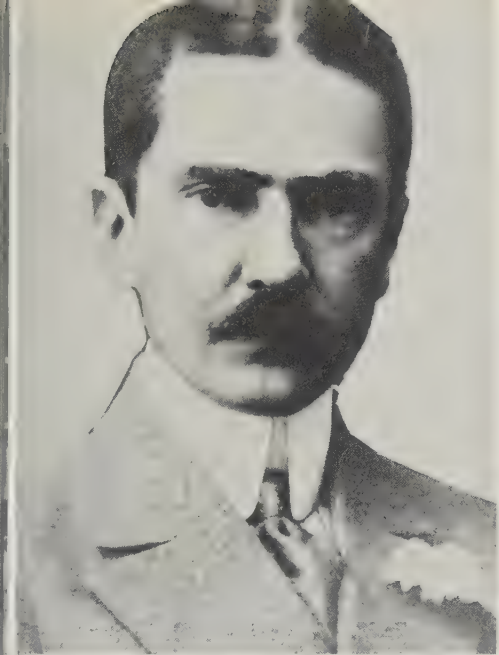
Sacking a warehouse in São Paulo during the July 1924 revolt. (*O Estado de S. Paulo*)



José Carlos de Macedo Soares of the São Paulo Associação Comercial. (*Agência Nacional*)



Marshal Carneiro da Fontoura, Federal District police chief in the administration of Artur Bernardes. (*O Globo*)



Edmundo Bittencourt, founder of the oppositionist daily, *Correio da Manhã*, who was jailed by the Bernardes administration. (*O Globo*)



Maurício de Lacerda displaying wounds resulting from poor medical treatment in 1924 while he was jailed by the Bernardes administration. (*O Globo*)



Silo Meireles, center, front row, and other political prisoners in the Army Hospital, 1925. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Cleto Campelo Filho, who was killed while leading an uprising near Recife in 1926. (*O Globo*)



Josias Carneiro Leão, journalist who escaped from Rio's Casa de Detenção in 1925 and went to Piauí to coordinate the Cleto Campelo uprising with the plans of the Miguel Costa-Prestes Column. (Kindness of Ambassador Josias Carneiro Leão)



Luís Carlos Prestes as a cadet, 1919. (*O Globo*)



Officers of the Third Detachment of the Miguel Costa-Prestes Column, photographed in Bahia, 1926. Antônio de Siqueira Campos, shown as No. 1, and Trifino Correia, No. 2. (*O Globo*)

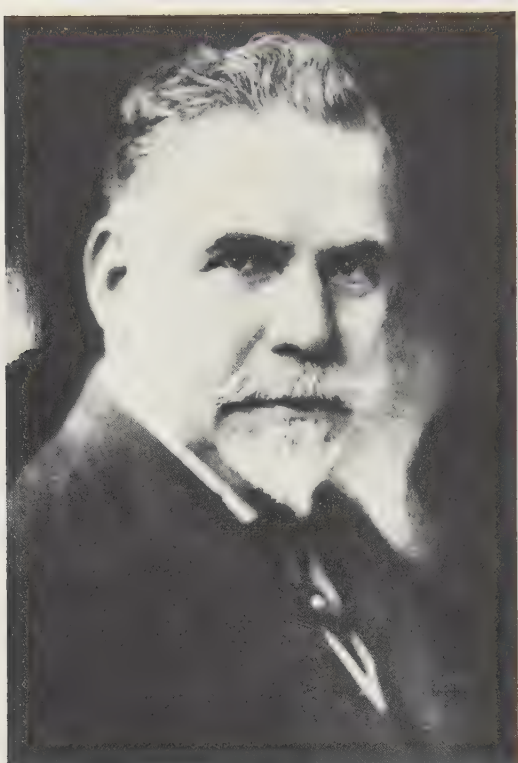




*O Jornal* reporter Rafael Correia de Oliveira, left, front row, with Luís Carlos Prestes, bearded, center, front row, in Bolivia, March 1927. Rafael Correia obtained the first interview with the exiled Miguel Costa–Prestes Column. (*Manchete*)



Brazilian revolutionaries at Paso de los Libres, Argentina, April 3, 1927. Seated, left to right: Dr. João Batista Remão (representative of *O Combate* of São Paulo), General Bernardo de Araújo Padilha, Marshal Isidoro Dias Lopes, General Miguel Costa, Colonel João Alberto Lins de Barros. (These military ranks were those in the revolutionary force.) (*O Jornal*)



Washington Luís Pereira de Souza, president of Brazil, 1926-1930. (*O Jornal*)



Antônio Carlos de Andrada, governor of Minas Gerais, 1926-1930. (*O Jornal*)



Policeman taking action against "disorderly" student, Rio de Janeiro, 1927. (Luís Bueno Filho, *Correio da Manhã* photographer)



Luís Carlos Prestes, *right*, with Orlando Leite Ribeiro in their commercial business office in Buenos Aires, 1928. This was shortly before Prestes discarded his beard, limiting himself to a mustache. (*O Cruzeiro*)



João Batista de Azevedo Lima, *left*, with a reporter. (*O Globo*)



Oppositionist Congressman João Batista de Azevedo Lima, 1927. (*O Globo*)



Paulo de Lacerda, Communist Party leader until he collapsed mentally while under arrest in Rio Grande do Sul in 1931. (*O Cruzeiro*)



Professor Rodolfo Coutinho, who lived in Moscow in 1924. He took part in the 1928 schism of the Communist Party of Brazil, attracting some students to his side. (Kindness of Nelson Coutinho)



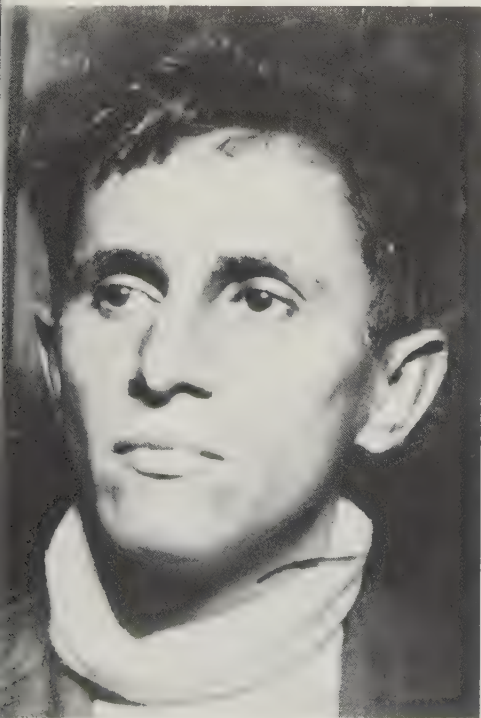
Professor Leônidas de Resende, who made the Rio daily *A Nação* available to the Communist Party in 1927. (*O Globo*)



Congressman Adolfo Bergamíni, oppositionist from the Federal District in the late 1920's. (*O Globo*)



Maria Lacerda de Moura, defender of women's rights and opponent of the Church, capitalism, and militarism. Otávio Brandão failed to convert this friend of Laura Brandão to Communism. (Maria Lacerda de Moura, *Religião do Amor e da Beleza*)



Otávio Brandão, successful Communist candidate for the Municipal Council, Rio de Janeiro, 1928. (*O Cruzeiro*)



Marbleworker Minervino de Oliveira, successful Communist candidate for the Municipal Council, Rio de Janeiro, 1928. In 1930 Minervino de Oliveira was the Communist candidate for president of Brazil. (*O Globo*)



A crowd gathers to hear Maurício de Lacerda in the Teatro do Parque. (*O Globo*)



Maurício de Lacerda, front center, bow tie. (*O Globo*)



Maurício de Lacerda, taking the oath of office as Rio de Janeiro municipal councilman, 1928. In making the customary pledge to uphold the laws, he added, "with restrictions." (*Correio da Manhã*)



Maurício de Lacerda. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Municipal Councilman Otávio Brandão.  
(*Correio da Manhã*)



*Left to right:* Leôncio and Artur Basbaum, leaders of Juventude Comunista (Communist Youth). (Kindness of Eny Basbaum)



Leôncio Basbaum, an important member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the early 1930's. (Kindness of Eny Basbaum)



Artur Basbaum, *center*, and Leôncio Basbaum, *far right*. (Kindness of Eny Basbaum)



Leôncio Basbaum in borrowed clothes after being released from jail in the early 1930's. (Kindness of Eny Basbaum)





Pedro Mota Lima, young oppositionist journalist who supported the Communist Party and the military rebels in the 1920's. In 1930 he supported the Aliança Liberal revolution, which brought Vargas to power. (*O Globo*)



Mário Grazini, Communist labor leader and candidate for the federal congress from the second district of the Federal District, 1930. (*O Cruzeiro*)



Danton Jobim, young oppositionist journalist and active Communist Party member in the late 1920's. In 1930 he supported the Aliança Liberal revolution. (*O Globo*)



Joaquim Francisco de Assis Brasil, veteran diplomat and Rio Grande do Sul oppositionist politician who was named "Civilian Chief of the Revolution" in the late 1920's by Luís Carlos Prestes and Isidoro Dias Lopes. (*O Jornal*)



Getúlio Vargas, president of Brazil, 1930–1945 and 1951–1954. He was brought to power by the popular Aliança Liberal revolution of October 1930. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Juarez Távora, leader of the successful Aliança Liberal revolution in the north of Brazil. (From a painting reproduced in *Manchete*)



Juarez Távora, “Viceroy of the North” during early years of the Vargas administration. He was mercilessly attacked in the pro-Communist manifestoes of Luís Carlos Prestes in 1931. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Federal District Mayor Adolfo Bergamini, *center, without glasses*, late 1930. (*O Globo*)



Maurício de Lacerda, *center, bow tie*, beside Pedro Ernesto Batista, *light suit*, who succeeded Adolfo Bergamini as mayor of the Federal District. Pedro Ernesto's medical clinic in Rio had been the scene of antigovernment conspiracy in the 1920's. (*O Globo*)



Some high-ranking members of the Vargas administration, November 22, 1931. *From left to right, front row:* Finance Minister Osvaldo Aranha, War Minister José Fernandes Leite de Castro, Justice Minister Maurício Cardoso (who succeeded Aranha as Justice Minister), Transport Minister José Américo de Almeida, Labor Minister Lindolfo Collor, and Pedro Ernesto Batista. (*Correio da Manhã*)



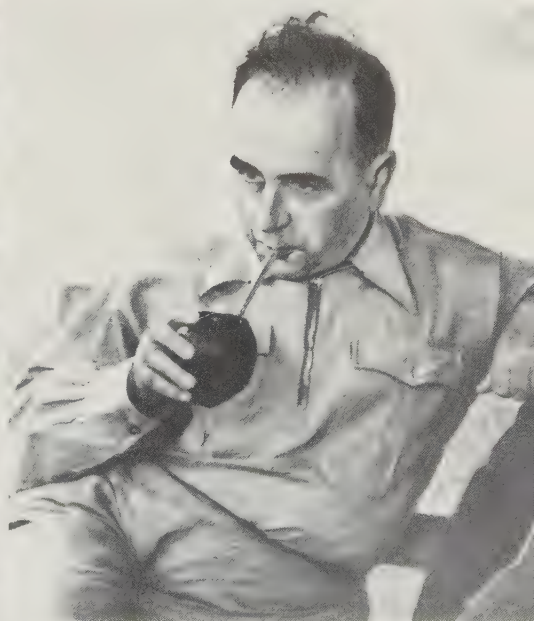
In white suits in the center are João Alberto Lins de Barros, *left*, and Joaquim Salgado Filho. Pedro Ernesto Batista is on Salgado Filho's left.



Joaquim Salgado Filho, *center*, listens to a political prisoner on Ilha Grande, late 1930. Salgado Filho, the Gaúcho who headed the Federal District Police Department's Fourth Delegacia Auxiliar early in the Vargas administration, succeeded Lindolfo Collor as Labor Minister in 1932. (Luís Bueno Filho, *Correio da Manhã* photographer)



More Gaúchos: Federal District Police Chief Batista Luzardo, *left*, and Labor Minister Lindolfo Collor. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Getúlio Vargas, sipping maté during a visit to his native state, Rio Grande do Sul. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Rally in downtown Rio de Janeiro. (Luís Bueno Filho, *Correio da Manhã* photographer)



Astrogildo Pereira with his wife, Inês Dias Pereira, Rio de Janeiro, 1933. (Kindness of Eponina Dias Alcoforado)



Integralistas in green shirts. (*O Jornal*)



Integralista funeral. Plínio Salgado, *front left*, is a pallbearer. (*O Jornal*)



Façade of state police barracks, Natal, marked by bullets of soldiers of the Twenty-first Army Battalion and of other rebels, some of them Communist civilians, November 1935. (*Correio da Manhã*)

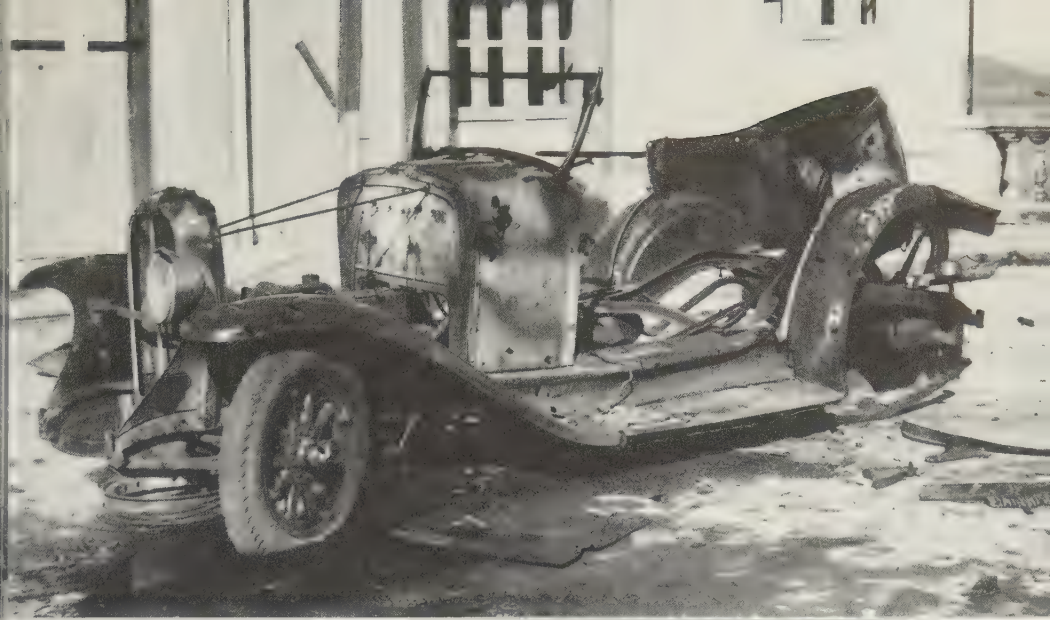


Third Infantry Regiment barracks at Praia Vermelha, Rio de Janeiro, after the Communist revolt there had been put down, November 27, 1935. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Second floor of the Third Infantry Regiment barracks at Praia Vermelha, Rio de Janeiro, after the Communist revolt there. (*Correio da Manhã*)





The commander of the Third Infantry Regiment found his car useless for escaping from the Communist-controlled barracks, Rio de Janeiro, November 27, 1935. "Burned by the rebels," the authorities explained. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Dining room of the Aviation School at Campo dos Afonsos following the early morning events of November 27, 1935. (*Manchete*)



A government machine-gun group, Rio de Janeiro, November 1935. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Munitions for the legalist forces. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Police checking automobiles in Praia de Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro, November 1935. (*Correio da Manhã*)



Evaristo de Morais, *left*, in the 1930's. He helped write labor laws during the early years of the Vargas regime, but resigned from the Labor Ministry together with Lindolfo Collor in March 1932. (*O Globo*)



Adolfo Bergamini, *right*, in the 1930's. (*O Globo*)



Nicanor do Nascimento, *right*, speaking to an *O Globo* reporter in the 1930's. (*O Globo*)



Danton Jobim in the 1930's. (*O Globo*)

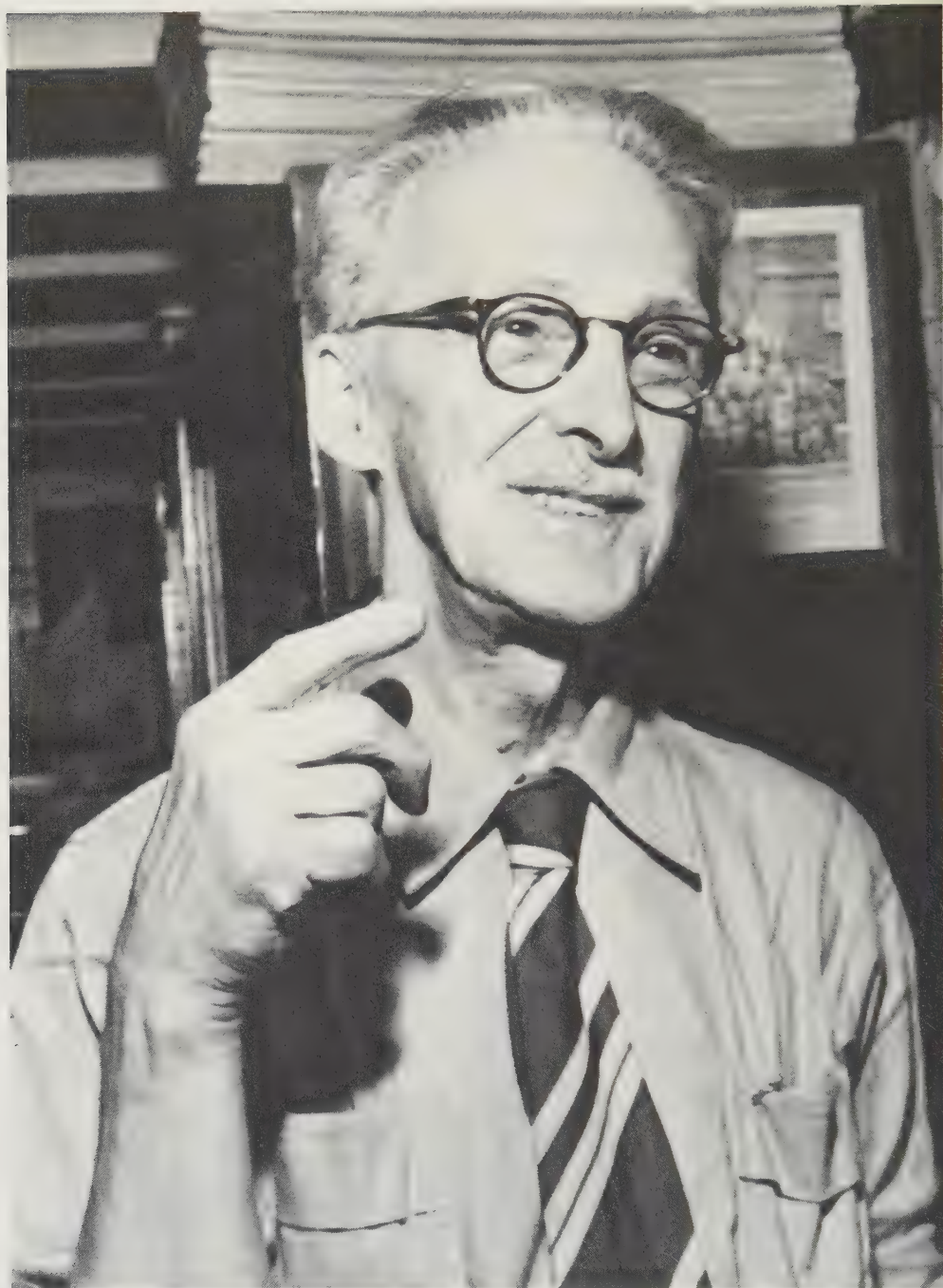


Professor Joaquim Pimenta, who helped Labor Minister Lindolfo Collor advance labor legislation. (*O Globo*)

Pedro Mota Lima, who directed the PCB's *A Manhã* in 1935. (*O Globo*)



Labor leader João da Costa Pimenta, at head of table. (Kindness of Germinal Leuenroth)



Edgard Leuenroth, of São Paulo, who remained faithful to anarchism until his death in 1968 at the age of 87. Like José Oiticica of Rio de Janeiro, who remained an anarchist until he died in 1957 at the age of 74, Leuenroth was long associated with the Brazilian anarchist press. (Kindness of Germinal Leuenroth)



Making use of a *viúva alegre* (police wagon) in the post-1935 repression of Communism.  
(*Correio da Manhã*)



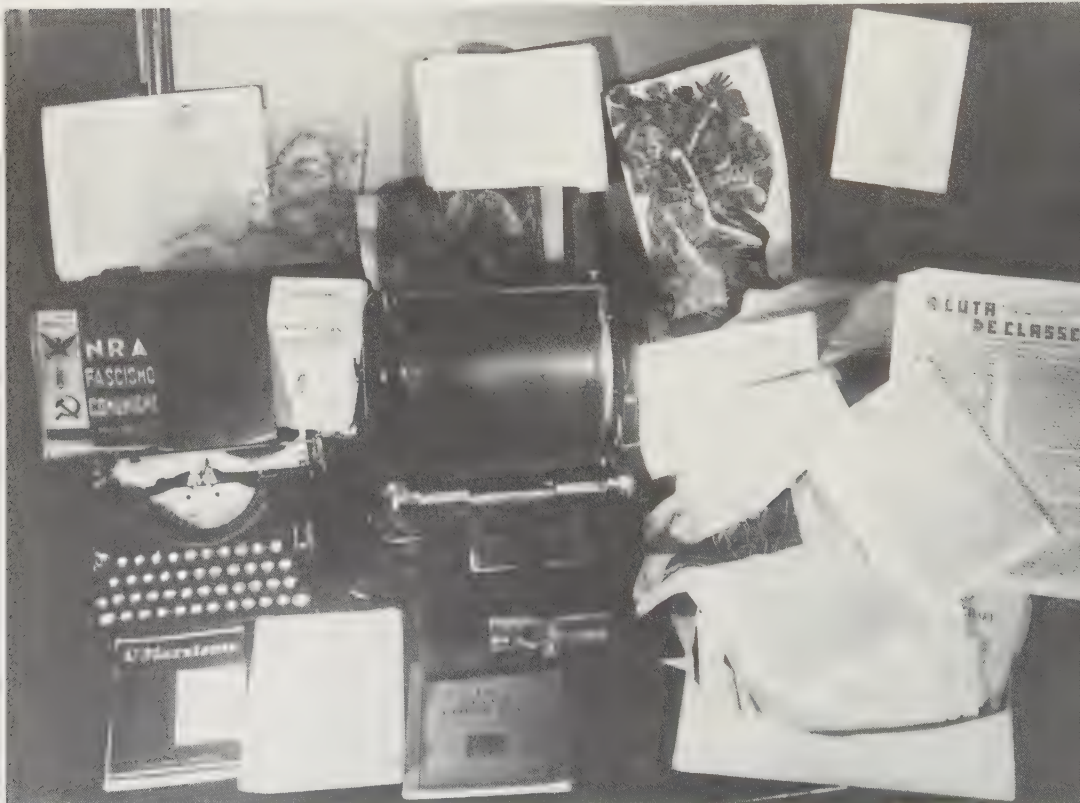
Agildo Barata, *left*, prisoner, 1937. (*Manchete*)



Luís Carlos Prestes, prisoner, 1937. (*O Jornal*)



Luís Carlos Prestes, prisoner. (Luís Bueno Filho, *Correio da Manhã* photographer)



Police exhibit of mimeograph and "Communist newspapers and books" seized at the home of Hílcar Leite during the post-1935 repression of Communism. Note copy of *Entre Duas Revoluções* by Maurício de Lacerda. (*Correio da Manhã*)



*A Patria*.<sup>20</sup> Without consulting the Party he published in brochure form the report on his mission to Moscow, and for this he was expelled from the Party in December 1923.<sup>21</sup> The CEC was not impressed by his argument that the report should not be kept secret from the workers, since a copy had fallen into the hands of the police in a raid and would therefore become known to the enemies of the working class.<sup>22</sup>

Rodolfo Ghioldi, representing the Executive Committee of the Communist International, reached Brazil early in January 1924. His report to the International, dated January 9, 1924, told of the steps taken by the CEC with respect to Canelas and Masonry. It approved of the PCB's structure, tactics, and political orientation. Stating that the PCB accepted the International's *tática parlamentar*, as revealed by its participation in Federal District elections, it explained that special circumstances necessitated electoral abstention in the states.<sup>23</sup> Ghioldi's report, critical of Canelas, concluded that the International's criticism of the PCB was groundless and caused by misunderstandings.

After this report opened the door for a better relationship between the PCB and the International, the PCB sent Rodolfo Coutinho to represent it in Moscow. This decision seemed admirable because Coutinho had studied Marx, had never been an anarchist, and possessed enough money of his own to make the trip.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 9, 1968.

<sup>21</sup> Edgard Carone, *A República Velha*, p. 330; Otávio Brandão, letter, March 11, 1971.

<sup>22</sup> Moniz Bandeira et al., *O Ano Vermelho*, p. 408.

<sup>23</sup> *Estudos* 1, no. 2 (March 1971): 97.

<sup>24</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

## 5. Leuenroth Steps Aside

On the evening of December 23, 1922, Rio police invaded the headquarters of the unions of civil construction workers, shoemakers, and textile workers.<sup>1</sup> About thirty workers were arrested and the civil construction workers' offices were closed down. *A Plebe* explained that two "rene-

<sup>1</sup> "Contra Associações Operarias: Violencias Policiaes no Rio," *A Plebe* 5, no. 199 (December 30, 1922).

gades," textile worker Antenor Faria and painter José Adão, had helped "the vulgar police" and led the assaults.<sup>2</sup> Faria and Adão, however, were anarchists loyal to the labor movement. Because the accusation proved false, Astrogildo Pereira made the most of *A Plebe's* gaffe. In *Movimento Comunista* he said that it was true that Faria and Adão were misguided by the confusionism in the libertarian ranks, but he added that *A Plebe* had been unfair to them.<sup>3</sup> They had been beaten by the police during the incident.

Leuenroth apologized in personal letters, written to Faria and Adão before Astrogildo's article appeared, and in a signed article in *A Plebe* on January 13, 1923.<sup>4</sup> Then Leuenroth attacked Astrogildo, the "ungrateful, disloyal neo-communist," for having tried—"unsuccessfully," Leuenroth wrote—to capitalize on an involuntary mistake that *A Plebe* had quickly rectified.<sup>5</sup>

In São Paulo on the evening of December 30, 1922, Ricardo Cípola, a young and devoted follower of Leuenroth, was assassinated at a dance given by the Legion of the Friends of *A Plebe* among Shoemakers. Cípola, founder of the legion, had represented São Paulo shoemakers at the Third Brazilian Labor Congress and had helped formulate the anarchist manifesto of March 1922. The daily press spoke of "a brawl among anarchists" and called Indalécio Iglésias, the murderer, a dangerous anarchist. *A Plebe* explained that Iglésias was "a declared enemy of *A Plebe*,"<sup>6</sup> and it published details of the argument, over a minor matter, which Iglésias had provoked at the dance before shooting Cípola.

Finding that the daily press continued to use Cípola's assassination "to disparage the libertarian movement," *A Plebe* filled its columns with information that made it appear as if Iglésias, a former police corporal, continued to serve the police.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time *A Plebe* announced that Leuenroth found it necessary to retire from São Paulo "for treatment of his health."<sup>8</sup> A group of workers, headed by Pedro A. Mota, took over the direction of *A Plebe*.

<sup>2</sup> *A Plebe* 5, no. 199 (December 30, 1922).

<sup>3</sup> *Movimento Comunista* 2, no. 14 (January 10, 1923).

<sup>4</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "A Proposito das Victimias Policiaes no Rio: Um Erro Lamentavel," *A Plebe* 5, no. 200 (January 13, 1923).

<sup>5</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "A Phobia Anti-anarchica dos Bolchevistas," *A Plebe* 5, no. 201 (January 27, 1923).

<sup>6</sup> *A Plebe* 5, no. 200 (January 13, 1923): 1.

<sup>7</sup> "A Proposito do Assassinato de Cípola," *A Plebe* 5, nos. 201, 202 (January 27, February 17, 1923).

<sup>8</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 202 (February 17, 1923).

## 6. The São Paulo Printers' Strike of 1923

On February 7, 1923, while Indalécio Iglésias's dubious allegiance was being discussed, São Paulo graphic workers decided to strike. The strike, which has made February 7 the Dia do Gráfico in Brazil, revealed a strength unusual for labor unions at the time. The support for the strike spoke well of the organizing ability of João da Costa Pimenta, secretary-general of the São Paulo União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos (UTG), formed in 1919 to succeed several unions that had gone out of existence.

Late in 1922 the UTG drew up a schedule of minimum wages for different job categories,<sup>1</sup> and it justified the suggested increases (20 percent for wages under 7\$000, otherwise 15 percent)<sup>2</sup> by stating that bureaucrats were receiving larger increases.<sup>3</sup> On January 31, 1923, in the Salão Celso Garcia, the UTG held an assembly that it claimed attracted over three thousand of the five thousand graphic workers in the city.<sup>4</sup> On February 2 it presented a *memorial* (petition) to the approximately forty-five printing plant owners, calling on them to recognize the UTG and adopt the suggested minimum wage tabulation. As the plant owners did not even acknowledge receipt of the *memorial* before the end of the five-day period the UTG gave them for replying, a monster rally of graphic workers was held at the Palace Theater on February 7 to declare the strike effective on the eighth.<sup>5</sup>

The São Paulo press was not affected by the strike and gave it little attention. *A Plebe* asserted that threats by the police, governing officials, and plant owners were responsible for the lack of strike news in "the more or less independent press."<sup>6</sup> The only newspapers to be praised by *O Trabalhador Graphico* for offering the use of their columns to strike supporters were *O Combate* of São Paulo and *O Paiz* of Rio.<sup>7</sup> The latter,

<sup>1</sup> "Notas Historicas," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 37 (São Paulo, March 24, 1923), and 3, no. 38 (April 5, 1923).

<sup>2</sup> "A Greve dos Graphics," *A Plebe* 6, no. 204 (March 10, 1923).

<sup>3</sup> "Que Querem Elles," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 12 (February 14, 1923).

<sup>4</sup> "O Movimento à Conquista do Salario Mínimo," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 11 (February 1923), and 3, no. 14 (February 17, 1923).

<sup>5</sup> "Notas Historicas," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 39 (April 13, 1923).

<sup>6</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 204 (March 10, 1923).

<sup>7</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 12 (February 14, 1923); J. Carlos Boscolo, "O Silencio da Imprensa," in *O Combate*, reproduced in *O Trabalhador Graphico*

an organ of the federal government, was cooperating with the PCB.<sup>8</sup>

After mid-February, five important printing plants accepted the UTG's terms. But the strike was far from over. *O Trabalhador Graphico*, which had become a daily for the duration instead of something resembling a monthly, predicted an early end of railroad transportation due to the lack of tickets and other indispensable printed materials.<sup>9</sup> José Carlos de Macedo Soares, president of the São Paulo Commercial Association, considered arbitrating but was restrained by some plant owners.<sup>10</sup> Late in February *O Trabalhador Graphico* began publishing lists of "scabs"—graphic workers who, it felt, cooperated with the owners. The daily lists were always headed by the name of Raimundo Ferreira, one of the delegates chosen by the workers to negotiate.<sup>11</sup>

Restlessness spread to other areas. Workers in São Paulo cafés demanded better wages after their leaders declared, on February 20, that their situation was "worse than that of a slave under the whip."<sup>12</sup> On February 27, when São Paulo textile workers tried to organize to obtain improvements, the police jailed three of their leaders. On the twenty-eighth they arrested the secretary of the tailors' union, a leader of the hotel employees, and Nicolau Paradas, an anarchist among café employees.<sup>13</sup>

João da Costa Pimenta was ordered to appear at the police *delegacia* on April Seven Street at midnight on February 28. Disregarding friendly

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3, no. 14 (February 17, 1923); "Agradecimento ao Grande Orgão *O Paiz*," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 24 (March 5, 1923).

<sup>8</sup> *O Paiz*, Carlos Lacerda has pointed out, was "the most progovernment newspaper of the epoch, the unofficial organ of the government." He explains that the Communists had at their disposition, for over a year, one full page of *O Paiz*, due to an alliance between the PCB and the CSCB (Confederação Sindicalista Cooperativista Brasileira), which posed, he says, as a labor confederation and was headed by men associated with the government. According to Carlos Lacerda, government men connected with *O Paiz* and CSCB were "at grips with the political tempest signaled by the Copacabana revolt" and hoped by the alliance to "conquer the working class, neutralizing or corrupting the revolutionary-communist militants" ([Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro* 3, no. 36 [January 1939]: 129).

<sup>9</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 19 (February 26, 1923).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, no. 20 (February 27, 1923).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, no. 21 (February 28, 1923), lists thirty-three "*crumiros*"; 3, no. 22 (March 1, 1923), lists forty-six.

<sup>12</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 203 (February 24, 1923). In some cafés wages were raised (see *A Plebe* 6, no. 204 [March 10, 1923]).

<sup>13</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 204 (March 10, 1923).

warnings, he reported and was jailed.<sup>14</sup> The police, recognizing that a habeas corpus petition might gain him freedom, shipped him to a jail in Rio, where it felt the state of siege might make such petitions less effective.<sup>15</sup> With no news about Pimenta, the proletarian press asked what had become of him.<sup>16</sup> Printers at six São Paulo dailies issued a statement denying that he had used "pressures, of all sorts," to prevent workers from returning to their jobs.<sup>17</sup>

In Rio friends of Pimenta and sympathizers of the strikers secured his freedom, and within a week of his arrest he was back in São Paulo,<sup>18</sup> directing the successful conclusion of the strike. In March *O Trabalhador Graphico* began listing printing firms that made agreements with their workers. The number increased from seventeen on March 13 to thirty-one on March 16. Empresa Gráfica Klabin made it thirty-two on the seventeenth. After the list had grown to forty on March 22, the UTG announced that the strike continued at only three or four establishments. The UTG also asked its companions not to seek work without first consulting its Executive Commission and to submit to the commission information about the conditions contained in work contracts.<sup>19</sup>

On March 24 the success of the strike was hailed by *A Plebe* and by *O Trabalhador Graphico*, which thereafter resumed appearing in an irregular fashion. *O Internacional* declared the outcome "a complete victory."<sup>20</sup>

Communist leaders in Rio hoped that after this success Pimenta would start giving attention to ideological matters. The Communist Party in São Paulo, they felt, amounted to "nothing" at this time.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 23 (March 3, 1923).

<sup>15</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, letter, October 22, 1970.

<sup>16</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 23 (March 3, 1923).

<sup>17</sup> Printers at *O Estado de S. Paulo*, one of whom was on *O Trabalhador Graphico*'s list of scabs, were not among the signers of the pro-Pimenta statement.

<sup>18</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, letter, October 22, 1970.

<sup>19</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 36 (March 22, 1923).

<sup>20</sup> *O Internacional* 3, no. 47 (April 3, 1923).

<sup>21</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970.

## 7. Rio Gets Two Rival Federations

When Alvaro Teixeira declared the necessity of having all the militants of the labor organizations of the country under the discipline of the PCB,<sup>1</sup> he summed up the Communist objective as the anarchists saw it.

To oppose this objective and to reorganize labor in the Rio area, in February 1923 Florentino de Carvalho (of the Sindicato de Ofícios Vários of Marechal Hermes) and leaders of the União dos Operários em Construção Civil planned a Congresso Local. Labor leaders in Rio and Niterói were asked to send delegates. At the congress the ineffective Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro (FTRJ)<sup>2</sup> was to be replaced with a geographically broader Federação dos Trabalhadores da Região Central do Brasil (Central Regional Federation).

The anarchists could count on a majority for the preparatory meetings of the Congresso Local. But Astrogildo Pereira called the anarchists' majority "a majority of representatives but not of those represented."<sup>3</sup> He forecast that the anarchists' projected statutes ("a veritable hodgepodge of old, rusty, hackneyed phrases, and ancient, thunderous formulas, all vague, imprecise, superficial, and insidious") would be accepted by the União dos Operários em Construção Civil (Union of Civil Construction Workers), the União Geral dos Trabalhadores em Hotéis (General Union of Workers in Hotels), perhaps the Aliança dos Operários em Calçado (Alliance of Workers in Footwear), and half a dozen "nominal *sindicatos*."

Astrogildo wrote that it was difficult to characterize the anarchist point of view, as it varied from time to time and from anarchist to anarchist, so as to represent an infinite variety of principles, means, and ends. However, he did detect among anarchists the desire to "divide and subdivide"—an objective that he said was being accomplished by their conduct at the meetings dealing with labor reorganization in the Rio area. The di-

<sup>1</sup> Alvaro Teixeira, "Ocasão Oportuna" (Vitória, December 27, 1922), *O Internacional* 3, no. 44 (January 13, 1923).

<sup>2</sup> The FTRJ's "state of pauperism" and "division" are mentioned by De Brevanes, "Rezenha de uma Reunião dos Delegados de Todas as Associações do Rio," *A Plebe* 6, no. 203 (February 24, 1923).

<sup>3</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Unificação Syndical," *Movimento Comunista* 2, no. 20 (April 1923).

visional policy, he added, was precisely the opposite of the "hard, realistic" Communist objective of creating a single proletarian bloc that could face "with advantage" the bourgeois bloc.<sup>4</sup>

Reporting on the anarchist influence among labor unions, visible in one of the labor reorganization meetings, an anarchist declared that "Bakunin towers over Lenin." This influence, according to a report in *A Plebe*, "was probably the reason why the Federação invited the Centro Cosmopolita and other chameleonic associations to come and speak against the anarchists." But even with such invitations, the Federação's delegate was forced to declare that the hoped-for Congresso Local would not be realized unless preliminary meetings attracted "many more associations."<sup>5</sup> Another speaker forecast that the effort to attract more organizations would cause such delays that the congress would never emerge from the planning stage.

Speaking for civil construction workers, Antônio Leite declared heatedly that his union wanted proletarian unification but only under libertarian principles. "From this premise we will not retreat one step."<sup>6</sup> Representatives of the unions of tailors, bakers, and stone quarry workers limited themselves to calling for unity. But the representative of the Association of Naval Carpenters pleased the anarchists by favoring federalist decentralization. A delegate from the Aliança dos Metalúrgicos warned against the influence of political parties.

A long speech by Florentino de Carvalho was praised by Roberto Morena, young Spanish-born leader among cabinetmakers. But after someone criticized the attitude of the Union of Civil Construction Workers, Morena closed the meeting by disappointing the anarchists. He made, *A Plebe* reported, "a very unfortunate speech" in which "he contradicted affirmations that he had expressed earlier."<sup>7</sup>

The declaration of principles, drawn up for the proposed Central Regional Federation, rejected "connections of any sort with political parties, be they *bourgeois* or *proletarian*."<sup>8</sup> Even in anarchist ranks the declaration provoked a controversy. Domingos Brás, anarchist textile worker and

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> De Brevanes, "Rezenha de uma Reunião dos Delegados de Todas as Associações do Rio," *A Plebe* 6, no. 203 (February 24, 1923).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. On May 27, 1922, *A Plebe* had published Morena's favorable opinion of the March 1922 Manifesto Program of the São Paulo anarchists.

<sup>8</sup> Federação dos Trabalhadores da Região Central do Brasil, "Declaração de Princípios," *A Plebe* 6, no. 203 (February 24, 1923).

composer of sonnets, wrote from Petrópolis to declare himself "absolutely opposed" to declarations of principles formulated by labor unions. Adolfo Marques da Costa then wrote in favor of such declarations and explained the need of blocking the implantation of the proletarian dictatorship and a centralized state following the destruction of capitalism.<sup>9</sup> Brás, fancying a note of "mockery and disdain" in a reference to him by Marques da Costa, argued that labor unions were essentially economic and reformist, and that if one expected labor organization to achieve its goals one should never ask that it declare itself anarchist; "nor must we allow that any faction, any party, take possession of it."<sup>10</sup>

The declaration of principles for the new federation would, Brás said, harm the anarchist movement as well as labor organization. For he felt that the mission of anarchism was to solve "the three aspects of the Social Question": moral, intellectual, and economic. Anarchism, "destined to redeem all classes and humanity," would disparage itself if it reduced itself to "a simple labor question, a mere question of class."

Another Petrópolis anarchist, José Soares, found Brás ("the sincere militant") "almost irrefutable," but he felt that labor organizations should concern themselves with more than the economic question. They should "defend the ideal of the highest social justice," and the anarchists should make their aims clear to the "labor world."<sup>11</sup>

The anarchist effort to reorganize labor in 1923 resulted in two rival federations in the Rio area. The new libertarian organization was called the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro (FORJ). Communist unions adhered to the old FTRJ.

*Voz Cosmopolita* wrote that the schism had been "provoked by the absurd intolerance of anarchist proselytism, which sought to construct an organism within the strict and lunatic form of its abstract ideology—an organism to cover the whole central region of Brazil." The effort, *Voz Cosmopolita* said, failed completely: it ended by producing "a label (FORJ), behind which shelter is sought by the intransigent sectarianism of those who beatifically obey we do not know what elastic commandments attributed to paradisiacal anarchy." *Voz Cosmopolita* added that the FTRJ, "the oldest" of the two Rio federations, "is guided by people who

<sup>9</sup> Marques da Costa, "A Proposito da Declaração de Principios da Federação dos Trabalhadores da Região Centro do Brasil," *A Plebe* 6, no. 204 (March 10, 1923).

<sup>10</sup> Domingos Braz, "Devem os Sindicatos Declarar-se Anarchistas?" (dateline Petrópolis, March 1923), *A Plebe* 6, no. 205 (March 24, 1923).

<sup>11</sup> José Soares, "Opinião sobre a Federação dos T. C. Brasil" (dateline Petrópolis, February 1923), *A Plebe* 6, no. 205 (March 24, 1923).



know more about the proletarian situation and requirements, and is disposed to help the resurgence of the economic organization of the workers, within molds most firm and suitable to their needs and possibilities. It is a purely economic organization, its action free of doctrinary principles."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "O Centro Cosmopolita e a Unificação Proletaria," *Voz Cosmopolita* 2, no. 35 (December 1, 1923).

## 8. Os Emancipados

**I**n the first half of 1923 Fábio Luz and other libertarian communists organized Os Emancipados to save "pure anarchism" in Brazil from the taint of syndicalist ideas.

Os Emancipados, noting some syndicalist tendencies in *A Plebe* following Leuenroth's withdrawal, prepared to found their own newspaper. In the meantime they suggested that space which *A Plebe* devoted to labor union news could better be used to institute a campaign of doctrinary character against the Communist Party. Some Emancipados attributed the absence of such a campaign to a secret fondness of *A Plebe's* editors for the Party.<sup>1</sup>

In April 1923, after Salvador Seguí, a syndicalist, had been assassinated in Spain, *A Plebe* published the translation of an article about Seguí, "the indefatigable anarcho-syndicalist, victim of bourgeois hatred."<sup>2</sup> Os Emancipados objected to the article. *A Plebe* explained that it had published the translation to give an idea of Seguí's mental ability and the atmosphere in Spanish syndical circles, but it confessed to disagreeing with "the manner in which Seguí expounded his opinion."<sup>3</sup>

On May 1, 1923, Os Emancipados launched *A Revolução Social*, a short-lived São Paulo monthly.<sup>4</sup> On the same day *A Plebe* published a letter from its Santos representative, lamenting the split in anarchist

<sup>1</sup> Agost Inho, "Divergencia de Opinião ou Vontade de Predominar?" (dateline Santos, April 1923), *A Plebe* 6, no. 208 (May 1, 1923).

<sup>2</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 207 (April 21, 1923).

<sup>3</sup> "O Syndicalismo Hespanhol," *A Plebe* 6, no. 209 (May 12, 1923).

<sup>4</sup> The state of siege in Rio de Janeiro made it difficult to publish an anarchist newspaper there.



The proletarian, crossing his arms, paralyzes industry. (*A Plebe*, May 1, 1923)

ranks, particularly while adepts of the proletarian dictatorship were "spreading propaganda, establishing centers everywhere, combating not only the bourgeoisie, but also and especially anarchism with the help of unscrupulous methods."<sup>5</sup> This message pointed out that Os Emancipados would do better to submit their doctrinary articles for publication in *A Plebe*. The writer attributed the "boycott" of *A Plebe* and the publication of *A Revolução Social* more to pride than to divergence of opinion. "They consider themselves super-anarchists."

*A Plebe*, now appearing only twice a month, denied sympathizing with Bolsheviks or dictatorships and lamented attacks by a group "which doltishly seeks a feud between syndicalism and anarchism." *A Plebe* said that it sought to use economic reasons to attract workers to unions without regard to political ideas. It hoped by example to persuade workers of the usefulness of the beliefs it held. But it did not feel that union members could "magically" be made libertarian simply by having the unions proclaim libertarian principles.<sup>6</sup> Pedro A. Mota wrote that the imposition of declarations of ideological principles on unions would throw them into the "abyss of destruction."<sup>7</sup> Stating that true syndicalist-revolutionary organization was the most direct path to anarchical communism (which he said he defended), he recommended the use of example and education so that, as a result of the members' own desires, unions would declare themselves libertarian.

*A Plebe* further irritated Os Emancipados in June 1923 when it published "Let Us Dissipate Illusions."<sup>8</sup> Because the war had used up all collective resources, it was ridiculous, the article said, to think that, right after the fall of the bourgeoisie, the masses would live in a world of plenty. Scarcities would make rationing necessary and would probably require an increase in the length of the workday.

*A Revolução Social* said that this opinion was "doctrine" issued from on high—a "papal curse" by the monopoly that considered itself in charge of proletarian orientation and feared losing its scepter whenever anyone else ventured an opinion.<sup>9</sup> The "doctrine" itself, *A Revolução Social* charged, could be carried out only by a provisional state and po-

<sup>5</sup> Inho, "Divergencia de Opinião."

<sup>6</sup> "Explicações Necessárias," *A Plebe* 6, no. 209 (May 12, 1923).

<sup>7</sup> Pedro A. Mota, "Considerações em Torno do Syndicalismo," *A Plebe* 6, no. 213 (July 7, 1923).

<sup>8</sup> "Dissipemos Illusoês," *A Plebe* 6, no. 212 (June 23, 1923).

<sup>9</sup> "Dissipemos Illusoês," *A Revolução Social*, no. 3 (São Paulo, August 1, 1923).



Mussolini. (*A Plebe*, July 5, 1924)

licing and was "no different from the Marxist conception put into effect by the authoritarian communists."

Readers of *A Revolução Social* learned that, after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, a society without authority or property could be achieved if all workers would simply retake their places in the shops and work without supervision. Those engaged in useless professions should seek new occupations. "Wise men," or leaders who sought to capture the confidence of the people, should be done away with.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Amilcar Floreal, "O que Será a Revolução Social," *A Revolução Social*, no. 3 (August 1, 1923).

Fábio Luz suggested that labor unions turn themselves at once into "schools of the Social Revolution" and concentrate on preparing their members to live in the ideal society.<sup>11</sup> Reviewing a book by the late Neno Vasco, he agreed with the author's declaration that labor unions would have to disappear "when the bases of society are established along libertarian lines."<sup>12</sup>

*A Plebe* denied issuing "papal excommunications." It said that its issues were compiled by modest workers, poorly educated, who sacrificed their spare time, and who, unlike the editors of *A Revolução Social*, had little opportunity to consult books and coordinate their thoughts. These workers, *A Plebe* said, realized that their efforts were often disappointing, but they were doing the best they could and did not like having "the wise men, the pure ones, the masters, the philosophers" of *A Revolução Social* doubt their attachment to the anarchist ideal.<sup>13</sup>

After being attacked by Luz in a talk in Rio, *A Plebe* said that it would refrain from getting further involved with what it called Luz's ridiculing and belittling of its modest but sincere libertarian work. It expressed no desire "to have polemics for the pleasure of showing off abilities at penmanship, or to break lances in the defense of wounded self-love."<sup>14</sup>

In November 1923 *A Plebe* suddenly undertook an anti-Bolshevik doctrinary campaign, as Os Emancipados and others had recommended. Showing Pedro A. Mota as "principal editor" for the first time, it began the publication of a series of theoretical articles by Oiticica. Early in 1924 it became a weekly again and supplemented the Oiticica series with an anti-Bolshevik series of "Commentaries" written by Mota and signed Atom.

<sup>11</sup> Fábio Luz, "Carta aos Camaradas do Centro Operario Natalense" (dateline Rio de Janeiro, November 1, 1922), *A Revolução Social*, no. 2 (June 1923).

<sup>12</sup> Fábio Luz, review of *Concepção Anarquista do Sindicalismo*, in *A revolução Social*, no. 2 (June 1923).

<sup>13</sup> "Dissipando Illusões," *A Plebe* 6, no. 217 (September 1, 1923).

<sup>14</sup> "Para Terminar," *A Plebe* 6, no. 219 (September 23, 1923).

## 9. Oiticica Analyzes Bolshevism

After the enactment of the state of siege in the Federal District and Rio State in July 1922, *Movimento Comunista*, in what Astrogildo Pereira has called "a little pretense," showed its publication place as São Paulo.<sup>1</sup> It was not a pretense with which the anarchists cooperated. In April 1923 *A Plebe* wrote: "From *Movimento Comunista*, published in Rio last March, we extracted the paragraphs with which Bukharin closes a long article."<sup>2</sup> Two months later the police discovered and seized *Movimento Comunista's* printing plant.

The Bukharin article called the anarchists "the scum of society," pilfering, creating nothing—"dregs brought afloat in the barbarous capitalist regime."<sup>3</sup> *A Plebe* asked if Astrogildo and José Elias da Silva, "the two maximum pontiffs of the Bolshevik party in Brazil," had considered themselves "the scum of society" when they had militated in anarchist circles.

An article in *O Solidario* of Santos said that history would lump the anarchists, clinging to the "worm-eaten hull" of their "encrusted concepts," together with other "old, rancid, and useless things."<sup>4</sup> *A Plebe's* Atom called this article a "product of a slime of spirit," the result of "the Bolshevik disease."<sup>5</sup>

High above exchanges such as these, Oiticica analyzed "the fundamental points of divergence between Bolsheviks and anarchists." He addressed his series of articles to "the comrades of the Communist Party of Brazil," explaining that, even though they had gone astray, he still considered them comrades. He acknowledged the validity of some criticisms by Bolsheviks—particularly when they spoke of the anarchists' "almost complete lack of international cohesion."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> "As Infâmias Bolchevistas," *A Plebe* 6, no. 206 (April 7, 1923).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> C. Antelius, "Frente Unica ou Reacção Burgueza," *O Solidario* 1, no. 13 (Santos, December 18, 1923).

<sup>5</sup> Atom, "Commentarios . . . O Cynicismo Delles," *A Plebe* 6, no. 226 (January 5, 1924).

<sup>6</sup> José Oiticica, "Resposta Necessaria, I," *A Plebe* 6, no. 222 (November 10, 1923).

Oiticica cited testimonials about the anarchists' role in making and saving the Russian revolution. Calling it a revolution that no good anarchist opposed, he said it was a senseless sophism to accuse anarchists of enrolling in the capitalist international because they did not wish to join the Communist International. "The anarchists, like all who favor the anti-capitalist revolution, were, are, and will be, in the Communist International without the need of a diploma signed in Moscow."<sup>7</sup>

Oiticica disagreed with those Bolsheviks who wrote (as he believed Astrogildo Pereira had done) that capitalism was collapsing.<sup>8</sup> On this point he agreed with former Russian anarchists, whose manifesto-appeal had prompted him to write his series. As for the former anarchists' argument that capitalism's strength made a united proletarian front necessary, Oiticica observed that the anarchists had always participated in the united front.<sup>9</sup> It was the former anarchists and Communists, he added, who did not want a united front: they wanted all the anarchists, and all the workers, "within the Communist Party."<sup>10</sup> Pointing to Brandão's recent articles, he argued that Brazilian Communists, far from seeking anarchist collaboration, strove to destroy anarchism.

In any event, Oiticica wrote, the anarchists could not accept the dictatorship of the proletariat (as the Bolsheviks "tell of it, and, worse, as they execute it") without completely renouncing their ideas.<sup>11</sup> When the former Russian anarchists argued that the Bolsheviks had to maintain their dictatorship, against their own wishes, because the workers of the other countries had not overthrown capitalism, Oiticica called it "an argument to fool the simpleminded."<sup>12</sup> They maintained their dictatorship, he said, because of "Bolshevik revolutionary theory."

In his last three articles, Oiticica studied what he felt was the heart of the problem: whether or not the dictatorship of the proletariat, headed by a political party, was an inevitable phase in the world revolution,<sup>13</sup> or

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> José Oiticica, "Resposta Necessaria, V," *A Plebe* 6, no. 226 (January 5, 1924).

<sup>9</sup> José Oiticica, "Resposta Necessaria, IV," *A Plebe* 6, no. 225 (December 22, 1923).

<sup>10</sup> Oiticica, "Resposta Necessaria, V."

<sup>11</sup> José Oiticica, "Resposta Necessaria, VII," *A Plebe* 6, no. 229 (February 16, 1924).

<sup>12</sup> José Oiticica, "Resposta Necessaria, III," *A Plebe* 6, no. 224 (December 8, 1923).

<sup>13</sup> Oiticica, "Resposta Necessaria, VII."



The cavalcade of the ideal. (*A Plebe*, May 1, 1924)

whether a nonauthoritarian, anarchical society could be established at once.

Turning to history to find his answer, Oiticica quoted Domela Nieuwenhuis, who had written that authoritarian, German, or Marxist socialism was strong in Germany, its birthplace, but could make little headway in France, for libertarian socialism was closer to the aspirations and spirit of the French people.<sup>14</sup> Bakunin, Oiticica said, had found that the Germans, although possessed of many solid qualities, lacked a love of liberty and the instinct to revolt. After reviewing how German discipline had killed the revolutionary spirit of the German Social Democratic party, turning it into a party with reformist and petit-bourgeois tendencies, Oiticica quoted Nieuwenhuis again: "It is not the despots who make

<sup>14</sup> Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Le socialisme en danger*, Chapter III, quoted by José Oiticica, "Resposta Necessaria, VII."



the people docile and submissive, but the absence of libertarian aspirations in the mass that makes tyrannies possible." In other words, Oiticica concluded, "where the people show themselves obedient, Bolshevism takes root better than anarchism."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> José Oiticica, "Resposta Necessaria, X," *A Plebe* 6, no. 234 (May 1, 1924).

## 10. Comments Inspired by Lenin's Death

Astrogildo Pereira went to Moscow for the Fifth World Congress, scheduled for early 1924. But with Lenin's death in January 1924, the congress was postponed until June. Astrogildo spent the intervening time observing conditions in Moscow, writing ecstatic letters for publication in Brazil, and learning how to strengthen the PCB. It should, he was told, become more proletarian, and its organization chart should give more emphasis to cells of workers and less to Brazilian geography.<sup>1</sup> At the Fifth World Congress the PCB became a full member of the Communist International. When Astrogildo returned to Brazil in mid-1924, he left behind Rodolfo Coutinho, who was to study Bolshevism and who shared a room in Moscow with another guest of the Soviet state, Ho Chi Minh.<sup>2</sup>

In Moscow Astrogildo learned of *A Plebe's* sensational obituary of Lenin. Published February 2, 1924, the obituary said:

. . . far from wanting to exterminate the capitalist and bourgeois regime, as all thought in 1918, he resorted to transactions with this regime and used every means possible to win its sympathy and backing, striving to have all governments recognize him as the dictator of all the Russias. More Marxist than Marx himself, he took advantage of a gigantic revolution, made by an entire people, to impose his strict doctrine of state socialism, crushing by brute force all discordant opinions, all attempts at free experimentation, all initiatives of liberty. . . . He updated the Jesuit aphorism that the end justifies the means. . . . He declared himself infallible, and he persecuted, killed, slandered, exterminated all who did not come running with bowed heads and on bended knees to flatter him very reverentially. . . . Mussolini in Italy, Primo de Rivera in Spain, and others

<sup>1</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Cláudio Kuck, "O Brasileiro Ho: A Longa Viagem do Marinheiro Ho ao Vietname," *O Cruzeiro*, September 14, 1968.

who await the opportune moment to appear on the scene, are the followers and most devoted disciples of his theories, his lack of scruples, his hatred of liberty, his hardness of heart, and his insensitivity to the dignity of his fellow man.

Now, men of this sort are doubly harmful to us: for the evil they do, and for the sinister ideas they spread to justify their abominable conduct. Lenin, more than any other despot of all times, was one of these sinister men.<sup>3</sup>

Astrogildo's reply was published in *O Paiz*. There was something indescribable, he wrote, about "so great a sum of condensed insanity."<sup>4</sup> The obituary, he continued, revealed the mean spirit of the last phase of anarchism and disclosed that its authors were "pitiable people, unable to understand." It would, he said, fill the Russian anarchists with shame if they could read it.

How, Astrogildo asked, could *A Plebe* call Lenin a "malign tyrant," when "the greatest human multitude ever to have assembled on the face of the earth" attended the funeral of "the guide, master, and incomparable friend?"

Astrogildo contrasted the "infamies printed by the ex-revolutionary Paulista organ" with the "noble words" of Apollon Karelin ("today the incontestable leader of Russian anarchism") and other "militant Russian libertarians," such as Aleksei Solonovich, defenders of the Soviet government. Their "noble words" praised Lenin and told of how anarchist groups in Moscow bowed respectfully before Lenin's open tomb.<sup>5</sup>

Astrogildo wrote that he had to laugh when he learned of a Brazilian anarchist report about the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party sending "secret instructions" to fight anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists.<sup>6</sup> It was ridiculous, he said, to think the Party would waste "its precious time" on these "poor, pacific, and impotent men." Astrogildo revealed that the Russian Communists allowed the anarchists to have their little clubs and distribute their publications. "Anarchism exists today in Russia like the Esperanto movement, vegetarianism, and Tolstoyism," without any life.

"We, the Communists of other countries, must fight against the residues of anarchism—against those who, as in Brazil, have degenerated

<sup>3</sup> "Lenine," *A Plebe* 6, no. 228 (February 2, 1924).

<sup>4</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Carta de Russia: Os Contra-revolucionários," *O Paiz*, May 7, 1924.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *O Paiz*, May 7, 1924, describing a headline in *O Trabalho*.

into vile slanderers of the Russian revolution and conscious or unconscious servants of the capitalist counterrevolution."<sup>7</sup>

*A Plebe* published articles in which Emma Goldman charged Lenin with Jesuitism, a complete lack of scruples, and scorn for his victims. Some of the Torquemadas, she said, shed tears when they sent their victims to torture rooms or to be shot. "Would Lenin have shed tears?" she asked.<sup>8</sup> *A Plebe* remarked that although Russian anarchists would not read its obituary of Lenin, they would certainly read Emma Goldman. "If they disagree with her, we hope to read their reply," it said.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile Brazilian Communist newspapers such as *Voz Cosmopolita* and *O Solidario* published the superlatives that Astrogildo ("the delegate of the Communist workers of Brazil") used to describe conditions "in the capital of the world revolution." "The first impression one has here is of abundance. The warehouses are crammed. . . . While in capitalist Europe the workers are impoverished and starved, Proletarian Russia, richer each day, supplies abundantly her millions of freed workers and peasants."<sup>10</sup>

A solemn session, "clearly proletarian," at the Labor Union Building (formerly a club for the nobility) left an "unforgettable impression" on Astrogildo. There he was moved by the speeches of Gregory Zinoviev, Clara Zetkin, and others, and participated in singing "the immortal hymn."

Astrogildo was installed in the Hotel Lux. His Moscow visit so filled him with "renewed energies and enthusiasm" that he was determined to transmit this "vibration" to friends and companions in Brazil.<sup>11</sup> Summing up Soviet Russia, he described it as "a marvel," surpassing his expectations.<sup>12</sup> Russia, he found, was "in fact" a proletarian state in which misery no longer existed. "Here people feel they are in a world completely new, where our revolutionary dreams are concrete, indestructible realities."

In telling, on February 26, of Lenin's funeral, Astrogildo was able to

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Emma Goldman, "Vladimir Ilytch Onlianoff Lenine," *A Plebe* 6, no. 238 (May 31, 1924).

<sup>9</sup> "Estocadas Bolchevistas-Comunistas," *A Plebe* 6, no. 237 (May 24, 1924).

<sup>10</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, letter, March 6, 1924, from Moscow. The letters of February 25, 26, 29, and March 6, 7, 8 are given in *Voz Cosmopolita* 3, no. 44 (April 15, 1924), and in *O Solidario* 1, no. 21 (May 1, 1924).

<sup>11</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, letter, February 25, 1924.

<sup>12</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, letter, March 7, 1924.



The social revolution leads to the extermination of the instruments of oppression. (*A Plebe*, May 1, 1924)

thrill Brazilian Communists by saying "I write these lines in an office . . . in the Comintern [Communist International]." The funeral, he reported, was "an indescribable affair," attended by over a million people in thirty-below-zero weather. Over one hundred thousand workers, who until then had not been Party members, joined the Party of Lenin, Astrogildo wrote.<sup>13</sup>

Pedro A. Mota, devoting his "commentaries" in *A Plebe* to the *correspondência astrogildiana*, said Astrogildo had revealed the jubilation with which the Russian people greeted Lenin's death. Mota pictured one hundred thousand rejoicing workers joining the Party because Lenin was out of the way.<sup>14</sup>

Astrogildo, back in Brazil, could not ignore this remark. "Pedro A. Mota," he wrote, "you are, inside and out, standing or seated, sleeping or awake, . . . positively the most stupendous revelation that anarchism has yet produced."<sup>15</sup>

Mota replied: "The little man seems to have returned even more seasoned by the Moscow dictatorial flames than when he went there." *A Plebe's* readers were told that Astrogildo had been "a guest at the Hotel Lux, surrounded by all comforts, by all privileges and attentions, as happens to any bourgeois diplomat received by bourgeois governments." Having been compared to a jackass by Astrogildo, Mota returned the compliment. "The only difference between a quadruped burro and the biped Astrogildo is Astrogildo's lack of a tail. As for the rest, all is similar."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, letter, February 26, 1924.

<sup>14</sup> Atom, "Commentarios . . . Correspondencia Astrogildiana," *A Plebe* 6, no. 236 (May 17, 1924). In this series of articles, published in May and June 1924, Atom (Pedro A. Mota), tongue in cheek, asked the libertarians of the world to weep at the death of the creator of "the most fierce, malign, inhuman dictatorship the world has ever known"; he said that this dictatorship made it possible for Astrogildo to report that anarchism exercised no political influence among Russia's workers. In other columns, *A Plebe* discussed "The Case of E. Rubintchik," said to have been condemned to three years in a concentration camp on Solovietzsky Island for trying to publish libertarian literature in Russia.

<sup>15</sup> Astrogildo Pereira in *Voz Cosmopolita*, quoted in Pedro A. Mota, "Resposta a um Curador de 'Engasgos' Engasgado com a 'Pilula'," *A Plebe* 7, no. 243 (July 5, 1924).

<sup>16</sup> Mota, "Resposta a um Curador."

## 11. Evidence of Anarchist Weakness in Rio

Early in 1923 the Rio Textile Workers' Union had to decide whether to be represented at the Textile Workers' Congress, being promoted by Libânio da Rocha Vaz, who had connections with the América Fabril Textile Company.<sup>1</sup> The Bernardes administration, demonstrating its interest in labor by talking about a possible National Labor Department,<sup>2</sup> planned to make Monroe Palace available for the congress.

Textile workers at union assemblies pleased the anarchists by resolving that their union should not be represented at such a congress. Backers of the congress therefore postponed their plans and sent Sarandi Raposo to persuade Manuel Inácio de Castro, president of the union, that union representation would be worthwhile. Raposo, advocate of worker participation in politics,<sup>3</sup> headed the Confederação Sindicalista Cooperativista Brasileira (CSCB), whose government connections had opened the columns of *O Paiz* to the PCB. While anarchists damned the CSCB,<sup>4</sup> *Voz Cosmopolita* praised its "unselfishness" and asserted that "nothing is more logical than the sympathy established between ourselves and the CSCB."<sup>5</sup>

After hearing Raposo, Manuel de Castro suddenly called an assembly to name the union's delegates to the congress. Thus the Textile Workers' Congress became a reality—although hardly a gathering useful to the workers: at Monroe Palace personal rivalries led to squabbles.<sup>6</sup>

Anarchists sadly concluded that the Textile Workers' Union was no longer "the defender of the morals and libertarianism of the proletariat."

<sup>1</sup> "O Congresso Textil no Rio," *A Plebe* 6, no. 214 (July 21, 1923).

<sup>2</sup> Evaristo de Moraes, signed editorial, *Correio da Manhã*, March 16, 1923. For an unfavorable anarchist opinion of what became known as the National Labor Board (consultive), see Mauro Serra in *A Plebe* 6, no. 219 (September 29, 1923).

<sup>3</sup> See editorials in *O Trabalho: Diário da Tarde* (director, Sarandi Raposo), dateline Rio de Janeiro, February 23, 1925 (1, no. 17), and March 7, 1925.

<sup>4</sup> "A Frente Única Proletária," *A Plebe* 6, no. 231 (March 15, 1924).

<sup>5</sup> *Voz Cosmopolita* 2, no. 35 (December 1, 1923). According to Carlos Lacerda, the CSCB "was nothing more than a showy façade," used for a while by the PCB in its first application of "the technique of infiltration" (Carlos Lacerda, "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro* 3, no. 36 [January 1939]: 129).

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 9, 1923. See "Correio Operário" column on p. 3.

Referring to the "good comrades" who had "stayed away from the arena," they pointed out that it was bad enough to compromise with "weaklings and cowards," but even worse to be cowed by dictators and tyrants like Manuel de Castro.<sup>7</sup>

The complete failure of the anarchist Comitê Pró Liberdade de José Leandro da Silva, which was seeking a habeas corpus judgment to allow a jury trial,<sup>8</sup> was another blow to anarchism in Rio in 1923. Late in 1923, the depressed prisoner, condemned to thirty years, sent a fellow cook, João Valentim Argolo, to Brandão's pharmacy to ask for Communist help.<sup>9</sup> After Brandão convinced the PCB's Central Executive Commission that "José Leandro should not be abandoned," the Federação dos Trabalhadores (FTRJ) issued a "Manifesto of the workers," which was published in the daily press. The PCB persuaded Paulo de Lacerda, youngest brother of Maurício, to act as José Leandro's lawyer. The original Comitê Pró Liberdade resigned, explaining that "people or organizations with political-Bolshevik purposes" had taken over the fight.<sup>10</sup>

Anarchists had argued that José Leandro had killed no one. The PCB-inspired workers' manifesto was based on a new slogan: "He killed, yes, but in self-defense."<sup>11</sup> The PCB got promises of help from Irineu Machado and Mendes Tavares, rival candidates in the February 1924 election for a Senate seat.

After judges ruled favorably on the petition for a trial by jury, the two candidates' lawyers argued for the defense before the seven jurymen (respected persons from the area) in the crowded courtroom. Paulo de Lacerda, known as a serious scholar of Jesuit writings,<sup>12</sup> created a sensation by speaking "in the name of the Communist Party of Brazil, Section of the Communist International" on behalf of "my brother, José Leandro."<sup>13</sup> Early in 1924 thousands of workers (fifteen thousand, according to one report)<sup>14</sup> left their jobs "to be at the judgment and the debate, and to comfort the comrade." The jury freed José Leandro.

<sup>7</sup> Mauro Serra, "Façam o Que Eu Digo e Não o Que Faço" (Petrópolis), *A Plebe* 6, no. 217 (September 1, 1923).

<sup>8</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 221 (October 27, 1923). Meetings to raise money for the Comitê Pró Liberdade are mentioned in *A Plebe* of June 24, 1922, August 5, 1922, January 27, 1923, and March 24, 1923.

<sup>9</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, June 27, 1971.

<sup>10</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 221 (October 27, 1923).

<sup>11</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, August 28, 1971.

<sup>12</sup> Carlos Lacerda, interview, July 3, 1971.

<sup>13</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, June 27, 1971.

<sup>14</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 229 (February 16, 1924).

When the grateful former prisoner went to the pharmacy, Brandão said: "You escaped, but you better go to the northeast."<sup>15</sup> Because the Bernardes government, starting in July 1924, took particularly strong measures to repress subversion, it was probably fortunate for José Leandro (nicknamed "Pernambuco" after his natal state) that he followed Brandão's advice and dropped out of the picture.

<sup>15</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, June 27, 1971.

## 12. May 1, 1924: A Revelation of Disorganization

In Rio the PCB, the FTRJ, Sarandi Raposo's CSCB, and Textile Workers' Union President Manuel de Castro called on their followers to assemble at 2:00 P.M. on May 1 at Praça Mauá. Among the unions supporting this rally were the Associação Gráfica do Rio de Janeiro (AGRJ—Graphic Association of Rio de Janeiro), the Union of Bakery Employees, the Textile Workers' Union, the Union of Clothes Cleaners, the Tailors' Union, the Cabinetmakers' Alliance, and the Marble Workers' Center.<sup>1</sup> Directors of the Centro Cosmopolita also favored the Praça Mauá commemoration.

The anarchist Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro (FORJ) asked its supporters to attend the rally to be held at Praça 11 de Junho at 2:00 P.M., following noon meetings at the FORJ headquarters and at the new headquarters of the Union of Civil Construction Workers. The FORJ had the adherence of the Alliance of Workers in Footwear, the Union of Civil Construction Workers, the General Union of Metalworkers, the Association of Naval Carpenters, the Syndicate of Tilemakers, the Syndicate of Foundrymen, the Union of Blacksmiths, the Industrial Union of Coopers, and the General Union of Employees in Hotels, Restaurants, and Cafés.<sup>2</sup>

Both rallies were poorly attended.

No more than fifteen hundred were at Praça Mauá. The banner of the Textile Workers' Union could not be displayed there because the number

<sup>1</sup> "No Meio Operario," *O Paiz*, May 1, 1924, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. The Centro Cosmopolita mentioned rumors that the General Union of Employees in Hotels, Restaurants, and Cafés might be made up of strikebreakers (see "Colaboração e Controversia: Centro Cosmopolita," *O Paiz*, May 2, 1924, p. 7).



of textile workers favoring the rally was less than the number required for such a step, according to a general assembly ruling.<sup>3</sup>

The anarchists' rally at Praça 11 de Junho turned into a parade in which five hundred were said to have participated.<sup>4</sup> After the parade, anarchists visited the Praça Mauá rally, which was still under way, and distributed anti-Communist bulletins—thus providing, according to *O Paiz*, the day's "disagreeable note."

The Praça Mauá speechmaking was supplied by the PCB. Pedro Serra, the FTRJ's secretary-general, was followed by João Valentim Argolo (president of the Centro Cosmopolita), Constantino Machado (of the Union of Bakery Employees), José Elias da Silva (official orator of the FTRJ), marble worker Minervino de Oliveira, and Paulo de Lacerda. Paulo de Lacerda, the eloquent "delegate of the PCB," praised the Russian revolution and harshly rebuked supporters of capitalism.

Sarandi Raposo and his team had opportunities to speak at the evening assemblies held at labor unions. Evaristo de Moraes, head of the fiscal board of the CSCB, gave the principal address at the Centro Cosmopolita's assembly. The assembly of the FTRJ, held at the Textile Workers' Union, heard Paulo de Lacerda, Manuel de Castro, and CSCB President Raposo.

"How many people should be seeking admittance here?" Raposo asked. "At least thirty thousand. And how many are here? Only five hundred." He recalled when the Textile Workers' Union alone could furnish fifteen thousand well-disciplined members at meetings. The figures, he said, proved the need of labor organization and the "imperative necessity" of an understanding among the leaders of the masses. He argued that "small divergences—trifling matters in comparison with great goals—" were being presented as "serious controversies," making labor organization difficult.<sup>5</sup>

In São Paulo, anarchist members of a joint committee drafting a May Day manifesto, introduced references to Bolshevik violence in Russia. After Communists arranged to have them omitted from the printed manifesto, anarchists complained of "the control" exercised by Bolsheviks in the work of the committee.<sup>6</sup>

João da Costa Pimenta, uninterested in contributing to the schism, was

<sup>3</sup> "No Meio Operario," *O Paiz*, May 2, 1924.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> "Resposta a 'O Internacional'," *A Plebe* 7, no. 240 (June 14, 1924).

concerned about the weakness of organized labor in São Paulo.<sup>7</sup> In his May Day speech in the Celso Garcia Room, he expressed regret that so many workers had deserted their unions and left "the social struggle."<sup>8</sup>

After Pimenta spoke, Florentino de Carvalho delivered a scathing anti-Bolshevik tirade. Amidst interruptions by the Communist minority, he protested emotionally against the persecution of anarchists by Russian Bolsheviks, "who, without a trace of humanity, kill, expel, arrest, and slander." He proclaimed that the Russian anarchists preferred to "be burned by the fire raging in the dungeons," or "suicide itself," to the "horrors of captivity and the cruelties of the Bolshevik hangmen."<sup>9</sup> Communists left the Celso Garcia Room amidst jeering and laughter.

*O Internacional* branded as "completely unfounded" *A Plebe's* report that João da Costa Pimenta had given his May Day speech "in the name of the Communist Party." It complained that the anarchist orators had been "intentionally prepared" to use May Day to attack "sovietism" more than fascism.

*A Plebe* replied that whether or not Pimenta spoke in the name of the Party was a "trifling" matter for "he is the motor of the Bolshevik wheel in São Paulo, . . . the future Commissar of the People. . . . If he did not declare he was there in the name of the Party it is due to Jesuitism, to cleverness."<sup>10</sup> The "intentional preparation" of the anarchist orators, *A Plebe* said, "showed our force."

*O Trabalhador Graphico* announced that it was refraining from commenting on the Celso Garcia Room rally except to say that "the intolerance and pure sectarianism of elements who call themselves organizers of the proletariat caused the disappearance, on this May First, of one more hope for proletarian organization in São Paulo."<sup>11</sup> In *O Trabalhador Graphico*, Isidoro Diego, who had done much for the graphic workers' strike of 1923,<sup>12</sup> told of some "interminable" May Day speeches and said that "extremists" had taken advantage of the commemoration to carry

<sup>7</sup> Reflecting the weakness, a recent textile workers' strike had failed. See *A Plebe* 6, no. 231 (March 15, 1924).

<sup>8</sup> "As Comemorações do 1º de Maio," *A Plebe* 6, no. 235 (May 10, 1924).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> "Resposta a 'O Internacional'," *A Plebe* 7, no. 240 (June 14, 1924).

<sup>11</sup> "1º de Maio: As Comemorações," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 49.

<sup>12</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, letter, April 14, 1970.

out their "action," thereby "converting into disharmony an assembly called for far different objectives."<sup>13</sup>

Edgard Leuenroth, who had recovered enough to speak at union meetings, attacked Diego, "my old colleague of the trade," for having commented "disloyally" about a May Day speaker and for having described speeches as "inconclusive and interminable."<sup>14</sup> Leuenroth also replied to articles in *O Internacional* and *O Solidario*, signed Alma Rubra, which praised Marx, downgraded Bakunin, and pictured anarchists as "raging, and spraying all the cursed bile of their livers."<sup>15</sup> Leuenroth, reminiscing about "dozens of years" of hard work by anarchists, including the new Brazilian Bolsheviks, was inclined to judge Alma Rubra an inexperienced militant, uninformed about Bakunin and the past accomplishments of Brazilian anarchists, rather than a "hypochondriac."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Antonio Pires (pseudonym of Isidoro Diego), "Palavras ao Vento," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 3, no. 49.

<sup>14</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "Pruridos Anti-anarchicos," *A Plebe* 6, no. 238 (May 31, 1924).

<sup>15</sup> Alma Rubra, "O Triumpho de Marx," *O Internacional* 6, no. 72 (April 15, 1924); and "Intolerancia Anarchica," *O Solidario* 1, no. 22 (May 22, 1924). See also Alma Rubra, "Desfazendo Equivocos," *O Solidario* 1, no. 23 (June 10, 1924).

<sup>16</sup> Leuenroth, "Pruridos Anti-anarchicos."



BOOK VI: *Revolts and Imprisonments, 1924–1926*





## 1. Military Plotters Approach Labor Leaders (1923)

Following the unsuccessful Army revolt in July 1922, young officers who had participated in it or who sympathized with it prepared a new uprising and sought converts to their cause, "Representation and Justice."

In February or March 1923, a representative of Maurício de Lacerda asked Everardo Dias, then a resident of Rio, to arrange to print five hundred copies of a circular. A week later he told Dias the details of an insurrectional plan and asked for a general strike of support by factory and transport workers. Dias explained that the general strike was impossible, for the labor unions were constantly watched and hampered by the police, who took advantage of the state of siege to act arbitrarily. However, to see if something might be done, Dias took the matter up with the PCB and spoke with labor leaders. He found only "weak acceptance," because of fears of union closings and arrests.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, the military plotters sought support from Oiticica in the anarcho-sindicalist-oriented organizations and began talks with Evaristo de Moraes and Sarandi Raposo, whose Confederação Sindicalista Cooperativista Brasileira (CSCB) was considered influential among railroad and mining workers in the three southern states.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

At the time Everardo Dias was speaking with PCB leaders, retired Colonel Isidoro Dias Lopes, a leading conspirator, came from São Paulo for the same purpose. He explained to the Communists that success required simultaneous uprisings in Rio and São Paulo. Because the PCB had only a few hundred members, its leaders told him the Party was weak—a statement he doubted. But they added that the PCB would back the proposed movement to overthrow “the common enemy, President Bernardes,” by helping to arm workers.<sup>3</sup>

Spies of Rio Police Chief Carneiro da Fontoura learned of the conspiratorial conversations. Therefore, starting in April 1923, some Army and Navy officers were arrested. The authorities, aided by the explosion of a bomb at the entrance of a Rio bakery,<sup>4</sup> also moved against labor leaders.

Police, seeking evidence with which to convict suspected military officers, invaded Everardo Dias's home, arrested him, and went off with his books and papers (which they did not return).<sup>5</sup> Among those arrested elsewhere in Rio were Luís Peres (PCB founder), Otávio Brandão, José Gonçalves, Antônio de Oliveira, Pedro Maurini, Vincente Llorca, Silvano Borges, and Joaquim Silva.<sup>6</sup> When the General Union of Employees in Hotels and Restaurants held a meeting to protest the jailing of Pedro Maurini, a foreign-born anarchist, the police assaulted the union headquarters, closed down the headquarters of the Union of Civil Construction Workers, and arrested Florentino de Carvalho.<sup>7</sup> At this time the police brought an end to *Movimento Comunista*.

Luís Peres and Antônio de Oliveira, Brazilian-born Communists, and Pedro Maurini were held for ninety days.<sup>8</sup> Most of the labor leaders were released sooner, with a warning: the presidency might order the shipment of “obdurate agitators” to a colony on the malaria-infested banks of the Oiapoque River on the frontier of French Guiana.<sup>9</sup> Army and Navy men found guilty of plotting were to be expelled from the military and turned over to the police.<sup>10</sup>

Isidoro Dias Lopes asked Everardo Dias to speak with friends in São

<sup>3</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, August 30, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, April 9, 1923.

<sup>5</sup> Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais*, p. 131.

<sup>6</sup> “A Reação Policial no Rio,” *A Plebe* 6, no. 211 (June 9, 1923). See also, *A Plebe* 6, no. 213 (July 7, 1923); and 6, no. 216 (August 18, 1923).

<sup>7</sup> *A Plebe* 6, no. 212 (June 23, 1923).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, no. 216 (August 18, 1923).

<sup>9</sup> Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais*, p. 131.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131–132.



Paulo who might want to cooperate with the plot. Everardo did so, returning to Rio optimistic about the outlook for an uprising in São Paulo. But he felt that the military conspirators were giving insufficient attention to "the destitution of the poor" and were "viewing events in a purely military manner."<sup>11</sup> Expressing the need of an advanced, progressive program in favor of the working masses, he was told that Maurício de Lacerda was in charge of making studies designed to change the nation's political and economic structure.<sup>12</sup>

In part the dislike for Bernardes among military officers went back to October 1921, when Mário Rodrigues, working for Edmundo Bittencourt at *Correio da Manhã*, published in that opposition daily some facsimiles of forged letters insulting the military, apparently in Bernardes's handwriting. After achieving the presidency in November 1922, Bernardes pushed for passage of the Press Law, which listed punishments for publishing attacks against the president, "public morals or good customs," or foreign heads of state or their diplomatic representatives.<sup>13</sup>

The Press Law was signed by Bernardes on October 31, 1923. Those who detested the president denounced it as a manifestation of his dictatorial ways. Nine days after it became effective, *Correio da Manhã* described Epiácio Pessoa as a reprobate, tyrant, comedian, and "king of the necklaces" in an article which repeated an old charge that he had, while president, accepted a valuable pearl necklace for his wife from sugar producers and then gone on to favor them by removing restrictions on sugar exports.<sup>14</sup> Nicanor do Nascimento's telling of the necklace story in the Chamber of Deputies in 1920 was said to have been a reason why in May 1921 the congressional majority had rejected his credentials, failing to seat him in spite of his victory at the polls.<sup>15</sup>

In November 1923 Epiácio Pessoa charged that Mário Rodrigues, manager of *Correio da Manhã* during Edmundo Bittencourt's sojourn abroad, was guilty of slander. The ensuing law suit attracted much attention because the defendant's lawyer, Evaristo de Moraes, argued that the Press Law was unconstitutional. When the case reached the Supreme Court

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>13</sup> Legislative Decree No. 4743 of October 31, 1923, regulating the liberty of the press.

<sup>14</sup> Edgard Costa, *Os Grandes Julgamentos do Supremo Tribunal Federal*, I, 352-353.

<sup>15</sup> Mario Rodrigues, *Meu Libello: Memórias do Carcere, Escriptas em Torno de Duas Revoluções*, 1ª Parte, pp. 265-267.



A deserted Bernardes: "I call and no one answers; I look and see no one." (*Correio da Manhã*)

in April 1924 Epitácio was helped by the vote of former Police Chief Geminiano da Franca, who had been appointed to the Supreme Court. Mário Rodrigues was sentenced to spend a year in prison and pay a fine of ten thousand mil-réis.<sup>16</sup> He went to jail early in July 1924.

<sup>16</sup> Mário Rodrigues regretted that illness prevented Sebastião de Lacerda, "the Incorruptible," from participating in the court decision (see *ibid.*, p. 158). For Epitácio Pessoa's comments on the affair of the pearl necklace, the court decision, and the "'journalistic ethics' of the opposition," see Epitácio Pessoa, *Pela Verdade*, I, 503-560.

## 2. Revolt in São Paulo, July 5, 1924

Military conspirators, inspired more by former Army Captain Joaquim Távora than by cautious "revolutionary chief" Isidoro Dias Lopes, rebelled in the city of São Paulo on July 5, 1924, second anniversary of the uprising in Rio. In this action, rebels of 1922 and new Army adepts were joined by São Paulo state police contingents under Major Miguel Costa. They forced Governor Carlos de Campos and loyalist troops out of the city on July 8.

At the same time, mobs sacked stores in Brás and Moóca. On July 9, with São Paulo dominated by Isidoro's revolutionaries, the sacking spread to warehouses, markets, and other stores.<sup>1</sup> *A Plebe* noted regretfully that "many people took advantage of the occasion, and much wasting and ruining of foodstuffs occurred," but added that the scenes made evident the hunger in the homes of those who carried out the sacking. Isidoro worked out arrangements with José Carlos de Macedo Soares, head of the São Paulo Commercial Association, for the protection of markets and warehouses.

Isidoro armed and incorporated into his force a good many foreign workers, particularly those with World War I experience in Europe. But radical labor leaders were disappointed in the "revolutionary general." They wanted arms for the formation of "genuinely popular battalions" to cut communications, stir up rebellion in the interior, and engage in guer-

<sup>1</sup> "Movimento Revolucionario," *A Plebe* 7, no. 244 (July 25, 1924).



*A Plebe*, July 25, 1924.

rilla fighting.<sup>2</sup> Isidoro, heeding Macedo Soares's warnings against Bolshevism, flatly rejected João da Costa Pimenta's ideas<sup>3</sup> and became inaccessible to other "radicals."

São Paulo anarchists, in a meeting with Pedro A. Mota, recognized that the military uprising had not been carried out by the people. Nevertheless, they saw some connection between it and the people. Appreciating that they had insufficient backing among the laboring and poor classes to make a revolution of their own, the São Paulo anarchists decided to accept Malatesta's thesis of joining all movements that seemed inspired by justice and liberty, in order to make them "the most 'ours' that is possible." They agreed with Malatesta that they might be abandoned, the victims of treason, for little reliance could be placed on promises made by "revolution-

<sup>2</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970. Ferreira Lima said that Pimenta spoke personally with Isidoro.



The conservative classes. (*A Plebe*, July 25, 1924)

aries." But the risk was felt worthwhile since inaction would mean the renouncement of any historical role for Brazilian anarchism. They resolved to back the uprising, if not materially, at least morally.<sup>4</sup>

In São Paulo on July 15, Pedro A. Mota, Antonino Domingues, Rodolfo Felipe, Pedro Zanela, José Righetti, and twenty-three others drew up "a Motion of the Labor Militants to the Committee of the Revolutionary Forces." The program contained suggestions for minimum wages, price ceilings, schooling, the right of laboring classes to assemble, liberty

<sup>4</sup> "Movimento Revolucionario."

of the proletarian press, extension of the eight-hour day, and modification of legislation about expulsions from Brazil.<sup>5</sup>

A few days before the revolt broke out, São Paulo's *O Combate*, under a front-page headline, "Revolution in Rio?" reported rumors of an impending assault on the presidential palace. In part, the excitement in Rio was due to extreme precautions taken by the government there. More suspected Army officers had been jailed, and General Santa Cruz, head of the presidential Casa Militar, was described as spending part of the night of July 2 visiting strategic points.<sup>6</sup> On July 3 the government in Rio, worried about the ease with which arrested officers arranged to visit their families, resolved to place them aboard warships.<sup>7</sup>

The Rio police acted vigorously after receiving news of the July 5 São Paulo uprising. A number of anarchists were seized because Domingos Passos made the mistake of going ahead with a meeting scheduled for the evening of the fifth.<sup>8</sup> Opposition writers and newspapermen and lawyer Evaristo de Moraes were herded into cells full of common criminals.

Congress declared a sixty-day state of siege in the federal capital and the states of Rio and São Paulo and authorized President Bernardes to extend, whenever he saw fit, its length and the area it covered.<sup>9</sup> Labor union headquarters and the proletarian press were closed,<sup>10</sup> and prominent labor leaders who had escaped arrest went into hiding. Marshal Carneiro da Fontoura (known as "General Ignorance" by his belittlers) sent police contingents to guard the streetcars and Ribeirão das Lages power plant of the Rio Light and Power Company.<sup>11</sup> For the time being, nothing more

<sup>5</sup> "Uma Moção de Militantes Operarios ao Comité das Forças Revolucionarias," *A Plebe* 7, no. 244 (July 25, 1924).

<sup>6</sup> "Revolução no Rio," *O Combate* 10, no. 2719 (São Paulo, July 3, 1924).

<sup>7</sup> "O Rio Revolucionario," *O Combate*, July 4, 1924.

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, Rio de Janeiro, August 30, 1970.

<sup>9</sup> Decreto (do Poder Legislativo) Número 4,836 de 5 de Julho de 1924. Decretos (do Poder Executivo) Números 16,526A of July 14, 1924; 16,535 of July 27, 1924; and 16,563 of August 26, 1924, extended the state of siege to cover Sergipe and Bahia, Amazonas and Pará, and Mato Grosso. Decreto (do Poder Executivo) 16,579 extended the state of siege to the end of 1924. Other extensions followed. The state of siege expired at the end of 1926.

<sup>10</sup> For example, see report of the Centro Cosmopolita (*Correio da Manhã*, July 15, 1924) advising of the postponement of its election due to the closing of its headquarters. *Voz Cosmopolita* was one of the proletarian newspapers that had to suspend publication.

<sup>11</sup> "Providencias para a Light," *Correio da Manhã*, July 6, 1924.

serious occurred in the federal capital than the circulation of subversive manifestoes, such as that of Colonel Paulo de Oliveira, chief of the São Paulo rebel staff.

Outbreaks in favor of the São Paulo insurgents occurred in the northeastern state of Sergipe and in the city of Manaus on the Amazon. But they did not prevent the Bernardes government from throwing a large force against São Paulo City. The ensuing bombardment, during which Joaquim Távora was killed, was described by José Carlos de Macedo Soares as cruelly destroying São Paulo. Arguing that the Bernardes government should make peace with the rebels, Macedo Soares asserted that the destruction of the industrial complex of the state would lead the unemployed to rise against social order and that "the workers are already agitating and Bolshevik aspirations are openly announced."<sup>12</sup>

As Bernardes would not listen to Macedo Soares or others with similar views, the São Paulo rebels decided to leave the city while they had the opportunity. With plenty of arms and munitions, Isidoro Dias Lopes, Miguel Costa, and three thousand rebels departed on July 27 by train on a trip west to the Paraná River.

The state government of Carlos de Campos, reinstated in São Paulo, closed down *A Plebe*. Among those it arrested were Pedro A. Mota, Benjamim Mota, José Carlos de Macedo Soares, Júlio de Mesquita of *O Estado de S. Paulo*, and railroad workers who had assisted the rebel escape. The state and federal governments believed Macedo Soares and Mesquita would, in forthcoming investigations, be found guilty of cooperating with the revolt.<sup>13</sup>

*O Combate*, no longer under the influence of the Rangel Pestana family, analyzed the revolt, "so unexpected in our land of work and order." It concluded that the uprising, "the robbing of our food and the sacking of our homes," had been the work of "a horde of uniformed pirates, joined by a mob of miserable ragamuffins and formally dressed types, who signed articles in the mercenary newspapers in praise of Isidoro, the well-known thief, and Paulo de Oliveira, the bandit." *O Combate* called on "the noble and generous people of São Paulo" to "back the patriotic government by naming, for deserved punishment, those who had plundered the deposits and warehouses."<sup>14</sup> To help the Paulistas recover, the

<sup>12</sup> Abilio de Noronha, *Narrando a Verdade*, pp. 79, 92.

<sup>13</sup> *O Combate*, August 4, 7, 1924.

<sup>14</sup> *O Combate* 10, no. 2736 (August 4, 1924).

federal Congress enacted a decree declaring a financial moratorium in the state, effective for forty-five days after July 4.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Decreto (do Poder Legislativo) Número 4,843 of August 5, 1924.

### 3. More Revolts, 1924–1925

In Rio in August 1924 the government forced the discontinuance of the oppositionist daily, *Correio da Manhã*. Only very small printers were able to defy the government. One of these was Antônio Bernardo Canelas. As the police could not locate his "insignificant" press,<sup>1</sup> Canelas, assisted by the Mota Lima brothers (Rodolfo, Paulo, and Pedro),<sup>2</sup> was able to use it to publish *5 de Julho*, a weekly supporting the military rebels.

Oppositionist manifestoes appeared from time to time. One of them presented a lengthy plan "so that it will not be said that we are simply piqued and discontented, revolutionaries without a program." It called for a rent reduction of 50 percent, radical tax reform, the reconstruction of legislatures along lines of class representation, advanced labor laws, the end of domination by large landowners, and the establishment of peasant cooperatives.<sup>3</sup> These demands did not reflect the views of the chief military rebels, whose program would appear in *5 de Julho* over a year later.

An emissary of conspiring Navy Captain Protógenes Guimarães asked Everardo Dias, hiding in Rio, to print a manifesto for distribution a few hours before the outbreak of a naval insurrection planned for September 7, 1924. Dias completed the job, but police arrested him on August 24, 1924, a day or so after he turned over the copies to the conspirators.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> José Oiticica, "Anarchistas e Bolchevistas," *Ação Direta* 11, no. 114 (January, February 1957).

<sup>2</sup> Rodolfo, the oldest, was not a Communist. The other two were.

<sup>3</sup> Aliança Libertadora, "Manifesto ao Povo Brasileiro," Rio de Janeiro, November 11, 1924.

<sup>4</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 143; Everardo Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, p. 266.



After a new date was set for the naval uprising, October 12, 1924, Protógenes Guimarães sent an emissary to ask Joaquim Pimenta to furnish at least two hundred insurrectionary workers. The law professor, who had infuriated Recife leftists by taking a post in the federal Justice Ministry in Rio,<sup>5</sup> refused; he pointed out that, even if he could gather that many rebel workers in Rio, few would act at the decisive moment and some might, by indiscretion, reveal plans to the police. Besides, Joaquim Pimenta was devoted to ailing Justice Minister João Luís Alves, who vouched for him when Police Chief Fontoura became suspicious.<sup>6</sup>

Shortly before October 12, Protógenes Guimarães and many of his military and civilian associates were arrested. At the same time the government's position in Rio was strengthened by the return of the cruiser *Barroso*, which had helped put down the uprisings in Amazonas.

In spite of these setbacks, a rebellion in the Navy occurred on November 4, 1924. First Lieutenant Herculino Cascardo and seven second lieutenants, helped by sailors and civilians, took control of the battleship *São Paulo* and imprisoned the loyal officers on board. Loyalist Navy Lieutenant-Captain Carlos Pena Boto expressed his horror: "Dumbfounded and appalled, on November 4, 1924, I saw, in effect, the symbol of anarchism waving on the proud ship!"<sup>7</sup>

Loyalists maintained control of the *Minas Gerais*, the Navy's other large battleship. Cascardo and his fellow revolutionaries, disappointed, sailed south to Uruguay, where they abandoned the *São Paulo* to its loyal officers and prepared to join with other revolutionaries in Rio Grande do Sul.

An insurrection had broken out in Rio Grande do Sul in October 1924. At the end of the year, when it seemed likely to be crushed, former Army Captain Luís Carlos Prestes led the bulk of the Gaúcho revolutionaries—two thousand strong—on a difficult march north to join the Paulista

<sup>5</sup> *Maracajá*, published in Recife in 1926 by Manuel de Souza Barros and Raul Karacik, criticized Joaquim Pimenta for his post "at the side of the inquisitorial hosts of Fontoura." See Chapter 6 of Manuel de Souza Barros, "A Década 20 em Pernambuco," which criticizes Joaquim Pimenta for abandoning his Pernambuco followers.

<sup>6</sup> Joaquim Pimenta, *Retalhos do Passado: Episódios que Vivi e Ftaos que Testemunhei*, p. 358.

<sup>7</sup> Carlos Penna Botto, quoted in H. Sobral Pinto and R. Lopes Machado, *O Caso da "Narrativa do Motim a Bordo do Encouraçado São Paulo, Exarada no Livro da Torre 3": Alegações de Defesa, pelos Advogados H. Sobral Pinto e R. Lopes Machado*, p. 14.

Column of Isidoro Dias Lopes, which had reached Iguaçú Falls in southwest Paraná near the Argentine-Paraguay border.

While the Prestes Column pressed on, a part of the Paulista Column dug in east of the Paraná River, at Catanduvas, Paraná, to hold off superior federal forces. Just as the Prestes Column, reduced by desertions to about eight hundred men, joined Isidoro's revolutionaries at Iguaçú Falls in March 1925, the almost four hundred surviving defenders of Catanduvas were forced to surrender.

In April 1925 Isidoro went to Argentina to try to promote a new uprising in Rio Grande do Sul. Miguel Costa and Luís Carlos Prestes led the remainders of the Paulista and Prestes columns—about twelve hundred men—into the interior of Brazil, thus beginning the revolutionary Long March that ended in Bolivia in January 1927. The Miguel Costa-Prestes Column covered fourteen thousand miles throughout the Brazilian interior, eluding or fighting off proadministration pursuers in the backlands. It kept the flame of revolt alive and won fame for many of its participants, particularly for Prestes. The Miguel Costa-Prestes Column became known as the Prestes Column.

While the Long March led by Costa and Prestes began moving in 1925 through Paraguay, Army Captain Carlos da Costa Leite and two other conspirators escaped by boat from the island prison camp on Ilha Grande and joined Army Captain Leopoldo Néri da Fonseca, who was plotting in Rio to seize the Third Infantry Regiment barracks and attack nearby Fort São João. The attempt to seize the barracks was made on the evening of May 2, 1925. After understandings had been reached with some sergeants in the barracks, Néri da Fonseca, Costa Leite, and seven others, some in uniforms indicating considerable rank, drove to the barracks in two cars and announced to guards that they had assumed command. After they were admitted, a sergeant asked a guard to join the conspiracy. But the guards, who controlled the munitions, fired on the newcomers. Jansen de Melo, who had rebelled in Mato Grosso in July 1922, was killed; the others fled in the cars that had brought them.<sup>8</sup>

On May 23, 1925, the proadministration *Correio Paulistano* declared that "complete order reigns in all the country." The newspaper emphasized the "impotence of the last revolutionary elements" and told of

<sup>8</sup> Ilvo Meireles, interview, November 1, 1968; Carlos da Costa Leite, interview, July 5, 1971.

steps the government was taking to end "perverse rumors, which alarm without reason."<sup>9</sup>

Eight days later, two members of the São Paulo state police were killed when conspirators tried unsuccessfully to take control of the First Cavalry Regiment of the Força Pública in the state capital.<sup>10</sup> The effort was part of a plan to have simultaneous uprisings in several São Paulo cities. It was immediately followed by a pronouncement in which "revolutionaries" in Barretos, in the north of the state, declared the movement to be headed by Filogônio Teodoro de Carvalho, on orders from Generalíssimo Isidoro Dias Lopes. Filogônio and his men arrested the police *delegado* of Barretos and his friends, seized telephone and telegraph services, and occupied the railroad station. While stores were sacked, railroad workers were forced to pull up track.

Filogônio's revolutionaries (described as the worst sort of bandits by the authorities) were prevented from seizing a nearby railroad station by eight police officers and thirty civilians, led by the assistant of the imprisoned Barretos *delegado*. Then the rebels went north to the Minas Gerais border, where the police of Minas and São Paulo captured them on June 4, 1925.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Situação Tranquillíssima," *Correio Paulistano*, May 23, 1925, reprinted in *O Estado do S. Paulo*, May 24, 1925.

<sup>10</sup> "Movimentos Subversivos," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 24, 1925.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4. Communists Join Cleto Campelo

As a lieutenant in Pernambuco in June 1922, Cleto da Costa Campelo had joined other young officers in telegraphing Military Club President Hermes da Fonseca to protest what they considered Army intervention in the state. Hermes's sympathetic response, infuriating the Epitácio Pessoa government, had resulted in Hermes's arrest and the closing of the Military Club, events that had led to the uprising of July 5, 1922. Campelo had been imprisoned for an antigovernment statement and transferred to Mato Grosso.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rosa, Ilvo, and Antônio Meireles, and Carlos da Costa Leite, interview, September 6, 1963.

When the Prestes Column began its Long March in 1925, Campelo deserted the Army and tried to start an uprising in Mato Grosso. After it failed, he went, via Uruguay, to Pernambuco, where his popularity, the memories of military-political events of 1922, and considerable discontent, made an important uprising a good possibility. In April 1925 the state government had already broken up what it called the "Conspiracy of Rua Velha," a meeting of men, among them Cristiano Cordeiro, who were dissatisfied with the local regime.<sup>2</sup>

The conspirators in Pernambuco sent for Josias Carneiro Leão, a young Communist journalist,<sup>3</sup> member of a prominent Pernambuco family, who had been arrested in Rio in December 1924 for conspiring with Carlos da Costa Leite and Gustavo and Osvaldo Cordeiro de Farias. In April 1925 Josias Leão and nine other prisoners, some with loaded pistols, had escaped from Rio's Casa de Detenção after spending two months sawing and separating bars in an underground passage.<sup>4</sup>

Late in 1925, Josias Leão went from Rio to Recife, where he learned that Cleto Campelo and his fellow conspirators planned to take over Recife when the Prestes Column reached Pernambuco, thus giving the column control of an important area.<sup>5</sup> Josias Leão and former Army Lieutenant Valdemar de Paula Lima, "sympathizer of the PCB,"<sup>6</sup> were sent through the backlands to the north of Brazil to make the arrangements with the column.

Near Teresina, Piauí, where the envoys found the column,<sup>7</sup> they were asked by its leaders to advise Campelo to carry out his uprising where he felt it most advantageous, and, in case it failed, to join the column when it passed through Triunfo, Pernambuco, between February 12 and 15, 1926.<sup>8</sup> Miguel Costa and Prestes prepared manifestoes not only for the people of Pernambuco but also for those of Paraíba, which the column would cross to reach Pernambuco and where an uprising was also scheduled. Column leaders declared: "We are not bandits; we are loyal and

<sup>2</sup> Manuel de Souza Barros, "A Década 20 em Pernambuco," Chapter 7.

<sup>3</sup> Jorge Amado, *O Cavaleiro da Esperança*, p. 178 n.

<sup>4</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, interview, June 28, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Souza Barros, "A Década 20 em Pernambuco," Chapter 7; Lourenço Moreira Lima, *A Coluna Prestes: Marchas e Combates*, pp. 220, 235.

<sup>6</sup> Manuel de Souza Barros, letter, July 3, 1971.

<sup>7</sup> João Alberto Lins de Barros, *Memórias de um Revolucionário*, p. 131.

<sup>8</sup> Lourenço Moreira Lima, *A Coluna Prestes*, p. 235.

disinterested fighters for a sacred cause, a cause which epitomizes the most ardent hopes of our nationality."<sup>9</sup>

Hopeful about the northeast, Miguel Costa and Prestes described the "sacred cause" in a declaration of "Motives and Ideas of the Revolution." The motives were "financial and economic disorder, exorbitant taxes, administrative dishonesty, lack of justice, falsehood of the vote, muzzling the press, disrespect for the autonomy of the states, lack of social legislation, and the modification of the Constitution during the state of siege." The ideas were: "assurance of the regime of the Constitution of 1891, establishment of free primary education and professional and technical education throughout all of Brazil, assurance of liberty of thought, unification of justice under the federal Supreme Court, unification of the electoral regime and establishment of secret and obligatory vote, fiscal unification, assurance of municipal liberty, punishment of the embezzlers of the people's patrimony, termination of the anomaly of a public treasury in debt while professional politicians prosper, and rigorous economy of public money along with efficient assistance to the nation's economic forces."<sup>10</sup>

While Valdemar de Paula Lima and Josias Leão returned to Recife, the column reached Paraíba. There eleven young men under Aristóteles de Sousa Dantas and Serão da Mota started a revolt to support the column, but it was easily crushed because of the work of a spy.<sup>11</sup>

On February 8, 1926, with the column approaching Pernambuco, Cleto Campelo met with the Recife conspirators at the home of Cristiano Cordeiro to assign missions to be carried out by assault groups before dawn on February 9.<sup>12</sup> Among those present were Cristiano Cordeiro, Manuel de Sousa Barros, Josias Carneiro Leão, Anfilóquio Cavalcânti, and some workers. Later on the eighth Anfilóquio Cavalcânti, a Navy sergeant, mentioned the plans to his sister. Scared of dynamite and revolution, she spoke about the plot to her husband, José Pedro da Silva, and he reported to the police.<sup>13</sup> Therefore on the eve of the planned insurrection, some

<sup>9</sup> Miguel Costa and L. Carlos Prestes, "Ao Povo Parahybano," *5 de Julho*, July 5, 1926 (Edição Commemorativa).

<sup>10</sup> Miguel Costa and L. Carlos Prestes, "Motivos e Ideaes da Revolução," *5 de Julho*, July 5, 1926.

<sup>11</sup> Lourenço Moreira Lima, *A Coluna Prestes*, p. 251.

<sup>12</sup> Testimony of Cândido Torres, in Souza Barros, "A Década 20 em Pernambuco," Chapter 7.

<sup>13</sup> Testimony of José Pedro da Silva, in *ibid.*

conspirators were arrested and others fled. Josias Leão and Anfilóquio went south to Palmeiras.<sup>14</sup>

During ten days in hiding, the determined Cleto Campelo, aided by Valdemar de Paula Lima, plotted with workers, among them three PCB members: bakers José Francisco de Barros and José Caetano Machado, and civil construction worker Sabino Cardoso da Silva.<sup>15</sup> Starting from José Francisco de Barros's home at midnight of February 17–18, the rebels made their way westward to Jaboatão, where Campelo, threatening with a pistol, forced the guards of a prison to free the prisoners. The group, grown to about twenty-five with the released prisoners, took control of a freight train.<sup>16</sup> After railroad workers had been forced to tear up tracks to the rear, the trainload of rebels, shouting "long live the revolution," proceeded to the interior. Stations and towns were attacked, dynamite and money were stolen, telegraph apparatus was destroyed, and a passing passenger train was immobilized. At lunchtime on February 18, Campelo took over a hotel in Vitória, Pernambuco, and ordered meals for his group, which had grown to seventy or eighty rebels.<sup>17</sup>

At Gravatá, later in the day, the rebels, shooting and throwing bombs, assaulted Army barracks. After twenty minutes of fighting, during which Cleto Campelo was killed, the rebels withdrew to the train.<sup>18</sup>

Valdemar de Paula Lima, who assumed command, decided to abandon the train when he heard that a large force was coming by rail from the west. His group, reduced to thirty, marched inland, helped by a few horses acquired at a plantation on February 19. On the twenty-second the police caught up with the rebels, killing some and arresting many.<sup>19</sup> The dead included Valdemar de Paula Lima, said to have been struck by a knife in the head after his arrest,<sup>20</sup> and Communist baker José Francisco de Barros.

<sup>14</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, interview, June 28, 1971.

<sup>15</sup> Manuel de Souza Barros, letter, July 3, 1971.

<sup>16</sup> Testimony of Sabino Cardoso da Silva, in *Diário do Estado*, Recife, March 14, 1926; also in Souza Barros, "A Década 20 em Pernambuco." Souza Barros, in his letter of July 3, 1971, states that Sabino Cardoso da Silva (Communist construction worker) was tortured after the Cleto Campelo uprising was put down, but nevertheless refused to reveal the names of his companions.

<sup>17</sup> Testimony of Sabino Cardoso da Silva, in *Diário do Estado*, Recife, March 14, 1926.

<sup>18</sup> Cleto Campelo's memory was honored when some of his Realengo Military School classmates (and others, such as Carlos da Costa Leite and members of the Mireles family) met in Pernambuco in 1963. Among those who spoke was General Humberto Castelo Branco.

<sup>19</sup> Testimony of Sabino Cardoso da Silva, *Diário do Estado*.

<sup>20</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, interview, June 28, 1971.

In Rio, speaking in the Chamber of Deputies, Congressman João Batista de Azevedo Lima accused the Pernambuco police of using Cleto Campelo's uprising as a reason for excessively harsh treatment of workers. He named four workers who he said were seized by the police, beaten, and deported to Fernando de Noronha Island.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *5 de Julho*, July 5, 1926.

## 5. Prisons in Rio

Everardo Dias, expert at describing bad air, poor food, and other disagreeable aspects of Rio prisons, wrote that the transfer of a political prisoner from one prison to another was designed to "annoy, torment, and disturb the nervous system of the prisoner, causing constant frights and shocks."<sup>1</sup>

For a political prisoner of the 1924-1926 era, it was not unusual to be imprisoned first of all, as was Everardo Dias, in the *geladeira* (ice box). In this eight-by-ten-meter cell, the most famous in the central police building, political prisoners often spent weeks. It was a noisy place, containing between 40 and 190 persons—mostly vagrants and thieves, who frequently fought with each other.<sup>2</sup>

From the Rio central police building, São Paulo anarchists Pedro A. Mota, Nino Martins, and José Maria Fernandes Varela sent notes to friends, pleading for food. They wrote that jailers and assaulting gangs of fellow prisoners had made off with most of the money that unarrested companions had sent them.<sup>3</sup>

If one were more fortunate than these anarchists (they were sent to the prison colony on the Oiapoque River), one might be transferred from the central police building to the Casa de Detenção (for "temporary" confinement). Everardo Dias, who likened this move to the passage from purgatory to the inferno,<sup>4</sup> and Nicolau Paradas, São Paulo anarchist, spent about

<sup>1</sup> Everardo Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas: 1924-1926*, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>3</sup> "As Miserias do Calabouço do Rio: Uma Carta de Pedro Motta," and "A Horível Odysseia de Varela," *A Plebe* 11, no. 245 (February 12, 1927).

<sup>4</sup> Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, p. 51.

two months with ten other prisoners in the Detenção's well-known Cell 59. The cell, about four meters square, was so dark that reading was never possible.<sup>5</sup>

The Detenção boasted of having, in addition to many small cells, a "basement" and a "fort," which were "worse than Cell 59."<sup>6</sup> "They are," said Senator Moniz Sodré, reading from a prisoner's letter, "gloomy, semi-subterranean dungeons, frightful places, reserved for incorrigible criminals. . . . Only uncommon resistance permits one to leave such a place alive."<sup>7</sup> From one of these "semi-subterranean dungeons," containing twenty-four prisoners, Josias Carneiro Leão and his nine companions made their escape in April 1925.

The Casa de Correção, much smaller than the nearby Casa de Detenção, held many "dangerous notables," arrested on July 5 and 6, 1924. Among those in its nine-by-twenty-meter Sala da Capela (Chapel Room) were Edmundo Bittencourt and his son Paulo, Mário Rodrigues, newspaperman José Eduardo de Macedo Soares (brother of José Carlos de Macedo Soares), José Oiticica, Evaristo de Moraes, Maurício and Paulo de Lacerda, and General Augusto Ximeno de Vileroy. The general had headed the Military Club study group that had said the false "Bernardes" letters, published by Mário Rodrigues and Edmundo Bittencourt in 1921, were authentic; he was accused by Marshal Fontoura of having planned a rebellion in March 1924.<sup>8</sup>

According to Agripino Nazaré, who was put in the Correção a little later in July, the honor of being the most hated by Bernardes was shared by Edmundo Bittencourt, José Eduardo de Macedo Soares, and Maurício de Lacerda.<sup>9</sup> The prison director, with orders to separate the three, moved them from the Chapel Room. The Bittencourts and Maurício de Lacerda were locked in small, cold cells on the prison's tenth gallery, and Macedo Soares in an infirmary cell. Although on one occasion Edmundo Bittencourt and the prison director had almost gotten into a fist fight, the director heeded the *Correio da Manhã's* owner when he said that his son and Mário Rodrigues were too ill to stand the tenth gallery cells: Mário

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from a prisoner to Senator Moniz Sodré, in *ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Aristides Dias Lopes, Santos worker in commerce and son of the rebel leader, was locked up in the "fort," reportedly after being beaten at the central police building (*ibid.*, pp. 122, 186).

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Marshal Fontoura in Abílio de Noronha, *Narrando a Verdade: Contribuição para a História da Revolta em São Paulo*, p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *História de uma Covardia*, p. 73.



Rodrigues was sent to an infirmary cell and Paulo Bittencourt to the hospital of the Brigada Militar.<sup>10</sup>

From the city jails laborers were transferred to the prison ship *Campos*, anchored in Guanabara Bay, and forced to chip rust from the old transatlantic liner.<sup>11</sup> Other prisoners, including writers, were moved to prison camps on nearby islands. In August 1924, scores of political prisoners, such as Edmundo Bittencourt, Oiticica, Paulo de Lacerda, and José Eduardo de Macedo Soares, were taken from the Casa de Correção and put aboard launches for the two-hour trip to the camp on rocky Ilha Rasa (Rasa Island). This made it easier for the Chapel Room to receive about one hundred Army officers.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147 (testimony of Alberto Sales Duarte).

<sup>11</sup> Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil*, p. 145.

<sup>12</sup> Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, pp. 256-257.

## 6. The Tribulations of the Lacerdas

**I**n his Correção cell, Maurício de Lacerda, troubled by migraines and paralysis of his right side,<sup>1</sup> asked for Dr. Maurício de Medeiros or Dr. Belisário Pena, also imprisoned in the Correção.<sup>2</sup> But he was attended by Juvenil da Rocha Vaz, Bernardes's own doctor.<sup>3</sup> After the patient became worse, a Lacerda family physician examined him and delivered the opinion that Rocha Vaz had prescribed just the wrong drugs.<sup>4</sup>

Maurício was rushed to the Brigada Militar Hospital, where a soldier, trying to give him an injection, broke the needle inside the patient's arm. A doctor was called. Without the proper antiseptics, he cut away on the arm in a fruitless attempt to find and remove the needle. After the large wound was sewed up, Maurício became feverish. A tumor developed in the infected arm.

<sup>1</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 394 (testimony of Belisário Pena). See also *ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Belisário Pena was freed when his relative, Afonso Pena Júnior, succeeded João Luís Alves as justice minister.

<sup>3</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 401.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.

In September 1924 the prisoner was taken by ambulance to the Casa de Saúde São Sebastião, a private clinic. At the same time, Paulo de Lacerda, who had become ill on Ilha Rasa, was moved to the same clinic.<sup>5</sup> Although Maurício was confined to his room and permitted to receive no one, Paulo was allowed to make visits to his home; there Paulo's wife, Judite Behring, daughter of a wealthy chocolate manufacturer, was becoming exasperated by Paulo's addiction to Communism.<sup>6</sup>

Maurício underwent operations on his arm in September 1924 and January 1925. He received what he construed to be an offer of freedom providing his ailing, Bernardes-hating father, Sebastião, did not participate in the Supreme Court's decision on Edmundo Bittencourt's habeas corpus petition. Maurício, indignant, wrote his father. But the sixty-one-year-old Sebastião was too ill to attend Supreme Court sessions. His condition was such that Fernando de Lacerda, Maurício's medical brother who was nursing their father, decided not to show him Maurício's letter.<sup>7</sup>

Edmundo Bittencourt became so sick on Ilha Rasa that he, too, was moved to the Casa de Saúde São Sebastião. He lost his case in the Supreme Court but escaped from the Casa de Saúde. The authorities, tightening surveillance, moved Maurício and Paulo de Lacerda to the Brigada Militar Hospital, where no reading matter or visitors were permitted.

Casa Militar Chief Santa Cruz ordered a medical examination of Maurício to see if he was well enough to be sent to an island prison. But the health of the two Lacerda brothers continued poor, and on February 22, 1925, during Carnaval, they were returned to the Casa de Saúde.

From his home in Vassouras, in Rio State, Sebastião addressed affectionate letters to Maurício and Paulo, extolling their defiance of the government. "The two sons separated from me will be my pride," he wrote.<sup>8</sup> When police invaded his home in March 1925 with orders from Justice Minister Afonso Pena Júnior to search for conspirators, Sebastião said: "Search the residence of a Supreme Court Minister? Never!"<sup>9</sup> The police searched anyway. They arrested several "fugitives from justice," including two nephews of Sebastião.<sup>10</sup>

With Sebastião close to death in his city house in the federal capital's

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970; Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970.

<sup>7</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 105.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.

Laranjeiras section, Paulo was permitted to live at home and make visits to his father.<sup>11</sup> Maurício joined Sebastião just before dawn on July 5, 1925, when he died. *Correio da Manhã*, in business after a ten-month interruption, dramatically told of their last moments together. "I have suffered much," Sebastião reportedly said. "We have suffered much, my son. But we have at least one consolation. We have suffered because we are upright. My son, continue my work! Always remain on the side of the persecuted, of the humble, of those needing protection."<sup>12</sup>

Notes that the late Supreme Court Judge had dictated listed the "causes" of his death. They began with the arrest of Maurício in July 1922, followed by the death of Sebastião's brother, and ended with "the present jailings of two sons, Maurício and Paulo, the persecution of several young men, military and civilians, . . . and the arrest of persons in my home . . . , invaded and surrounded by the police."<sup>13</sup>

After Sebastião's death, the police ended Paulo's arrest. Paulo's wife demanded that he choose between her and that "scum of the earth of Communism."<sup>14</sup> Paulo chose Communism.

Hoping to leave the Casa de Saúde, whose bills his father had been paying, Maurício submitted a habeas corpus petition<sup>15</sup> and in September 1925 argued his case before the Supreme Court and a crowd of visitors. He insisted that he had been jailed illegally, had "absolutely no responsibility for the armed movements," and wanted freedom to campaign for the March 1, 1926, election to the Rio Municipal Council.<sup>16</sup>

The Supreme Court, by an 8-to-3 vote, denied the request. A judge who favored the habeas corpus petition pointed out that Maurício had been arrested on the morning of July 5, 1924, before the state of siege had been decreed. But most of the judges, Maurício felt, were influenced by Bernardes's hatred for Maurício and his late father.<sup>17</sup> After Maurício advised Justice Minister Pena that he could no longer pay the Casa de Saúde for the treatment of wounds inflicted by "doctors of the state of siege,"<sup>18</sup> he was transferred to the prison camp on Bom Jesus Island.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>12</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, July 7, 1925.

<sup>13</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, pp. 331-333.

<sup>14</sup> Octavio Brandão and Heitor Ferreira Lima, interviews, November 14, 15, 1970.

<sup>15</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 153.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*; also *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 19, 24, 1925.

<sup>17</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 127.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

## 7. Island Prisons Near Rio

The criminal prosecutor of the Republic relaxed impassively inside the Navy Arsenal, Everardo Dias writes, while Dias and seven others, boxed inside an armored car, screamed in heat and sweat, fearful of asphyxiation.<sup>1</sup> Two hours later, when a Navy officer belatedly arrived in his tugboat, the prisoners were escorted to the docks under fixed bayonets and shipped to Ilha Rasa. On the island the newcomers found about forty soldiers guarding fifty political prisoners, among them Oiticica, Paulo Bitencourt, Benjamim Mota (from São Paulo), and Bartlett James (Rio lawyer and opposition politician).

The prisoners were housed in a shed, eighteen by twenty meters, with galvanized roofing. They complained of summer heat, the abundance of mosquitoes, and a lack of medical service and hygiene. The food ("the worst sort of fried meat, mediocre dried codfish, and old, buggy beans") was voted "as infamous as the president."<sup>2</sup> Occasionally the government sent a barge of "drinking water" ("a terrible purgative, causing appalling colic spasms and dangerous dysentery").<sup>3</sup> Little or no fresh water was available; when it rained the prisoners were served water gathered in the unclean lighthouse patio.<sup>4</sup>

After José Eduardo de Macedo Soares mysteriously escaped from the island, the guards instituted a regime described by prisoners as "an inferno" and "iniquitous and debasing." To keep their spirits up, the prisoners sang the "Hino da Rasa" (Rasa Hymn), composed by Oiticica:

While on this isle we lie restrained,  
With unbent will we shall proceed  
To firmly stand, though bound and chained,  
And proudly sing our gallant creed.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Everardo Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas: 1924-1926*, p. 145. The criminal prosecutor was Heráclito Fontoura Sobral Pinto.

<sup>2</sup> Mauricio de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 406 (testimony of Raul Paula Lopes).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Raul Paula Lopes, who supplied this information, became so sick that the authorities transferred him from Ilha Rasa. About drinking water, see also Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, p. 161.

The months on Ilha Rasa were followed by transfers to Ilha das Flores, about three miles north of Niterói. From there Everardo Dias wrote to São Paulo: "Perhaps, my daughter, the day is at hand when the cruel men will pay for all they are doing."<sup>6</sup>

Two senators and two congressmen tried to make a public scandal out of the treatment of political prisoners. In the Senate the campaign of Moniz Sodré was backed by Alexandre José Barbosa Lima. In Congress João Batista de Azevedo Lima and Adolfo Bergamíni led the attack.<sup>7</sup> Constitutional Article 80, they pointed out, stipulated that political prisoners should be held "in a place not used for those convicted of common crimes." Already the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of the military men in the Chapel Room, after they had insisted that their confinement in the Casa de Detenção was illegal. Why then, Moniz Sodré asked, were political prisoners still in the Casa de Detenção and Casa de Correção?<sup>8</sup> The senator read letters telling of shocking conditions.

This campaign, Everardo Dias says, resulted in better treatment starting in July 1925.<sup>9</sup> Visiting hours were relaxed. Sixty political prisoners were transferred from Ilha das Flores to the Bom Jesus Island Prison, a more convenient location for visitors. But as the new prison camp was next to Ilha da Sapucaia, the garbage dump of Rio, prisoners complained of the smell and asserted that garbage, attracting vultures and flies, floated to Bom Jesus.

The government, Everardo Dias felt, wanted at this time to establish an appearance of being guided by legal formalities. Mário Rodrigues was released in July 1925 after completing his one-year sentence for slandering Eptácio Pessoa.<sup>10</sup> On July 13, 1925, however, the Supreme Court denied a habeas corpus petition in which Everardo Dias argued that no judicial accusation had been made against him and that he had never been interrogated. The petition attributed to unlawfulness and abuse of power his detention for four months in a "pestilential and vile dungeon in the Casa de Detenção" and his abandonment thereafter "in dismal prisons."<sup>11</sup>

Oiticica, who used his time on island prisons to write a book about anarchism, had lost an early appeal, in which he had denied playing any

<sup>6</sup> Letter, Everardo Dias to Eponina Dias, July 10, 1925.

<sup>7</sup> Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>10</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 11, 1925.

<sup>11</sup> Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, pp. 265-271.

role in the 1924 uprising. The Supreme Court, impressed by the government's argument that he was "highly harmful to public order in a period like the present one,"<sup>12</sup> had, nevertheless, allowed him unrestricted visits by his wife and children. From Ilha das Flores in July 1925, Oiticica complained that the visiting arrangement was not respected by prison authorities, and he reminded the Supreme Court that the government was releasing men, who, unlike himself, had been implicated in the revolt.<sup>13</sup> Freed in August 1925, Oiticica assisted Canelas and the Mota Lima brothers in the publication of *5 de Julho*.

One evening in October 1925, after Maurício de Lacerda reached Bom Jesus, food poisoning made the prisoners ill. On the recommendation of fellow prisoner Professor Bruno Lobo, the inmates requested certain medicines. But as the professor was a chemist and not a medical doctor, the Army captain in charge of the camp refused to order the medicines; instead, he sent for a military physician who took four hours to reach Bom Jesus.<sup>14</sup> In an indignant letter to Azevedo Lima, Maurício demanded an investigation of the "grave abuses and criminal irregularities" committed by the Army captain.

On November 10, 1925, Bruno Lobo was imprisoned in cavalry barracks, and Maurício was transferred to the São Clemente police barracks. Maurício, about to be taken from Bom Jesus, was asked by an Army officer if he had called the president a coward. After he confirmed "the epithet and the fact," the officer wrote his commanding officer that the prisoner had slandered the president in front of the armed forces on Bom Jesus Island.<sup>15</sup>

Early in June 1926 the Bom Jesus camp received about one hundred prisoners, in pitiful condition, from backlands in the north of Brazil. Although a prison supervisor ruled that the new arrivals had "come here to be prisoners, not to learn to read,"<sup>16</sup> Everardo Dias and Ataliba Martins Crespo, a noncommissioned Navy officer, with the help of teaching materials sent by Oiticica and others, taught about fifty to read, write, and count.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 10, 1925.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, p. 22. Also see Maurício de Lacerda, letter of November 1, 1925, to Azevedo Lima, given in *ibid.*, pp. 223-229.

<sup>15</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 177.

<sup>16</sup> Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, p. 234.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

## 8. Oiapoque

Early in 1927 Communists listed four PCB members (none of them important Party leaders) who were deported overseas in the 1924–1926 period. Among the three or four anarchists who suffered the same fate was Adolfo Marques da Costa, the civil construction worker leader with many years of residence in Brazil. He was arrested on July 7, 1924, and deported to Portugal. Jailed in Lisbon in October 1924 after a bomb exploded in a hotel where he had been staying, Marques da Costa later accused a deported Brazilian Communist of testifying against him.<sup>1</sup> Brazilian police also furnished information harmful to his case,<sup>2</sup> and he was shipped to a prison in Portuguese Guinea. He escaped and reached Dakar, Senegal.

When comparisons were drawn between the sufferings of Communists and anarchists within Brazil during the “Bernardes terror,” Communists sometimes admitted that the anarchists had the worst of it. Thus an article in *A Classe Operaria*, the Communist weekly that appeared for three months in 1925 thanks to arrangements made with Bernardes supporters, called it a “curious” fact that “the chief adversaries of the united front in the 1923–1924 period were precisely those” who had become “the chief victims of the reaction.” The article went on to say: “It had to be thus. History condemned those companions.”<sup>3</sup> In a message in 1927 to the hard-hit Union of Civil Construction Workers, Communists explained that “the Communists, seeing the storm and being unable to oppose it, acted like camels: they buried their necks in the sand and let the simoon pass. . . . They hid in order to continue the revolutionary work.”<sup>4</sup>

Anarchist documents reveal that, of fifteen anarchists sent to the colony of the Centro Agrícola Clevelândia on the Oiapoque River, which sepa-

<sup>1</sup> Adolpho Marques da Costa, letter to Rodolpho Felipe from Limoeiro Jail, Lisbon, January 5, 1925, published in *A Plebe* 11, no. 246 (February 26, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> “Marques da Costa Conseguiu Fugir da Guiné,” *A Plebe*, February 12, 1927.

<sup>3</sup> José Mussambé, “A confraternização de Todos os Trabalhadores,” *A Classe Operaria* 1, no. 4 (May 23, 1925).

<sup>4</sup> “Aos Companheiros da Construção Civil,” *A Nação*, March 10, 1927, p. 3.

rates Brazil from French Guiana,<sup>5</sup> six perished.<sup>6</sup> When the Communists, who suffered no such reverse, tried to claim that living in Rio under the "inferno" of Carneiro da Fontoura was as bad as internment in Clevelândia,<sup>7</sup> they missed the truth by a wide margin.

In 1924 and 1925 three ships brought over nine hundred prisoners to the Centro Agrícola Clevelândia. One of the prisoners, Lauro Nicácio, a military rebel under Isidoro Dias Lopes, lists 401 prisoners, who he says were buried at Clevelândia.<sup>8</sup> He and other Bernardes-haters assert that his list is incomplete.<sup>9</sup> A spokesman for the Bernardes administration stated that "the mortality" among prisoners at Clevelândia was "approximately 43 percent."<sup>10</sup> According to Otávio Brandão and Everardo Dias, the tragedy did not end with the deaths in the Oiapoque region. Brandão, who saw some who returned to Rio in 1927, reports that they "had earth-colored complexions, sick livers, and swollen feet. Entirely exhausted, they soon died."<sup>11</sup> Everardo Dias describes survivors as "bent, lean, yellow, and without spirit or vitality. From their faces, which had become drawn and the color of beeswax, only the eyes stood out, denoting some vivacity. Otherwise they appeared as mummies, animated by a weak breath of life."<sup>12</sup>

Four of the five anarchists known to have died in the Oiapoque region were Paulistas: Pedro A. Mota, José Maria Fernandes Varela, Nicolau Paradas, and Nino Martins.<sup>13</sup> The fifth was José Alves do Nascimento,

<sup>5</sup> Domingos Braz, "A Horrível Situação dos Degredados," *A Plebe* 11, no. 245 (February 12, 1927). Everardo Dias states in *Bastilhas Modernas: 1924-1926* (p. 238) that the correct name for what came to be known as Clevelândia was Colônia Cleveland.

<sup>6</sup> "A Horrível Situação dos Degredados: Carta de Domingos Braz Publicada pela *A Batalha de Lisboa*," *A Plebe* 11, no. 245 (February 12, 1927).

<sup>7</sup> "Aos Companheiros da Construção Civil," p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Lauro Nicácio quoted in Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, pp. 238-254.

<sup>9</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, March 11, 1971. Everardo Dias, *História das Lutas Sociais no Brasil* (p. 146), states that of the approximately four hundred Paulista rebels who were captured at Catanduvas, Paraná, and sent to Clevelândia, only twenty-seven returned alive.

<sup>10</sup> Miguel Calmon, "A Verdade sobre as Deportações para a Clevelandia," *O Jornal*, January 3, 1928. Domingos Braz ("A Horrível Situação dos Degredados") estimated that about one thousand prisoners were sent to Clevelândia.

<sup>11</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, March 11, 1971.

<sup>12</sup> Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, p. 237.

<sup>13</sup> Graphic worker Martins, like *A Plebe's* Pedro A. Mota, signed the manifesto of the "São Paulo working class militants" addressed to the chiefs of the Revolutionary Movement.





Oiapoque: Symbol of tyranny. (*A Plebe*, February 12, 1927)

former secretary of the Rio Union of Construction Workers. Domingos Passos, also shipped to the Clevelândia Colony, declared that his fellow civil construction worker, José Batista da Silva, almost certainly perished during an escape attempt.

The first ship to bring prisoners to the camp reached its destination on December 26, 1924. It brought about 250 whom the government considered "dangerous because of their very bad pasts."<sup>14</sup> Among them were many Rio workers who had been chipping rust off the *Campos*, some thieves and vagrants from Rio, and conspirators in the Navy. A second

<sup>14</sup> Miguel Calmon, "A Verdade sobre as Deportações para a Clevelândia," *O Jornal*, January 3, 1928.

ship arrived on January 6, 1925, with 120 who had rebelled in the Amazon region. On the banks of the Oiapoque on May Day 1925, 6 anarchists (including Domingos Passos and Domingos Brás) met with a few thieves and farmhands to sing "The International."<sup>15</sup>

The third and last shipment included the approximately four hundred surviving defenders of Catanduvas, Paraná.<sup>16</sup> Following their surrender to superior forces under legalist General Cândido Rondon, they had been forced to make a long march to Irati, the nearest rail center, moved to Paranaguá, and put aboard the *Cuyabá*. According to Lauro Nicácio, the *Cuyabá*, after stopping at Rio to pick up 23 "conspirators" and 133 "thieves and vagrants," reached Oiapoque Falls early in June 1925. From the Falls, river boats took the prisoners to Santo Antônio. The last eighteen kilometers of the trip to the Clevelândia Colony were made on foot in the rain through forest and swamps.<sup>17</sup>

One of the new arrivals reported (in a note carried by a fugitive) that only forty of the "five hundred" prisoners shipped earlier could be found in the colony. "They seem more like wild animals than men," he wrote.<sup>18</sup> Lauro Nicácio has written that of the earlier prisoners, one-third had died, one-third were "agonizing, leashed to the work and oppressed by fevers," and one-third had managed to make use of fishermen's boats to cross the Oiapoque and reach French Guiana.<sup>19</sup> So many had fled (often to encounter new horrors) that a more rigorous regime of guarding prisoners was instituted. Those thought to be contemplating escape, or caught in the attempt, were beaten.

Prisoners who could not be fitted into the few large sheds tried to sleep under wooden floors or trees, but they were molested by reptiles, scorpions, and rats.<sup>20</sup> Later, in their spare time, they built small shacks for themselves.

The prisoners were given straw hats and denim pants, and assigned jobs. Usually, survivors reported, they had to work without pay for nine

<sup>15</sup> Domingos Passos, "Um 1º de Maio no Oyapock," *A Plebe* 11, no. 246 (February 26, 1927).

<sup>16</sup> Miguel Calmon ("A Verdade sobre as Deportações para a Clevelândia," *O Jornal*, January 3, 1928) states that 577 Catanduvas prisoners were sent to Clevelândia. Perhaps this figure includes non-Catanduvas prisoners who went on the last ship, or perhaps it is a misprint for 377.

<sup>17</sup> Lauro Nicácio quoted in Dias, *Bastilbas Modernas*, p. 242.

<sup>18</sup> "Um Grito de Revolta!" *O Syndicalista* 7, no. 11 (Porto Alegre, December 26, 1925).

<sup>19</sup> Lauro Nicácio quoted in Dias, *Bastilbas Modernas*, p. 243.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*; Braz, "A Horrível Situação dos Degredados."

hours a day. They constructed a chapel, a school, and the Artur Bernardes Bridge, and enlarged the Simões Lopes Hospital.<sup>21</sup> Some carried logs from the river to the sawmill. When the work was particularly heavy, the prisoners might be rewarded with some cigarettes. Specialists (mechanics, electricians, hospital cooks, and warehouse clerks) sometimes received between ten and two hundred mil-réis for a year's work. Landclearing, at first assigned only to "thieves and vagrants," was later also done by Catanduvas veterans.<sup>22</sup>

When Domingos Passos and a companion complained of beatings given by a colonel who was a political prisoner, they learned that the authorities respected the colonel. On the next day prisoners gathered at Epitácio Pessoa Square (a cattle field) to protest bad treatment, but an administrator of the Centro Agrícola Clevelândia, accompanied by soldiers, forced an end to the meeting. Domingos Brás and eight other protesters were put in irons.<sup>23</sup>

Lauro Nicácio has written that starting in July 1925, when Deocleciano Coelho de Sousa became administrator of the prison camp, the quality and quantity of the food declined. Within three months all the prisoners were sick. The Simões Lopes Hospital was inadequate for handling the cases of malaria, bacterial dysentery, beri-beri, dropsy, and diarrhea—the fevers, vomitings, and convulsions. The standard cure was to provide quinine tablets, or quinine injections (which seemed to cause swellings). For injecting 120 persons daily, the hospital had only two syringes (and, more than once, only one needle).<sup>24</sup> A group of prisoners under Domingos Patriarca was brought in to do hospital work.<sup>25</sup> Patriarca, who had served as a nurse at Catanduvas, zealously looked after patients until his death in March 1926.

With not enough beds, patients slept on the hospital floor. A shed was built and named the Auxiliary Hospital. But the capacity of the main hospital was only one hundred, and the auxiliary could accommodate only eighty-eight; many were left waiting to get in. If one could wait, one would find a place, because, according to Nicácio, death certificates, once

<sup>21</sup> "O Domínio da Tyrannia em Clevelândia," *A Plebe* 11, no. 247 (March 12, 1927).

<sup>22</sup> Lauro Nicácio quoted in Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, p. 253.

<sup>23</sup> "O Domínio da Tyrannia em Clevelândia."

<sup>24</sup> Lauro Nicácio quoted in Dias, *Bastilhas Modernas*, p. 244.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245. Lauro Nicácio writes that the official nurses (one the wife of the hospital administrator, the other the son of a Colônia official) were mere payroll names.

issued at the rate of two to five per day, reached a rate of ten to twelve per day.<sup>26</sup> Not all of these were hospital cases. Some died in the sheds they had planned to live in.

Prisoners called the Auxiliary Hospital the "Hospital of Death." The main hospital was described by Domingos Brás and Domingos Passos as "the terror of the deportees because entering it meant being removed, two or three days later, to the cemetery."<sup>27</sup> Gravedigging was no longer assigned only to Rio criminals and vagrants. Nicolau Paradas, dying, was forced to dig graves.<sup>28</sup>

Domingos Brás, Pedro A. Mota, Manuel Ferreira Gomes, José Batista da Silva, and Tomás Deslits Borghe escaped to the port of St. Georges on the French Guiana side of the Oiapoque River. Although they had freed themselves "from the humiliations and tyrannies" of Clevelândia,<sup>29</sup> the fugitives were desperate after one month in St. Georges. Money from friends at home gave out. They could find no work, had no canoe, and lacked passports necessary to enter Cayenne, French Guiana.<sup>30</sup>

A letter to São Paulo reported that Mota died in St. Georges on January 12, 1926, "due to lack of medicine and food, as others have died." Antônio Salgado da Cunha, who also reached St. Georges, gained admittance to the local hospital, "his feet almost rotten with infections, worms, and other diseases common to these parts."<sup>31</sup>

Domingos Brás and a few others eventually reached Belém. Biófilo Panclastra got to Cayenne, from where he reportedly set out in a canoe in the direction of Colombia. José Batista da Silva apparently hoped somehow to reach Venezuela when he entered forests to the north of St. Georges on a trip described by natives as "absolutely impractical." This was the trip from which, according to Domingos Passos, "the comrade cannot possibly return alive."<sup>32</sup>

Sensational news of the tragic episode along the Oiapoque River was

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245–246.

<sup>27</sup> Domingos Brás and Domingos Passos, "A Horrível Verdade sobre o Oiapoque" (December 1926), *A Plebe* 11, no. 247 (March 12, 1927).

<sup>28</sup> "O Domínio da Tyrannia em Clevelândia."

<sup>29</sup> Manuel Ferreira Gomes, "A Fuga de Clevelândia," *A Plebe* 11, no. 245 (February 12, 1927). This letter is dated December 14, 1925.

<sup>30</sup> Pedro A. Motta, "Motta Comunica a Morte de Nino, Varella, Paradas, e Nascimento," *A Plebe* 11, no. 245 (February 12, 1927). Letter, December 30, 1925.

<sup>31</sup> "Uma Carta que É um Grito de Agonia," *A Plebe* 11, no. 245 (February 12, 1927). Letter, February 2, 1926.

<sup>32</sup> "A Triste Sorte do Camarada José Baptista da Silva," *A Plebe* 11, no. 246 (February 26, 1927): 1.

published in Brazil in December 1925 by *O Syndicalista*, organ of the anarcho-syndicalist Federação Operária do Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>33</sup> Using information given in a letter from a Clevelândia prisoner, already published in *La Antorcha* of Buenos Aires, *O Syndicalista* asked whether "we can permit so much crime and barbarity?"<sup>34</sup> Particular attention was given to the sufferings of Tomás Borghe, for he had helped commemorate May Day 1924 in Porto Alegre. He was described as "in a state of coma."

The letter transcribed from *La Antorcha* had been brought from the Clevelândia Colony by a fugitive "with good health and some money." "Our only salvation," the writer said, "would be a flight to French Guiana and this will be absolutely impossible without your help, for we are in a savage state, destitute of clothing and weakened by hunger."<sup>35</sup>

In 1927, after Bernardes's successor in the presidency had arranged to have the Clevelândia survivors returned to their homes, members of the Bernardes administration defended that administration's use of Clevelândia as a prison camp.

In March 1927 Bernardes himself said that "they accuse my government of having practiced absurd and illegal abuses: the Clevelândia case, for example." He went on to explain that at Catanduvas General Cândido Rondon had made prisoners of "four hundred recognized disturbers of public order" and that they were first placed on Ilha das Flores in lodgings that could not have been more hygienic for they had been used by immigrants and had therefore been inspected by foreign consuls. The Supreme Court, Bernardes continued, ruled in favor of the Catanduvas veterans' appeal to be moved to a "special prison," and it was then that Agriculture Minister Miguel Calmon thought of Clevelândia, declaring it a healthy place. Bernardes added that, after the prisoners from Catanduvas had been sent to Clevelândia, "a ship, stopping in the region, brought to some internees an infectious disease because the crew was afflicted with the illness. Members of the ship's crew and men held in Clevelândia died. Some prisoners disappeared because they fled to unknown places."<sup>36</sup>

*O Jornal's* headline above Bernardes's remarks said that the former president "accused" his agriculture minister of being the "creator of Clevelândia." Perhaps because of this, Miguel Calmon, in his report submitted to Congress late in December 1927, pointed out that the colony,

<sup>33</sup> *5 de Julho* also reported on the Clevelândia Colony.

<sup>34</sup> "Um Grito de Revolta!"

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *O Jornal*, March 15, 1927.

a dependency of the Agriculture Ministry, had been organized in 1920, before he became agriculture minister.<sup>37</sup>

Calmon's report dismissed charges of hunger and ill treatment as coming from "dangerous prisoners" who should not be believed. Calmon insisted that, although malaria was endemic in a large part of the Brazilian north, including Clevelândia, the colony was a healthy place, "perfectly installed," with sufficient resources for the provision of "abundant food," and with an excellent hospital, capable of providing all the necessary medical attention. "Nothing was lacking in the way of food and medical relief," Calmon repeated.

Calmon quoted Gentil Norberto, the director of the colony, as saying that the prisoners were not mistreated and that only the common criminals were forced to work, and then only four and one-half hours per day "in cleaning the place and in other work, receiving, in compensation, cigarettes, clothing, and a little money." Norberto asserted that, after the prisoners arrived, one of his first acts had been to issue a "rigorous prohibition against the use of any corporal punishment." "Possibly one or two cases of abuse occurred," Norberto admitted, but he said that this was "never with the approval of the administration."

Miguel Calmon cited hunger in Germany and the "universal tragedy of Spanish gripe," which he said had sprung from the war in Europe, and he argued that the revolt in Brazil "could not escape the rule of the three inseparable scourges: war, pestilence, and hunger."

Specifically he and Dr. Joaquim Paulo de Sousa, doctor at the Simões Lopes Hospital, laid the blame for the high mortality rate on the prisoners from Catanduvas: he said that the wretched hygienic conditions these prisoners experienced while defending Catanduvas made them the bearers of germs of bacterial dysentery, a disease never before known in Clevelândia but one that had killed one Catanduvas veteran while en route to the colony. Calmon reported that more prisoners died of bacterial dysentery than of malaria and that weaknesses caused by the dysentery "aggravated the malaria" in some cases.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, January 3, 1928.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

BOOK VII: *The PCB during the Bernardes  
Repression, 1924–1926*

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## 1. Brandão, PCB Theoretician

Joaquim Pimenta, no admirer of the regime he served, has written of his hopes that the São Paulo rebellion of 1924 would spread to Rio. "I would stand on the porch of my home in Rio, waiting for the first shots, sorry when they did not occur."<sup>1</sup> Rio Communist and anarchist leaders were probably even more grieved than Joaquim Pimenta at Isidoro Dias Lopes's lack of success.

Otávio Brandão, hiding from the police, was in the home of journalist Rodolfo Mota Lima on July 28, 1924, when word reached Rio of the evacuation of São Paulo by Isidoro and his men. Rodolfo came in from the street, "completely in despair," and told the story.<sup>2</sup>

Brandão, who had been reading a French translation of Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, sat down in Mota Lima's dining room and began to write—seeking to explain the July 1924 uprising from a Marxist point of view. This "first effort made in Brazil to provide a Marxist analysis of the national situation"<sup>3</sup> was completed on August 22,

<sup>1</sup> Joaquim Pimenta, *Retalhos do Passado: Episódios que Vivi e Fatos que Testemunhei*, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Agrarismo e Industrialismo" (based on *Agrarismo e Industrialismo* of 1926, February 1971), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, "Pensadores, Críticos e Ensaístas," in Rubens Borba de Moraes and William Berrien, eds., *Manual Bibliográfico de Estudos Brasileiros*, p. 656.

1924. It bore the title: *Agrarismo e Industrialismo: Ensaio Marxista-Leninista sôbre a Revolta de São Paulo e a Guerra de Classe no Brasil*.<sup>4</sup> Typewritten copies were immediately distributed to Brandão's friends. The work inspired the theses written by Astrogildo Pereira for presentation at the Second National Congress of the PCB in May 1925.

In January 1926 police broke into a printing shop (not far from the central police building) where *Agrarismo e Industrialismo*, about two hundred pages long, was being printed. But the police could find no copies of the "Marxist-Leninist Essay" because the shop manager and workers threw what they had printed into the linotype furnaces. Later the type was set up again at the same shop, cautiously and at night. Finally, in April 1926 *Agrarismo e Industrialismo* appeared, showing Buenos Aires as the place of publication and Fritz Mayer as the author.<sup>5</sup>

In this book Brandão declared the Brazilian Communists to be "the successors of all the rebels of the past" (his list included Tiradentes and Euclides da Cunha). He recommended an alliance of the proletariat and its PCB with the small-bourgeois military rebels of 1922 and 1924.

Brandão explained that the fundamental error of the uprisings of 1922 and 1924 was the failure to apply the rules of Marx and Engels. For one thing, he said, this error had led the rebels to "limit themselves to the defensive."<sup>6</sup> "The third revolt must not repeat the errors of the earlier two; it must encompass technique and politics, the Army and the Navy, Rio and São Paulo, the south and the north, the proletariat, the small urban bourgeoisie and the large industrial bourgeoisie. The proletariat will enter the battle as an independent class, carrying out its own policy."<sup>7</sup>

*Agrarismo e Industrialismo* insisted that "without theory—without a compass—we shall be shipwrecked in the midst of the present chaos. Daily let us unite Marxist-Leninist theory with the practical revolutionary struggle, and vice-versa. . . . Let us coldly, objectively, study the national struggles in all their depth and complexity, acquiring a realistic idea of them, interpreting them in the light of historic materialism and the Marxist dialectic—in the light of Marxism-Leninism."<sup>8</sup>

To help this study of Brazil "in its thousands of aspects," *Agrarismo e*

<sup>4</sup> Agrarianism and industrialism: Marxist-Leninist essay about the revolt of São Paulo and the class war in Brazil.

<sup>5</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Agrarismo e Industrialismo," p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Octavio Brandão (Fritz Mayer), *Agrarismo e Industrialismo*, p. 84. (See Octavio Brandão, article in *Imprensa Popular*, January 21, 1957).

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, *Agrarismo e Industrialismo*, p. 57.

*Industrialismo* supplied figures to prove that industry was only incipient. The 1920 census showed 9 million rural workers compared with only 275,000 in industrial plants. "There are fourteen thousand metallurgical workers—a figure revealing the low state of that industry, the true industrial base of a nation."<sup>9</sup> Economically, socially, and politically, Brazil was declared to be dominated by a feudalistic agrarianism, based on large coffee-producing properties.<sup>10</sup> "The economy is unstable, tied to a secondary product, coffee," and needing recurrent infusions of foreign loans.

To the feudal agrarianism installed in the presidential palace, Brandão noted a weak but increasing opposition by a "disorganized, chaotic" industrial and commercial bourgeoisie. This opposition, he wrote, had carried out the revolts of July 5, 1922, and July 5, 1924. It had been aided by North American imperialism, whereas British imperialism supported Epitácio Pessoa and Artur Bernardes.<sup>11</sup>

In describing the struggle between British and United States imperialism on Brazilian soil, *Agrarismo e Industrialismo* stated: "Hoover, secretary of commerce, agent of North American imperialism, campaigns against Brazilian coffee, even recommending a boycott. Meanwhile English banks loan money to Brazilian coffee and to the Institute for the Permanent Defense of Coffee. However, as North America is the major consumer of Brazilian coffee, a grave coffee crisis appears on the horizon."<sup>12</sup>

The proletariat was told by Brandão to enter into a "united front with the small bourgeoisie and the large industrial bourgeoisie" in order to overthrow the oligarchy and its allies.<sup>13</sup> After the revolution of the bourgeoisie had been achieved, the proletariat was to exert pressure to "transform it into a permanent revolution in the Marxist-Leninist sense, prolonging it as much as possible, in order to agitate the deepest layers of the proletariat" and to create an abyss between the rebels and the feudal past. "Let us press the revolution of the industrial bourgeoisie . . . to its utmost limits so that, with the passage of the stage of the bourgeois revolution, the door becomes open for the proletarian, Communist revolution."<sup>14</sup>

In a self-criticism published in 1957, Brandão wrote that from 1924 to 1928 the PCB suffered from "rightist deviations." The "origin of the

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44, quoted in Edgard Carone, *A República Velha: Instituições e Classes Sociais*, p. 334.

<sup>12</sup> Octavio Brandão, *Agrarismo e Industrialismo*, p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22, quoted in Carone, *A República Velha*, p. 335.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59, quoted in Carone, *A República Velha*, p. 335.

errors," he confessed, was *Agrarismo e Industrialismo*.<sup>15</sup> Brandão's self-criticism included "faults" that others had found with his book in 1930 and later.

One of these "faults" was that the author had, without understanding the true nature of the revolution in Brazil, simply applied dialectical materialism in a mechanical manner, thus interpreting the outbreaks of July 5, 1922, and July 5, 1924, as "aspects of the struggle between agrarianism and industrialism in Brazil, between feudalism and capitalism, between the large feudal landowners and the large industrial bourgeoisie."<sup>16</sup>

In listing those who should participate in a "third revolt" (the military, the proletariat, the small urban bourgeoisie, and the large industrial bourgeoisie), Brandão in 1924 made no mention of "the peasants—the principal allies of the working class." This, he admitted in 1957, was "a capital error." But what would principally haunt him in the early 1930's would be the book's "underestimation of the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution" and "overestimation of the role of the small-bourgeois rebels" as far as the true revolution was concerned.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Uma Etapa da História de Lutas," *Imprensa Popular*, January 21, 1957.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2. Theses of the Second Congress of the PCB

On February 22, 1925, the PCB's Central Executive Commission (CEC) met with delegates of cells in Rio and Niterói to discuss the publication of a proletarian newspaper and the adoption of new statutes at the forthcoming Second National Congress of the PCB.<sup>1</sup> At this conference, a review was made of the work done since mid-1924 to reorganize the Party on the basis of factory cells as ordered by the Communist International. It was reported that "in Rio and Niterói, where we have half of the Party membership, there are no more than 150 members."<sup>2</sup> This number was felt to be "ridiculously" low, because the Federal District, the nation's

<sup>1</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

industrial center, was considered to have over 300,000 workers, of whom 45,000 were in transportation and about 20,000 in textiles.

The Second National Congress took place in an upstairs room in downtown Rio, May 16-18, 1925, and was attended by seventeen men (six Central Executive Commission members, five delegates from Rio and Niterói, two each from Pernambuco and Santos, and one each from São Paulo City and Cubatão, S.P.).<sup>3</sup> The congress resolved that Juventude Comunista (Communist Youth), which had attracted only a few members in Rio since the CEC had decided to form it in January 1924, should be given serious attention by the whole Party.<sup>4</sup> Looking at organized labor, the congress found that "Yellow or reformist" influences existed to some extent in textile unions and were strong in unions of port workers, maritime workers, and land transport workers. "Socially and numerically," the congress concluded, Yellow unions were stronger than anarchist or Communist unions.<sup>5</sup>

Theses of the congress noted that the English had over £3 million invested in Brazilian coffee *fazendas*. British investment in Brazilian industry was said to be £120 million, compared with a United States investment of U.S.\$250 million, but the theses explained that the British figure included £50 million in the Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Company, which, "like all the Canadian economy, is becoming more and more a subsidiary of North American finance."<sup>6</sup>

These figures were cited in connection with the political theses, which explained the uprisings of July 5, 1922, and 1924, as manifestations of a "fundamental contradiction" present in Brazilian society following the establishment of the Republic in 1889. The cause of the contradiction was said to be "the struggle between semifeudal agrarian capitalism and modern industrial capitalism," the former backed by British imperialism and the latter by American imperialism.<sup>7</sup> It was a view Astrogildo, writing in 1962, would describe as "a mechanical and arbitrary application of the dialectic method," fitting the July 5 revolts into the "agrarianism-industrialism" scheme, without consideration of the true political situation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 70, 131. Fourteen youths (under twenty-one years old) joined JC (Juventude Comunista) in 1925, and thirteen in 1926.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 66, 68.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

The "dualist 'agrarianism-industrialism' concept," which dominated the Party directorship<sup>9</sup> after Brandão wrote his book, was explained to the workers in the Communist press. In February 1926 *O Solidario* wrote that "all the political history of the Republic" had been affected by the struggle "between agrarian semifeudal capitalism and modern industrial capitalism." Bearing this struggle in mind, one could, *O Solidario* said, understand "the attack on President Afonso Pena, the succeeding presidency of Hermes da Fonseca, with its 'politics of salvation' against the state oligarchies, the protectionist tariffs of 1897 and 1900, and, finally, the revolts of July 5, 1922, and 1924. . . . In short, the revolt of July 5 is, socially, a movement of the small military and civilian bourgeoisie directly against the dominant agrarianism and indirectly in favor of industrialism, which struggles for power."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> "Características da Situação Política Nacional: 1. Agrarismo versus Industrialismo; 2. A Revolta de 5 de Julho," *O Solidario* 3, no. 39 (February 25, 1926).

### 3. *A Classe Operaria*, 1925

During the state of siege, which began in July 1924 and lasted until the end of 1926, *A Plebe* was not published. However, *O Internacional* and *O Solidario*, the leading Communist newspapers in São Paulo State, were more fortunate. They were not seriously troubled by the authorities, and could, as in the past, count on a source of income unknown to *A Plebe*: they carried advertising, largely for beer, scotch, gin, and vermouth, placed by Matarazzo, Antarctica, Brahma, and other large firms.<sup>1</sup> During the state of siege, *O Internacional* was published regularly, and *O Solidario* most of the time, both usually as fortnightlies.

In February 1925 *O Solidario* spoke out against "police interference"

<sup>1</sup> Such advertising did not prevent *O Internacional* from carrying (on May 1, 1924) Maria Lacerda de Moura's attack on the use of alcoholic beverages. (Maria Lacerda de Moura, a defender of women's rights, and the author of articles and books, was a friend of Laura Brandão. Otávio, unable to convert her to Communism, found her afflicted by "mysticism and anarchism." She was not related to the family of Sebastião and Maurício de Lacerda.)

with dock workers who sought an increase in their 8\$000 daily wage,<sup>2</sup> and in March, when other Santos workers demanded more pay, it enthusiastically supported the "incomparable proletarian agitation."<sup>3</sup> The paper was not printed in the last half of 1925, but normal publication was resumed in January 1926, this time as the "Organ of the Working Class," rather than the "Organ of Workers in Foods." Its rebirth under the direction of Communist waiter João Freire de Oliveira was hailed by Communists. *Voz Cosmopolita*, again being published, called the new *O Solidario* "the great newspaper of the Santos workers, . . . the newspaper of a party, the newspaper of proletarian politics."<sup>4</sup>

In Rio, Sarandi Raposo published the daily *O Trabalho* for a short time early in 1925. Displaying the hammer and sickle, it attacked anarchists and suggested that it was high time for the workers to form groups powerful enough to assure their representation in Congress. *O Trabalho* happily detected a new civic spirit in the proletariat and saw the dawning of a new social era when the Yellow Stevedores' Union launched the candidacy of its president, Luís de Oliveira, for a seat on the Rio Municipal Council.<sup>5</sup>

The outstanding achievement of the PCB in 1925 was the publication of its popular weekly, *A Classe Operaria*, the "newspaper of the workers, made by the workers, for the workers." After the PCB's Newspaper Commission suggested at the Party conference of February 22, 1925, that the proposed organ should advance "the new cellular organization" and help the Party penetrate the masses,<sup>6</sup> Brandão and other militants went to the factories to sell subscriptions (at two mil-réis for thirteen numbers). Communist sympathizers belonging to prominent families contributed to the organ. A secondhand press was purchased in time to print five thousand copies of the first number (May 1, 1925), featuring a history of the hymn, "The International."<sup>7</sup>

The little press on Frei Caneca Street broke down on April 30, after the copies had been printed. Therefore two members of the PCB cell in the progovernment *O Paiz* spoke with directors of that daily about having

<sup>2</sup> "Será Greve?" *O Solidario* 2, no. 31 (February 5, 1925).

<sup>3</sup> "Actividade Reivindicadora," *O Solidario* 2, no. 35 (March 24, 1925).

<sup>4</sup> *Voz Cosmopolita*, February 2, 1926.

<sup>5</sup> "Novos Horizontes," *O Trabalho*, March 7, 1925.

<sup>6</sup> "Elementos para a História d'A Classe Operária," *A Classe Operária*, new phase, 1, no. 1 (Rio de Janeiro, March 9, 1946). See also Rui Facó, *A Classe Operária: 20 Anos de Luta*, p. 5; Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, pp. 62, 72.

<sup>7</sup> "Elementos para a História d'A Classe Operária."

future numbers of *A Classe Operaria* printed on its press during regular working hours.<sup>8</sup> The arrangement was made with the consent of the government, which apparently wished to avoid labor trouble at *O Paiz*, and it continued in effect until mid-July 1925, when the government became so displeased with the Communist newspaper's success and attacks that it closed it down. The lack of censorship of *A Classe Operaria* was in striking contrast to the situation at *Correio da Manhã*, which began publication again in May 1925 with a government representative in its editorial office. Moniz Sodré told fellow senators that an article of his in *Correio da Manhã* had been "mutilated" by censorship.<sup>9</sup>

Copies of *A Classe Operaria*, which did not use normal distribution points, were carried each week to factories by *pacoteiros* (bundle carriers). Circulation grew rapidly, far exceeding the two to four thousand copies originally estimated by the PCB's Newspaper Commission.<sup>10</sup> After 9,500 copies of Number 9 had been printed, preparations were made to issue 10,000 in July. *A Classe Operaria* felt that even this number was insignificant compared with Brazil's "ten million workers"<sup>11</sup> (mostly illiterate peasants). Nonetheless, penetration was considerably greater than circulation, for *A Classe Operaria* went from hand to hand, and copies were read aloud to gatherings (as happened each week when the wife of an illiterate port worker read the paper at the Rio docks).<sup>12</sup> Interest in *A Classe Operaria* increased PCB membership, when many of the committees of workers, formed to promote the paper, became Party cells.<sup>13</sup>

When the Rio daily, *O Jornal*, published articles by Trotsky that were critical of Stalin, *A Classe Operaria* stated that the articles were not authentic. But for the most part *A Classe Operaria* devoted its attention to matters of immediate concern to the Brazilian proletariat. It covered union affairs and the textile strikes in Rio.<sup>14</sup> The editors received many letters from workers, some of which, edited by Laura Brandão, were published.

Following the 1925 May Day rally at Praça Mauá, where the list of

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 9, 1968; August 30, 1970. Brandão states that the two PCB members were comrades João Daladéia and José Alfredo dos Santos.

<sup>9</sup> "Censura à Imprensa," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, July 13, 1925.

<sup>10</sup> *A Classe Operária*, new phase, March 9, 1946.

<sup>11</sup> "Mais um Esforço," *A Classe Operaria* 1, no. 9 (June 27, 1925).

<sup>12</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970.

<sup>13</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Combates da Classe Operária," *Revista Brasiliense*, no. 46 (March–April 1963), p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> Strikes at the Fábrica Aliança and Fábrica Botafogo are discussed in *A Classe Operaria* 1, no. 2 (May 9, 1925).



speakers indicated the considerable strength of the Yellow unions, *A Classe Operaria* wrote that although the commemoration reflected a lack of preparation and the prevailing unfavorable situation for labor, it nevertheless proved the "vitality" of the Carioca proletariat.

*A Classe Operaria* repeatedly called for a large, united labor front in Brazil. It lamented the "shabby, chaotic union movement" in São Paulo, where, it reported, graphic workers and shoemakers had unions but textile workers and metalworkers did not.<sup>15</sup> As for Rio, it complained that the barbers disliked being called "workers" and showed little interest in *A Classe Operaria*: the only two subscriptions were in the name of the Barbers' Union and its president.<sup>16</sup>

*A Classe Operaria* campaigned for labor union reform along industry lines. "What if all the Light and Power Company workers were organized according to the trade of each?" it asked. It urged a high degree of centralization to combat "the increasing centralization of capital" and campaigned for an end to the "rigorous observance" paid by the unions "to the municipal divisions created by the bourgeoisie"; it felt that formation of one shoemakers' union in Rio and another in Niterói was senseless.<sup>17</sup>

In a plea for a united front of all workers, "Marxists, anarchists, syndicalists, and reformists," one of *A Classe Operaria's* writers asserted that if the anarchists and syndicalists had accepted "the front when it was proposed by us, we would not have been so victimized by the common enemy." He criticized attacks made on "reformist" workers: "If the stevedores are backward, it is largely our fault."<sup>18</sup>

"How many are we?" *A Classe Operaria* asked, and then turned, like *Agrarismo e Industrialismo*, to the 1920 census.

*A Classe Operaria* planned to enter politics by forming a *bloco operário* to participate in the March 1, 1926, election of Rio Municipal Council members. Declaring itself the organ of a political party and the indisputable representative of the views of the workers, *A Classe Operaria* said it would coordinate the formation of a single slate of labor candidates under a single platform.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> "A Vida Tragica dos Trabalhadores de S. Paulo," *A Classe Operaria* 1, no. 4 (May 23, 1925).

<sup>16</sup> "Aos Barbeiros," *A Classe Operaria* 1, no. 9 (June 27, 1925).

<sup>17</sup> "Aperfeiçoemos os Nossos Methodos Syndicaes," *A Classe Operaria* 1, no. 9 (June 27, 1925).

<sup>18</sup> José Mussambé, "A Confraternização de Todos os Trabalhadores," *A Classe Operaria* 1, no. 4 (May 23, 1925).

<sup>19</sup> "A Formação do Bloco Operario," *A Classe Operaria* 1, no. 9 (June 27, 1925).

TABLE 7  
Industrial Strength, Brazil, 1920

Industry	Number of Establishments	Number of Workers
Textiles	1,211	112,195
Hides and skins	424	4,605
Wood	1,207	12,161
Metallurgy	509	14,147
Ceramics	1,590	18,888
Chemical products	950	15,350
Food	3,969	51,871
Apparel	1,988	28,248
Furniture	548	7,994
Construction	331	3,600
Construction of transport equipment	533	5,118
Production and transmission of energy	29	479
Luxury industries	47	861
Total	13,336	275,517

SOURCE: *A Classe Operaria*, I, 4.

Unfortunately for this work, *A Classe Operaria* was closed down just before it could publish its thirteenth number on July 25, 1925. The increasingly popular weekly was at the time engaged in a campaign against Albert Thomas, the bearded French socialist who had served as war minister and currently headed the International Labor Bureau, established in Geneva in accordance with the 1919 peace treaties. In its issue of July 11, three days before Thomas was to visit Brazil, *A Classe Operaria* described him as the "leader of social treason . . . at the service of the imperialist bourgeoisie."<sup>20</sup>

Thomas attended banquets given in his honor by the Brazilian foreign minister and the Congressional Commission on Social Legislation.<sup>21</sup> On July 18, after Thomas spoke to the Rio Association of Employees in Commerce (a pet of the Bernardes administration),<sup>22</sup> *A Classe Operaria* devoted its Number 12 almost entirely to "the false socialist."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Facó, *A Classe Operária*, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, July 15, 16, 1925.

<sup>22</sup> The Associação dos Empregados no Comércio do Rio de Janeiro honored and praised high government officials. Legislative Decree 4787, of January 2, 1924, declared the association "publicly useful."

<sup>23</sup> Facó, *A Classe Operária*, p. 7.

Brandão was attending to page arrangements for the next number when friendly workers surprised him, pulling him away from his work in time to prevent his arrest by policemen who had come to close down *A Classe Operaria*.

Since the state of siege did not then apply to Minas Gerais, Brandão spoke with printers in Juiz de Fora about keeping the PCB organ alive, but the only ones with adequate presses were afraid to print it.

At Retiro, near Juiz de Fora, Brandão and other Communists gathered signatures—many the simple X's of peasants—on a message to Justice Minister Pena Júnior, protesting the closing of *A Classe Operaria*. They entered a *fazenda* and, until they were driven off, made speeches calling for an alliance of peasants and workers to support *A Classe Operaria*.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 9, 14, 1968; also Octavio Brandão, "Combates da Classe Operária," pp. 76-77.

#### 4. The Government and the Social Question

**I**n 1925 President Bernardes, leader of the Republican party of Minas Gerais, took the steps necessary to have Washington Luís Pereira de Sousa elected on March 1, 1926, to succeed him in the nation's presidency. The election of Washington Luís, leader of the Republican party of São Paulo, was thus assured, in accordance with political ways that favored Minas and São Paulo.

"Washington Luís," *O Trabalhador Graphico* observed, "once wrote that 'the social question in Brazil is a question for the police.'" <sup>1</sup> The words attributed to Washington Luís had their origin in a statement in his gubernatorial program for São Paulo, drawn up in 1920: "labor agitation is a question more closely related to public order than to social order; it represents the state of spirit of some workers, but not the state of a society."<sup>2</sup>

Late in December 1925 the official candidate for president of Brazil "reiterated" that "the labor question is a question more closely related to

<sup>1</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico* 4, no. 52 (July 5, 1925).

<sup>2</sup> Washington Luís, quoted in Evaristo de Moraes, "A Questão Operaria em S. Paulo e no Resto do Brasil," *Correio da Manhã*, January 15, 1926.

public order than to social order."<sup>3</sup> He expressed interest in legislation that would bring an end to labor disturbances by arranging for the arbitration of labor disputes to provide "prompt and fair solutions."<sup>4</sup> He added that he was not opposed to social legislation "suitable to our setting."

Brazil had received a little social legislation under Bernardes. In January 1923 Bernardes promulgated a congressional decree setting up pension funds for railroad workers, to be established by deductions of 3 percent from wages, workers' initiation fees (one month's salary), company fines charged against workers, a 1.5 percent increase in railroad rates, and company contributions of 1 percent of gross income.<sup>5</sup>

In April 1923 Bernardes issued the decree that created the Conselho Nacional do Trabalho (National Labor Board). This consultive board, made up of two representatives each of labor, management, and the government, together with six outside experts, was to meet twice a month to study the workday, methods of wage payment, collective labor contracts, the arbitration of disputes, social security, labor accidents, and work by women and children.<sup>6</sup> It supervised the pension fund system which was extended to cover maritime and port workers just after Washington Luís became president in November 1926.<sup>7</sup>

Bernardes issued decrees to assist and provide shelter for abandoned and delinquent children.<sup>8</sup> Both he and his successor took steps to outlaw work by children under twelve or by children under fourteen who lacked primary education.<sup>9</sup> In January 1925 Congress, under the control of Bernardes, created the post of "special doctor for labor accidents"<sup>10</sup> as a first step in providing free medical assistance to workers injured on the job. Late in 1925 Bernardes promulgated a congressional decree that ordered commercial, industrial, and banking establishments to grant annual, two-week paid vacations to their workers.<sup>11</sup>

The Bernardes administration also sought to attract more immigrants

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Evaristo de Moraes noted substitution of the words "the labor question" for "labor agitation."

<sup>4</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, January 2, 1926.

<sup>5</sup> Legislative Decree 4682 of January 24, 1923.

<sup>6</sup> Executive Decree 16,027 of April 30, 1923.

<sup>7</sup> Legislative Decree 5109 of December 20, 1926.

<sup>8</sup> Executive Decrees 16,272, 16,388, and 16,444 of December 20, 1923, February 27, 1924, and April 2, 1924.

<sup>9</sup> Executive Decree 17,943A, of October 12, 1927 ("consolida as leis de assistência e proteção a menores: Código dos Menores"). See articles 101 and 102.

<sup>10</sup> Legislative Decree 4907 of January 7, 1925.

<sup>11</sup> Legislative Decree 4982 of December 24, 1925.

to Brazil. In Paris in February 1925 Gilberto Amado spoke about "misunderstandings" that had arisen between Brazil and Italy regarding immigration.<sup>12</sup> He agreed that wages paid to the newly arrived Italian workers in Brazil might be inferior to those they received in Italy. But, he explained, in Italy the worker would remain a worker, whereas in Brazil he would in a short time become a landowner, aided by machinery and accessories furnished by the government. Statistics, Amado said, showed that many Italian immigrants had become Paulista landowners and powerful industrialists.

Brazil's representative at the League of Nations' International Labor Conference affirmed that Brazilian "labor accident legislation" did not establish the slightest distinction between foreigners and nationals, and he emphasized "the extreme liberalism" of the Brazilian constitution.<sup>13</sup> At the same time the state government of São Paulo spoke of setting up "health posts" to comply with international agreements, and it proposed classifying plantations so as to steer immigrants to those with above-average health conditions.<sup>14</sup>

In spite of the attractive picture drawn by Gilberto Amado and others, between 1925 and 1929 Italian immigration to São Paulo State dropped sharply below the level of the previous five years.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, in Geneva in September 1925, to the surprise of the Brazilians,<sup>16</sup> Italians at the League of Nations opposed a proposal to grant assistance to allow White Russian refugees from the Soviet Union to settle in South America. This opposition occurred several months after representatives of the League of Nations, with the White Russians in mind, had studied conditions in Brazil.<sup>17</sup> Everardo Dias's fear that fifty thousand "Wrangelite," antilabor "adventurers" would come to Brazil did not materialize.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 12, 1925.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, May 23, 1925.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, May 30, 1925.

<sup>15</sup> The figure fell from 45,206 to 29,472. Immigration from Spain to São Paulo also fell, whereas immigration from Portugal and Japan increased (see Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, Conselho Nacional de Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico do Brasil, Ano V, 1939-1940*, p. 1307).

<sup>16</sup> "O Brasil e os Refugiados Russos e Armenios," *Correio da Manhã*, September 23, 1925.

<sup>17</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 30, 1925.

<sup>18</sup> About eight thousand immigrants of Russian nationality entered Brazil between 1924 and 1933 (see Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico*, p. 1307).

## 5. Nazaré's Tilt with the PCB

Socialists in Rio observed May Day 1925 by founding a new Partido Socialista Brasileiro (PSB) and distributing a manifesto that announced the party's program: electoral reform, opposition to the presidential system, abolition of the "useless" Senate, recognition of the Soviet Union, suppression of the Brazilian Embassy at the Vatican, a limit on profits, the establishment of minimum wages and free education, and state ownership of "transportation, electric energy, mines, and such."<sup>1</sup>

Evaristo de Moraes, the heavily mustached author of the manifesto, became the PSB's candidate for the Rio Municipal Council elections of March 1, 1926.

As in Europe, where the Socialist parties refused to join the Communists' United Front, a verbal battle raged between Socialists and Communists. Late in 1925, the PCB's CEC attacked Agripino Nazaré, the fat and sedentary leader of the new PSB in Bahia. The CEC declared that a message by Nazaré to the Bahian tobacco workers sought "to serve the Socialist party—party of the small bourgeoisie—to the detriment of the Communist Party—the first and only party of the Brazilian proletariat." The PCB also observed that *Vanguarda*, the Rio daily for which Nazaré wrote, was a "radish newspaper, red in its title and white in its text." It was, the PCB said, the property of Geraldo Rocha, "instrument of Yankee imperialism and intimate friend of bourgeois elements, who, to please Socialist Albert Thomas, closed *A Classe Operaria* exactly when our anti-Socialist campaign, here and abroad, was most heated."<sup>2</sup>

*Vanguarda*, which had published some PCB material in the past, became the mouthpiece of Socialists, anarchists, and "reformist" labor leaders, all the object of PCB attacks. Nazaré contended that *Vanguarda*'s orientation was provided exclusively by Oseas Mota, the director and largest stockholder. He added that Geraldo Rocha was "a mere stockholder," and dismissed the charge of his ownership of the newspaper as "another big fantasy of the Communists."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "O Manifesto do Partido Socialista Brasileiro," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 1, 1925, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> PCB's CEC, quoted in Agripino Nazareth, "Bolchevistas de Opera Comica: Resposta ao Partido Comunista do Brasil," *Vanguarda*, Rio de Janeiro, January 11, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> Nazareth, "Bolchevistas de Opera Comica."

In his series of articles, "Comic Opera Bolsheviks," Nazaré asserted that the Russian revolution was "isolated." The PCB's CEC retorted that the Russian revolution was backed by sixty Communist parties throughout the world and the millions of workers belonging to the Red International of Labor Unions.

Maybe, Nazaré wrote, some real Communist parties did exist—that is, parties with more members than the PCB. But even so, he argued, they were not going to bring about the triumph of the social revolution in their countries in the manner called for by the movement that Lenin had headed. "Even if Bolsheviks are spread out all over the earth, to such an extent that we can find a few more than five hundred here, we must conclude" that the Russian revolution is "isolated." Only "lunatics" and "those who argue in bad faith" could think otherwise, "and in the PCB both types abound."<sup>4</sup>

After Nazaré said that Russia had "retreated," the PCB wrote: "If Russia retreated, who is primarily responsible? The guilty ones are the Socialists, the European colleagues of Agripino, who, by helping the bourgeoisie combat the revolution in Russia, smash the Hungarian and German revolutions, and set back the movements of Italy, France, Bulgaria, etc., have made it impossible for the world revolution to triumph at the moment."<sup>5</sup>

Nazaré replied that he, too, could not forgive the European Socialists who had behaved as described by the PCB. He himself, he said, had persuaded Bahian workers to wire Epiácio Pessoa, asking that the Soviet government be recognized by Brazil, and, in the Syndicate of Newspaper Workers, he had supported Congressman João Batista de Azevedo Lima's project to recognize the Soviet Union. What annoyed Nazaré was the hostility of the PCB toward Brazilian Socialists based on acts of European Socialists.

Having thus presented his own position, he quoted the PCB as having once said: "In 1918 Lenin believed that, in view of the backwardness of the country, state capitalism would represent enormous progress for Russia; therefore, in 1918, Lenin foresaw the New Economic Policy, that is, the need for a strategic retreat." Was it, then, Nazaré asked, his "European colleagues" who caused the "retreat"? Or was it due, "as I foresaw, and as Lenin foresaw," to causes "which neither sociology nor political economics can disregard"?<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Agripino Nazareth, "Bolchevistas de Opera Comica, IV," *Vanguarda*, February 1, 1926.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

## 6. Gaúcho Anarchists

*O Internacional*, "Organ of Workers in Restaurants and Hotels" in São Paulo, told its readers that Brazil had three political parties: the Republican party of large landowners, the Socialist party of small property owners and unhappy intellectuals, and the Marxist party of the proletariat.<sup>1</sup> Workers were urged to support the last-named. Those who had "a horror of politics" were told that to refrain from voting was to help the bourgeoisie.<sup>2</sup>

Anarcho-syndicalists, in control of the Executive Committee of A Internacional, São Paulo's union of workers in restaurants and hotels, charged that Apolinário José Alves, director of the newspaper, was receiving financial assistance from outside.<sup>3</sup>

Vítor M. Saavedra, leader of A Internacional's anarcho-syndicalist wing, managed in October 1925 to have *O Internacional* publish an article unique for a Communist newspaper. Saavedra's article announced the forthcoming Third Congress of the Federação Operária do Rio Grande do Sul, where "the proletariat of the state will again be faithful to its honorable tradition . . . , the syndicalist orientation—the traditional tendency of the Brazilian proletariat."<sup>4</sup> Saavedra praised previous congresses of the Rio Grande do Sul federation for their antipolitical, anti-state stands in spite of opposition by some *figurões* (big shots).

As Saavedra predicted, the Third Congress in Rio Grande do Sul issued anti-Bolshevik pronouncements and reiterated the Federação's adherence to the anarcho-syndicalist International Workingmen's Association of Berlin.<sup>5</sup> A typical motion declared that "the organized proletariat of Rio Grande do Sul reaffirms its libertarian purposes and its determination to oppose all political parties." The delegates made plans to organize *grupos libertários* to teach comrades how to "devote their efforts to human

<sup>1</sup> "Os Tres Partidos do Brasil," *O Internacional* 6, no. 98 (first half of October 1925).

<sup>2</sup> "Aos Neutros," *O Internacional* 6, no. 98.

<sup>3</sup> "Acta da Assembléa Realizada 3 Dez. '25," *O Internacional* 6, no. 102 (January 26, 1926).

<sup>4</sup> Victor M. Saavedra, "Os Congressos Operarios," *O Internacional* 6, no. 98.

<sup>5</sup> "Acabamos de Realizar o 3º Congresso Operario do Rio Grande do Sul," *O Syndicalista* 7, no. 7 (Porto Alegre, October 24, 1925).



liberation." The *grupos* were "not to be, as our enemies imply, for throwing bombs of dynamite." What was needed was "cerebral dynamite."<sup>6</sup>

To serve as a model for Gaúcho workers, the lengthy "bases of agreement" (libertarian term for statutes) of the anarchist Nucleus of Shoemakers of São Paulo<sup>7</sup> were read aloud at the congress. They consigned the administrative work of the Nucleus of Shoemakers to a three-man commission, named every six months, and stated that one of the purposes of the nucleus was to combat political elements and all political parties—even those calling themselves proletarian.

While the congress was under way, two Communists walked in with credentials from the União dos Operários Estivadores de Porto Alegre (Union of the Stevedore Workers of Porto Alegre). Frederico Kniestedt, the presiding officer, asked if they had been invited. Replying yes, they objected to the question by "Der Freie Arbeiter." Kniestedt pointed out that the congress had already expressed its support of the International Workingmen's Association, whereupon Manuel Pereira, one of the Communists, proposed that the congress abandon all ideologies. The proposal was rejected, Kniestedt attacked the Soviet government, and another anarchist indignantly objected to being called "comrade" by the "supporters of despots." The Communists withdrew from the congress—but not before Manuel Pereira described it as being run "dictatorially."<sup>8</sup>

The congress named Edgard Leuenroth to serve with four Gaúchos on the editorial board of *O Syndicalista*, the Federação's seven-year-old organ. *O Syndicalista*, its pages full of anti-Bolshevik comments, published articles signed "Democrito," a pseudonym used in *A Plebe* when Leuenroth was its editor.

"Political elements," *O Syndicalista* wrote, had made "impetuous and disreputable attacks against the Third Congress of the Federação, held in Porto Alegre."<sup>9</sup> It added that the Communist "detractors" had placed so much emphasis on "personal slanders and insults" that they had left untouched all matters of principle enunciated at the congress.

In observance of the second anniversary of Lenin's death, *O Syndicalista* published a story sent from São Paulo. It told of how a frail old

<sup>6</sup> "3º Congresso Operario," *O Syndicalista* 7, no. 10 (December 5, 1925).

<sup>7</sup> Full name: Nucleo Sindicalista de Operários Sapateiros da Cidade de São Paulo (Syndicalist Nucleus of Shoemakers of the City of São Paulo).

<sup>8</sup> "3º Congresso Operario," *O Syndicalista* 7, no. 10 (December 5, 1925).

<sup>9</sup> "Em Torno dos Ataques ao 3º Congresso Operario," *O Syndicalista* 7, no. 12 (February 13, 1926).

Russian had waited for days in a Moscow government office, unable to get a permit to travel to see his dying sister because he had not known that a bribe was necessary. The corrupt young Soviet official, his waiting room full of poor people with requests, received a rich merchant. "At your orders," he told the merchant. Sending away the poor, he added: "What ill-mannered people!"<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "O 'Companheiro' Lenine," signed Mujik (São Paulo, I-926), *O Syndicalista* 7, no. 12 (February 13, 1926).

## 7. Union Squabbles, Late 1925

Ravengar,<sup>1</sup> *O Syndicalista's* "special correspondent in Rio," wrote that the labor situation in the nation's capital was "wretched" due to the state of siege and to the "Bolshevik chameleons, who seek to penetrate the labor unions in order to impose their enslaving, immoral, and tattered politics." The struggle of the Rio proletariat, he said, "continued to be against the two allies, capitalism and Maximalism."<sup>2</sup> He charged that "little Maximalist newspapers" had let the authorities know that he and Manuel Simon were conspirators, and that Communist Pedro Goite had later denounced the pair to the police at a Centro Cosmopolita assembly, where, he added, the Communist directors were protected by police rifles.

Ravengar attributed the Communist control of the Centro Cosmopolita to police cooperation and to unfair elections. Another anti-Bolshevik wrote in *Correio da Manhã* that an election for Centro Cosmopolita officers, won by the anti-Bolsheviks 210 to 186, had been annulled at the insistence of the presiding officer, because at 4:00 A.M., after "exhaustive" counting and checking, an additional ballot box (containing one uncounted ballot) had been found under a table.<sup>3</sup> A prominent opponent of the Centro Cosmopolita directorship was diagnosed a pathological case by *Voz Cosmopolita*; since *Voz Cosmopolita* would not print his reply, he turned to

<sup>1</sup> Ravengar was nom de plume of Joaquim Fernandes, who sometimes wrote on labor matters for Rio's *Vanguarda*.

<sup>2</sup> Fernandes Ravengar, "Movimento Syndical, Rio de Janeiro," *O Syndicalista* 7, no. 11 (December 26, 1925).

<sup>3</sup> Luiz Gomes da Silva, "As Eleições no Centro Cosmopolita," *Correio da Manhã*, July 19, 1925.

*Vanguarda* to point out that the proper place for primeval specimens, like *Voz's* editor, was the Army's general barracks and not the Centro Cosmopolita.<sup>4</sup>

Ravengar reported that after the Rio police closed the anarchist-controlled Aliança dos Operários em Calçados (Shoemakers' Alliance) and the Union of Civil Construction Workers, the Maximalists received police permission to make off with the furnishings in the headquarters of the Shoemakers' Alliance. They had also, he wrote, registered a rival Aliança dos Operários em Calçados (the same name), knowing that the original Aliança was not a registered organization. The anti-Bolsheviks had thus been obliged to register, and the dispute was in the courts. Completing his report to *O Syndicalista*, Ravengar said that Bolsheviki ("two low scoundrels, Cavalcânti and Co.") had established a rival to the great Union of Civil Construction Workers, but he predicted that "the day the old union reopens, the small organization of the chameleons will disappear."<sup>5</sup>

In São Paulo, A Internacional held an assembly of restaurant and hotel employees on December 1, 1925, to decide what to do about *O Internacional*. Vítor M. Saavedra maintained that the paper's orientation hurt the association. C. Paterlini, another Executive Committee member, agreed but pointed out that the matter could only be solved if A Internacional were to establish "an official organ" and disavow *O Internacional*. The assembly was unexpectedly sidetracked into a heated debate over the true meaning of syndicalism. Paterlini heard himself accused of being ambitious, and Saavedra, amidst shouts and confusion, quickly adjourned the meeting.<sup>6</sup>

When the assembly reconvened two days later, three proposals were considered.<sup>7</sup> Saavedra moved that Editor Apolinário José Alves and his staff on *O Internacional* be replaced by syndicalists. Paterlini proposed that the "editorial group should harmonize with an exclusively syndicalist orientation" or be replaced. A third suggestion was that A Internacional "completely disavow" *O Internacional* because its editors had neither morals nor good sense.

<sup>4</sup> José Baptista Ferreira, "Resposta a Francisco Monteiro Paz," *Vanguarda*, January 12, 1926.

<sup>5</sup> Fernandes Ravengar in *O Syndicalista* 7, no. 11 (December 26, 1925).

<sup>6</sup> "Acta da Assembléa Realizada 1 Dez.," *O Internacional* 6, no. 102 (January 26, 1926).

<sup>7</sup> "Acta da Assembléa Realizada 3 Dez. '25," *O Internacional* 6, no. 102 (January 26, 1926).

Apolinário, who turned out to have considerable support at this reconvened meeting, dismissed remarks made about his lack of financial integrity on the ground that they were not specific and said that he would respect the orientation decided by the assembly.

Paterlini's proposal, the mildest of the three, was favored in the voting. But this neither meant that *O Internacional* would "harmonize with an exclusively syndicalist orientation," nor that Apolinário would be disavowed or replaced for not doing so. For one thing, after Paterlini's motion passed, the assembly selected an Executive Committee of *A Internacional* that did not share the strong syndicalist view of its predecessor. The only committee member reelected was one who had insisted that all but himself be dismissed because he could not work on a committee dominated by Saavedra. Saavedra's dismissal was approved by a majority, and Apolinário was elected secretary of public relations of *A Internacional*. The assembly ended when Apolinário asked it to recognize a debt of 250\$000, which he said *A Internacional* owed *O Internacional*. The members of the association preferred adjourning to resolving the matter.<sup>8</sup>

The struggle to dominate unions brought the PCB into conflict with labor leaders who were not interested in anarcho-syndicalist or Communist ideas, and who were called Yellow or "reformist" by the PCB. Sarandi Raposo, the PCB said, was a "charlatan reformist" who supported the Bernardes government in the hope of receiving financial gratification.<sup>9</sup>

*A Classe Operaria*, aided by Congressman Azevedo Lima, started a campaign against Luís de Oliveira,<sup>10</sup> the stevedore union's president whose candidacy for the Municipal Council so pleased Raposo. After *A Classe Operaria* was closed, its editorial staff, issuing brochures from time to time, accused Luís de Oliveira of receiving government assistance in his electoral work and denounced the alliances he made with anti-Communists, such as fellow candidate Cândido Pessoa, relative of Epi-tácio Pessoa.<sup>11</sup>

*A Classe Operaria*'s editors used the columns of *Vanguarda* for a general attack on "the yellow 'leaders,' agents of the bourgeoisie disguised

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Octavio Brandão, "Combates da Classe Operária," *Revista Brasiliense*, no. 46 (March-April 1963), p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 89, quoting from "Carta Aberta" of the PCB Central Executive Commission, published in *A Nação*, January 5, 1927.

<sup>11</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, August 30, 1970.

as labor leaders," and on their plan to publish a newspaper during the closing months of the election campaign. The reply, also in *Vanguarda*, came from Metalworkers' Union President Amaro de Araújo, who signed on behalf of "the editorship of the stevedores' union" and added "worker" after his name.

"I a former Red, a turncoat? What a slander," he wrote. "Understand well. I am, as I always was, a worker, and, like my companions, I defend the rights of the class to which I have the honor of belonging."<sup>12</sup> He asked the editors of *A Classe Operaria* to give their names, reveal their trades, and "prove they are really workers." Araújo found it curious that *A Classe Operaria* was born and placed in circulation during a full state of siege, just when *A Nação* (of Leônidas de Resende and Maurício de Lacerda), *O Trabalho* (of Raposo), and *Correio da Manhã* were prevented from circulating.

Most probably, he wrote, the enemies of the proletariat hide behind those who, sustaining a Red propaganda, contributed to the collapse of so many labor organizations. "The disguised agents of the bourgeoisie are those who want to force the workers to remain eternal children, and who offer them a prize, some plaything, provided they will blindly strike out in a stipulated direction. The disguised agents of the bourgeoisie most likely are those who, without the backing of an official and powerful proletarian organization, are forever inciting the least experienced workers" to foolishness—giving them, in compensation, "unemployment, jailings, deportations, and other sacrifices. . . . They are more than agents of the enemy. They are unscrupulous jokers who do not hesitate to make use of thousands of victims in order to satisfy their low and ignominious passions.

"*A Classe Operaria* was suspended. And what do we have to do with its closing—that we should repeatedly have to hear about that incident? They are going to complain—to Russia. But leave them whine."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Amaro de Araujo, "O Movimento e A Classe Operaria," *Vanguarda*, no. 1282 (January 9, 1926).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

## 8. The PCB and Elections, 1925 and 1926

The PCB and its Santos leader, João Freire de Oliveira, organized a political movement in Santos, the Coligação Operária, in time to participate in the local municipal elections of November 29, 1925. The results were disappointing to João Freire de Oliveira:

Approximate electorate of Santos	3,200
Number voting (despite heavy rain)	1,912
Votes received by J. F. de Oliveira	34

Candidates of the Partido Republicano were backed by 1,493 voters, but opposition candidates won three of the fourteen Municipal Council seats. Ibraim Nobre, running as a Republican, received 316 votes, very nearly enough for election.<sup>1</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira called the occasion historic because "for the first time in Brazil, the working class, duly regimented, participated in an election as an independent party," supporting a worker.<sup>2</sup> He praised the Coligação Operária for clearly establishing in the electoral field "the differentiation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie."

João Freire de Oliveira spoke about future triumphs<sup>3</sup> and blamed his poor showing on labor disorganization, "miserable treason by some workers," and "the residues" of anarchism in the unions.<sup>4</sup> He announced a reorganization: the "complete detachment" of the Coligação from the unions, giving it, he hoped, greater liberty of action.

Early in 1926 Astrogildo censured members of the Coligação who wanted to ally it with a new so-called national party, the Partido da Mocidade (Party of Youth). Politically, Astrogildo wrote, "the criterion of age is not worth two seashells. The worker is just as exploited at eighteen as he is at fifty." He criticized the Partido da Mocidade for failing to consider class differences, for supposing that bourgeois youth and proletarian

<sup>1</sup> *Tribuna de Santos*, December 1, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "A Coligação Operária e o Partido da Mocidade," *O Solidario* 3, no. 39 (February 24, 1926).

<sup>3</sup> João Freire de Oliveira, interview given to *Folha da Manhã* of São Paulo, reported in *Vanguarda*, January 11, 1926.

<sup>4</sup> "A Reorganização da Coligação Operária," *O Solidario* 3, no. 37 (January 20, 1926).

youth could be brought together.<sup>5</sup> The Partido da Mocidade was being attacked from other quarters for other reasons. After it decided not to participate in the presidential election, *Jornal do Commercio* wrote that "abstention is either the maximum of prudence or the consummate of cunning," neither of which "happen to be virtues in young people."<sup>6</sup> In *Correio da Manhã*, Antônio Leão Veloso attacked the new party for admiring old politicians whose past behavior had contradicted the ideals of the young.<sup>7</sup>

Astrogildo admitted that the Partido da Mocidade included some well-intentioned youths who were sincerely attracted to the program of the Coligação Operária, but he pointed out that for thousands of years the road to hell had been paved with good intentions. "Even at the cost of a few votes," he said, the Coligação should not collaborate with the Partido da Mocidade. "The workers of Santos must close ranks uncompromisingly behind the Coligação, and, unanimously, like one single block of iron, sustain it."<sup>8</sup>

On February 22, 1926, members of the "block of iron" of Santos received instructions from the Coligação to "abstain completely from the elections to be held on the twenty-eighth and on March 1."<sup>9</sup>

In the Rio municipal elections of March 1, 1926, the PCB was chiefly concerned with defeating stevedore leader Luís de Oliveira and Socialist Evaristo de Morais. Maurício de Lacerda, whose independent attitude

<sup>5</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "A Colligação Operaria e o Partido da Mocidade." The organ of the Partido da Mocidade, *O Idealista* (1, no. 1 [December 13, 1925]), explained that the party was to be made up of "groups of five to twenty voters, not over thirty-five years of age," and that older voters could apply to be "collaborators" but could play no part "in the party's internal deliberations." *O Idealista* published the Manifesto to the Nation issued by the Partido da Mocidade in São Paulo on November 19, 1925. The manifesto said that the party had been born as a result of the shame felt by Brazilian youth because of "the ignominious lie that our democracy has become, the arbitrary power of the Executive, the plundering of all the citizens' rights, the indecent subservience of the Legislature, the malign perpetuation of the armed oligarchies, the suppression of liberty of thought and speech, the ignorance in which the governments leave our people, the distressing physical conditions of our people, and our lack of conscience in the face of social problems."

<sup>6</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, January 17, 1926.

<sup>7</sup> Antonio Leão Velloso, "Partido da Mocidade," *Correio da Manhã*, February 24, 1926.

<sup>8</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "A Colligação Operaria e o Partido da Mocidade."

<sup>9</sup> "A Colligação Operaria ao Seu Eleitorado," *O Solidario* 3, no. 39 (February 25, 1926).

annoyed the PCB, was supported by *5 de Julho*, which published the manifesto in which he proclaimed that "the city, by electing the prisoner, will condemn the permanent state of siege used to scourge it ever since the establishment of the republican regime." "I do not," Maurício said, "put up my name as the instrument of factions or groups but as the banner of liberty in the hands of the people in general."<sup>10</sup>

Municipal council seats were to go to twenty-four contestants: the twelve in each of the two districts who received the most votes. Every elector could cast eight votes, distributing them if he wished, or giving them all (as a *voto de caixão*) to one candidate.

On March 1, 1926, Maurício won a council seat easily. His 6,648 votes put him in second place in the Second District. In the First District, of greater interest to the PCB, Evaristo de Moraes received about 3,300 votes, about 1,500 less than the necessary number for a seat, and Cândido Pessoa and Luís de Oliveira, with 7,518 and 5,621 votes respectively, finished in the second and eighth places.<sup>11</sup>

Luís de Oliveira proclaimed himself the first workers' representative to have been elected in Brazil. In Mário Rodrigues's new newspaper, *A Manhã*, Pedro Mota Lima wrote that policemen had received orders to vote for Luís de Oliveira.<sup>12</sup>

Luís de Oliveira's maiden speech in the Municipal Council was directed against "those who call themselves Communists and representatives of the working classes of the Federal District. . . . The present situation requires that every one of us produce, work, and construct. To destroy, to aggravate, is a prejudicial undertaking and is even antipatriotic. Mr. President, from this tribunal I launch my protest against the funereal campaign of the defeatists, against those citizens who combat organization, calling us 'yellows' and forgetting that when they do so they reflect the spite which dominates them."<sup>13</sup>

The March 1, 1926, presidential election was won by Washington Luís, the only candidate. After the election, São Paulo professors and other prominent citizens who disliked the regime acted to overcome the organizational weakness of the opposition by founding the Partido

<sup>10</sup> "Carta de Maurício de Lacerda aos Directores do Centro Eleitoral do 2º Distrito," *5 de Julho* 2, no. 43 (Rio de Janeiro, May 18, 1925).

<sup>11</sup> *O Paiz*, March 3, 1926.

<sup>12</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, August 30, 1970.

<sup>13</sup> "Como Se Definiu, no Conselho Municipal, o Primeiro Intendente Operario," *Vanguarda*, June 14, 1926.



Democrático de São Paulo. The Partido da Mocidade at once adhered to the new party and was received "with open arms."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 23, 1926.

## 9. Carlos Dias Goes to Geneva

After Albert Thomas criticized Brazil for having no delegate at the Geneva conferences of the International Labor Bureau,<sup>1</sup> the Bernardes government used Libânio da Rocha Vaz to arrange for meetings to choose a delegate.

The first meeting, held at the Association of Employees in Commerce on April 21, 1926, was attended by representatives of important Yellow groups such as textile workers, stevedores, metalworkers, port workers, and workers in waterfront warehouses and coffee (Sociedade de Resistência dos Trabalhadores em Trapiches e Café). Metalworker Amaro de Araújo and two others were authorized to invite "all labor organizations without distinction of political or religious creed" to a second meeting four days later to select Brazil's delegate to the Geneva conferences.<sup>2</sup> The second meeting was attended by delegates claiming to represent a long list of associations (among them associations of firemen, naval carpenters, and municipal workers).

By acclamation Libânio da Rocha Vaz was named presiding officer. When José Pereira de Oliveira, president of the Textile Workers' Union, nominated Carlos Dias to represent Brazilian labor in Geneva, the suggestion was heartily approved by the delegates. Two years earlier the old anarchist had been named by the Federação Operária to attend the Second Congress of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workingmen's Association in Berlin,<sup>3</sup> but the events of July 1924 had interfered with the collection of travel money.

To ridicule Carlos Dias's mission to Geneva, the editorial board of

<sup>1</sup> *O Combate*, São Paulo, May 4, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Luiz de Oliveira, maiden speech in Rio Municipal Council, reported in *Vanguarda*, June 14, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> *A Plebe* 7, no. 240 (June 14, 1924).

*A Classe Operaria* printed two thousand copies<sup>4</sup> of a message that opened with denouncements of the Versailles Treaty ("the cause of famine among the European proletariat") and the League of Nations ("the instrument of English bankers"). It described Albert Thomas as the lackey of bankers, intimate friend of coffee *fazendeiros*, ally of "yellow Luís de Oliveira," and the person responsible for closing down *A Classe Operaria*.<sup>5</sup>

Laughing at a claim that Carlos Dias represented 800,000 Brazilian workers, the message pointed out that the gathering at the Association of Employees in Commerce had been limited to unions in Rio, where the 1920 census showed only 56,517 factory workers. Furthermore, the Communists estimated that only 4,000 of Rio's 35,000 textile workers paid union dues, and cited a recent Metalworkers' Union financial statement to show that, of Rio's thousands of metalworkers, only 183 were dues-paying members. Besides, the Communists added, union presidents had acted on their own on the Geneva matter, not consulting members.

The Communists claimed that many unions, like the Centro Cosmopolita, had refused to be represented at the meeting on April 25. "We ask the sponsors of that meeting if anyone heard from the unions of barbers, butchers, confectionery shop workers, tailors, sailors, bakers, stoneworkers, or carpenters?"<sup>6</sup>

The Communists quoted from Carlos Dias's book, *A Luta Sindicalista Revolucionaria*, published in 1918, to show that he had changed. The former attacker of unions controlled by politicians was now described as the agent of Amaro de Araújo, "who transformed the Metalworkers' Union into a branch of the office of Nicanor do Nascimento." Carlos Dias, the Communists said, was making the revolution at the side of Albert Thomas, newspaper publisher Assis Chateaubriand, Epitácio Pessoa, Libânio da Rocha Vaz, Amaro de Araújo, Luís de Oliveira—"terrible revolutionaries! . . . In short, Carlos Dias, once the companion of anarchists João Plácido and Domingos Passos, has become the unconditional supporter of their assassins."<sup>7</sup>

*Correio da Manhã*, which felt that the Brazilian proletariat had been

<sup>4</sup> "Balço da *A Classe Operaria* desde Outubro de 1925 a Abril de 1928," *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 1 (May 1, 1928).

<sup>5</sup> A Redacção da *A Classe Operaria*, "A Conferencia de Genébra" (dated May 5, 1926).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* This was written when it was thought that Passos had perished at Colônia Clevelandia.

treated inconsiderately when Albert Thomas visited Brazil, said that if it was impossible to have authentic labor representation at Geneva it was best to have no representation. On the other hand, *Gazeta de Noticias* praised the selection of Carlos Dias, "the direct representative of over fifty thousand Brazilian workers," and said that the great majority of them, unlike the insignificant Communist minority, was in perfect accord with all who worked for the progress of Brazil.<sup>8</sup> Assis Chateaubriand's *O Jornal* organized a send-off banquet for Carlos Dias, prompting the Communists to point out that the president of *O Jornal's* board was Epiácio Pessoa, "deporter of 150 of your companions, anarchists like you, oh Carlos Dias."<sup>9</sup>

The Carlos Dias affair turned the May Day rally of 1926 into an uproar. At Praça Mauá, Pedro Bastos shouted that Carlos Dias, pseudo-representative of labor associations, would be present on May 25 at the Geneva Conference of Exploiters of Labor. As the orator prepared to read a motion censuring Dias, anti-Communists shouted objections.<sup>10</sup> Dias's wife cried out that Bastos was an anarchist and added indignantly: "My husband left for Geneva as delegate of sixteen labor associations, properly constituted. He is neither an adventurer nor an anarchist. He is a good man."<sup>11</sup>

When Police Colonel Bandeira de Melo told Pedro Bastos not to read his motion and to end his speech, the orator retorted that he would read his motion at the Textile Workers' Union that evening. Policemen therefore arrested Bastos and broke up the rally. At the police station, Bastos was interrogated by Bandeira de Melo, who had once denounced Carlos Dias for involvement in the anarchist plot of November 1918. The colonel, famous for giving food—and never beatings—to prisoners,<sup>12</sup> released Bastos at 8:00 P.M. after threatening him with rearrest if he attended the evening session at the Textile Workers' Union.<sup>13</sup>

*O Solidario* wrote that the person "who defended Carlos Dias with

<sup>8</sup> *Gazeta de Noticias*, May 2, 1926.

<sup>9</sup> A Redacção da *A Classe Operaria*, "A Conferencia de Genébra." Nelson Werneck Sodré writes that shortly after August 1922 *O Jornal* had been purchased by Assis Chateaubriand "with the help of Epiácio Pessoa, Alfredo Pujol, and Virgílio de Melo Franco, and with the approval of Artur Bernardes" (Nelson Werneck Sodré, *História da Imprensa no Brasil*, p. 415).

<sup>10</sup> *Gazeta de Noticias* reported (May 2, 1926) that the Communists were "defeated at the labor rally by the great mass of our workers."

<sup>11</sup> *O Combate*, May 5, 1926.

<sup>12</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, November 14, 1970; June 27, 1971.

<sup>13</sup> *O Combate*, May 5, 1926.

the greatest vehemence was a frail, sick, withered, ill-nourished, tiny, lean-looking, shrill-voiced widow—the symbol of anarchism!”<sup>14</sup>

In Congress Azevedo Lima declared that justice was on the side of *A Classe Operaria*, closed at Albert Thomas’s request, and on the side of the unions that did not help select Carlos Dias. He said that Dias, the first Brazilian to be sent to the “messy merrymaking” of Albert Thomas, was simply “the expression of the official will.” Azevedo Lima revealed that the Carioca police, “reverting to the old regime of Marshal Fontoura,” had ordered the press to discontinue publishing protests against Carlos Dias’s selection on the grounds that they were often the work of agitators and were harmful to public tranquility.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> “A Comemoração do 1º de Maio,” *O Solidario* 3, no. 44 (May 13, 1926).

<sup>15</sup> *O Combate*, May 25, 1926.

## 10. The “Frente Única Multicolor”

*O Solidario* proposed “to prove with facts” that “whites such as the bourgeoisie, yellows such as Amaro de Araújo and Luís de Oliveira, pinks such as the Socialists, and radishes such as the anarchists, syndicalists, and anarcho-syndicalists, constitute one single person.” In making its case, *O Solidario* said that “precisely in *Vanguarda* the multicolored united front is carried out.”<sup>1</sup>

Anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist sentiment had become strong in *Vanguarda*. In February 1926 the newspaper published resolutions adopted at the Third Congress of the Federação Operária do Rio Grande do Sul and reprinted one of Fábio Luz’s attacks on Astrogildo, written in 1922. In June 1926 Francisco Oliveira, secretary of Os Emancipados, recalled in *Vanguarda* that in 1922, “when an anarchist press still existed,” Luz had first called the Brazilian Bolsheviks “radishes, a term they now use indiscriminately.”<sup>2</sup> Francisco Oliveira found similarities between the Soviet Union and fascist Italy.

A week later Francisco Pereira went further, writing in *Vanguarda* that “Bolshevism, or authoritarian Communism, differs in no way from

<sup>1</sup> *O Solidario* 3, no. 45 (June 27, 1926).

<sup>2</sup> Francisco Oliveira, “Rabanetes,” *Vanguarda*, June 14, 1926.

fascism.”<sup>3</sup> Pereira represented Os Iluminados, a group that lamented that “simpleminded workers” in Brazil “let themselves be led by the nose by the scrawny and spasmodic Otávio Brandão, and by radish-like Astrogildo, the supreme dictator.”

Ravengar, replying in *Vanguarda* to questions put to him by *Voz Cosmopolita* (such as, why did he support Amaro de Araújo and have close relations with Vítor M. Saavedra?), retaliated with questions he wanted *Voz Cosmopolita* to answer. “Why,” he asked, “does Otávio Brandão, hidden director of *Voz Cosmopolita* and chief Brazilian ‘Red,’ carry on pharmaceutical work only in the Red Light district? Why do not the ‘Reds’ of *Voz Cosmopolita* (painted with carmine from the pharmacy of the famous druggist) reply to José Batista Ferreira, who, at a Centro Cosmopolita assembly, described that association as governed by Brandão—proving the incapacity of the Centro’s leaders?”<sup>4</sup>

Such articles were cited by Communists to show that anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists had joined the white capitalists (“Geraldo Rocha—associate of the Equitable Trust”), the socialist pinks, and the “yellows.” *O Solidario* wrote: “Under the inspiration of pink Agripino Nazaré, the radish Ravengar defends yellow police agent Amaro de Araújo, one of those responsible for closing *A Classe Operaria*. Twice in his article one can see the influence of Geraldo Rocha.”<sup>5</sup>

Communists said that the multicolored united front was “not only national—but international.” They pointed out that *Vanguarda*, “in the section managed by Nazaré, transcribed a manifesto of the Yellow Federation of Amsterdam” and reprinted attacks on Communists by the “yellow” North American, William Green. “We prefer,” Green was quoted as saying, “the philosophy of Samuel Gompers to that of Moscow.” “In other words,” *O Solidario* declared, they preferred “the companionship of Morgan and Rockefeller to the interests of the proletariat.”<sup>6</sup>

Repeatedly exclaiming “putrid anarchy,” Communists derided the activities of Leuenroth and Oiticica. In connection with a Pan American Press Congress in Washington, Edgard Leuenroth had gone to the United

<sup>3</sup> Francisco Pereira, “A Revolução Russa e o Partido Comunista,” *Vanguarda*, June 21, 1926.

<sup>4</sup> Joaquim Fernandes (Ravengar), “Vaidade, Hipocrisia, Confusionismo e Companhia,” *Vanguarda*, June 14, 1926.

<sup>5</sup> M.B., “A Frente Unica Multicor (no Rio de Janeiro),” *O Solidario* 3, no. 45 (June 27, 1926).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

States to represent A Eclética, a São Paulo advertising firm in which his youngest brother worked. "Oh joy!" wrote *O Solidario*, quoting news items that described Leuenroth as bearing greetings to the Pan American Press Congress from *Correio Paulistano*, organ of the Republican party of São Paulo, and from *O Combate*, and as carrying an official recommendation from Foreign Minister Félix Pacheco to the Brazilian ambassador in Washington. *O Solidario* pictured Leuenroth as delighted with speeches by President Coolidge and Secretary of State Kellogg about "peace" and "universal conciliation."<sup>7</sup>

Leuenroth, the Communists said, had been in Guaranaema, S.P., when the July 1924 revolt "surprised" him. "The terrible revolutionary," it added, remained there—a very different figure from Marx, who rushed to battle points when revolutions broke out in France and Germany. After a long disappearance, the Communists said, Edgard showed up. Was this to "redeem the errors of twenty years, to reorganize the São Paulo proletariat, disorganized by anarchist incapacity?" No. It was to attack Communists, "inventing that we had relations with the police. The ape does not look at its own tail." He "evaporated" again. "We wanted to pay him back with an energetic and brutal reply. Never did we find him. Now, however, we know where he is. . . . Going to participate in the Pan American Press Congress in Washington."<sup>8</sup>

And what, the Communists asked, was Oiticica up to on May 1, 1926? They could correctly reply that he had published that day in *Correio da Manhã* a complicated article, favoring the toleration of mysticism and religion, which showed the author intrigued by the Sociedade Teosófica, an organization formed to foster "the dissemination of the old philosophy consubstantiated in the symbols, in the myths, in the ritual of the basic religions."<sup>9</sup> The Communists saw Oiticica as preaching a united front of anarchists, spiritualists, and theosophists. Oiticica's observation that the best and only religion is that of Jesus provoked the Communist comment: "Oh anarchist rottenness!"<sup>10</sup>

Manuel Perdigão Saavedra, another well-known anarchist of the past, had apparently been converted to Communism. In Santos on May 1, 1926, he issued a dramatic manifesto pleading to the young at heart to "come

<sup>7</sup> Krieg, "Edgard Leuenroth," *O Solidario* 3, no. 45 (June 27, 1926); also "A Comemoração do 1º de Maio," *O Solidario* 3, no. 44 (May 13, 1926).

<sup>8</sup> Krieg, "Edgard Leuenroth."

<sup>9</sup> José Oiticica, "Um Modo de Ver," *Correio da Manhã*, May 1, 1926.

<sup>10</sup> "A Comemoração do 1º de Maio."

to the bosom of the Third International."<sup>11</sup> A few months later he committed suicide, whereupon *O Solidario* wrote a flowery obituary revealing that he had wanted to spend his last days struggling and dying "in the shadow of the Red Flag of the Communist International."<sup>12</sup> The obituary brought *O Solidario* a reprimand from Agitprop (the PCB's Commission for Agitation and Propaganda) that made it doubtful that Perdigão had died as he had wished. After describing the obituary as "a jumble of words (we prefer facts and figures)," the reprimand said that Perdigão's suicide should have been censured, not praised. "It is inadmissible for a Communist to commit suicide. Companions know that Perdigão had not digested Communism."<sup>13</sup>

*O Solidario* humbly agreed with Agitprop's reproof.

<sup>11</sup> Manoel Perdigão Saavedra, "Manifesto aos Jovens," *O Solidario* 3, no. 43 (May 1, 1926).

<sup>12</sup> A. Simões de Almeida, "Manoel Perdigão Saavedra," *O Solidario* 3, no. 45 (June 27, 1926).

<sup>13</sup> Agitprop quoted in "Autocritica," *O Solidario* 3, no. 46 (August 1, 1926).

## 11. Propaganda for the CGT

Late in 1925 one of the "words of order" issued by the PCB's CEC was "the united front of the proletariat."<sup>1</sup> To bring it about, the CEC submitted "to the proletariat in general" a message to set the stage for the formation of a Brazilian Confederação Geral do Trabalho (CGT).

The message explained that "the Communist Party—the first and only labor party of Brazil, the vanguard of the proletariat—cannot remain silent about the difficult situation." It described textile plants as often operating only four days a week and said that metalworkers had been forced to accept reduced wages and longer hours. According to the CEC, a food price index, with a base of 100 for 1913, reached 237 in 1919, and

<sup>1</sup> Central Executive Commission of the PCB, "Ao Proletariado em Geral" (November 1925), *O Trabalhador Graphico* 7, no. 58 (January 16, 1926). The other "words of order" at this time were: "Legality for the Communist Party," "the eight-hour day," and "no reduction in the six-day week."

345 in 1925, whereas textile plant owners themselves were quoted as admitting that wages had increased only 150 percent since 1913.<sup>2</sup>

"To combat the bourgeois offensive," the message stressed the need of a united front, union organization, proletarian newspapers, and a legal PCB "with tens of thousands of members." It was necessary, also, "to understand that the struggle against imperialism is inseparable from the struggle against reformist socialism." The message concluded: "Above all to direct this struggle we need to base our actions on im-

TABLE 8  
Organization of Santos Workers

Occupation	Total	Organized
Construction	5,040	310
Transportation	4,260	1,800
Docks	4,080	980
City Improvements Co.	3,500	—
Railroads	2,700	—
Coffee warehouses	2,700	1,300
Fishing	2,240	650
Commerce	4,200	200
Various occupations	2,000	—
Public employment	1,600	—
Bakeries	1,160	400
Hotels	1,100	400
Woodworking	1,050	—
Entertainment	980	—
Metallurgy	720	—
Apparel	650	—
Textiles	630	—
Meat	830	—
Barbershops	540	—
Bottling plants	410	—
Furs and hides	400	—
Printing	400	—
Chemicals	350	—
Telephones	380	—
Milk	330	—
Total	42,250	6,040

SOURCE: *O Solidario*, February 25, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. For some cost of living and general wage indexes with a base of 100 for 1915, see Roberto Simonsen table at the end of Appendix.



mensely strong unions and on an iron-disciplined Communist Party."<sup>3</sup>

Both Amaro de Araújo and the PCB referred to the low membership of unions in Rio. João Freire de Oliveira showed that in Santos, "traditionally famous" for proletarian action, only 6,040 workers out of 42,250 were unionized early in 1926. Even where labor associations existed, João Freire de Oliveira found them "isolated . . . each living for itself."<sup>4</sup> *O Solidario* blamed the troubles on the "blindness, inefficiency, stupidity, and extemporaneous methods" of the anarcho-syndicalists, who were reported to have encouraged strikes without proper preparation, on the theory that a strike is always a good thing.<sup>5</sup>

To overcome these troubles, the PCB called for the speedy formation of the CGT, the united front of all working groups (including those it had been excoriating). It urged the rejection of "old organizational methods." "Old-fashioned" unions of masons, plasterers, painters, and other groups were to be replaced by industrial unions, said to be more appropriate for the modern, industrial age. Explaining that these unions would form industrial federations, *O Internacional* wrote that "the national federation of food industries, for example, will consist of all the unions in this field in the country." National and local federations were to make up the CGT.<sup>6</sup>

Plans for the CGT were backed by the São Paulo Union of Graphic Workers (UTG). In June 1926, after the PCB brought João da Costa Pimenta to Rio to give him political experience and, above all, theoretical orientation,<sup>7</sup> the UTG of São Paulo picked non-PCB directors;<sup>8</sup> but *O Trabalhador Graphico*, for which the new UTG directors declared themselves responsible, continued endorsing such PCB favorites as the CGT

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> João F. de Oliveira, "A Situação Syndical em Santos: Reorganização e Organização," *O Solidario* 3, no. 39 (February 25, 1926).

<sup>5</sup> "Aos Anarcho-syndicalistas," *O Solidario* 3, no. 45 (June 27, 1926).

<sup>6</sup> "Pro-Confederação Geral do Trabalho," *O Internacional* 7, no. 113 (January 1, 1927).

<sup>7</sup> The PCB's CEC hoped that graphic worker Mário Grazini and journalist Aristides Lobo, replacing João Pimenta in the São Paulo Party leadership, would effectively combat the lack of interest in the PCB in São Paulo. The hope was not realized (Octavio Brandão, interviews, November 14, 1970; June 27, 1971).

<sup>8</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico* 7, no. 64 (June 15, 1926). This issue, in which the new UTG directors declared themselves unaffiliated with the PCB, announced that *O Trabalhador Graphico* had been represented at the Pan American Press Congress in Washington, and that some of its numbers would be displayed at the International Press Congress in Geneva.

and the Bloco Operário. About the CGT it wrote: "The united front does not mean renouncing principles of doctrinary nature. It is not a political accord, a pacification, nor even an armistice among those sustaining different opinions. The theoretical propaganda, in the press, in conferences, and in the assemblies, will not suffer the least restriction. When one talks of a united front it is in the neutral terrain of economic struggle."<sup>9</sup>

Since the PCB had declared that the united labor front should be directed by an iron-willed Communist Party, Yellows and anarchists were not impressed by pledges of ideological neutrality in the CGT. The CGT therefore gave promise of being one more paper organization unless the Communists could capture a large block of organized labor. The PCB bore this in mind as it fought in 1926 to throw José Pereira de Oliveira out of the leadership of the Rio Textile Workers' Union.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "A Frente Unica dos Trabalhadores," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 7, no. 70 (November 15, 1926). In 7, no. 74 (January 15, 1927), *O Trabalhador Graphico* said that only an organization like the CGT could bring to fulfillment the work that had been going on for thirty years.

<sup>10</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, August 30, 1970.

## 12. "The Greatest Proletarian Battle since 1920"

As an election of officers of the Textile Workers' Union (União dos Operários em Fábricas de Tecidos do Rio de Janeiro) was scheduled for December 1926, the PCB began in October to issue propaganda for the Bloco Têxtil, the Communist wing in the union. The immediate task of the Bloco Têxtil, "vanguard" of the "exploited" textile workers, was a membership drive to bring opponents of José Pereira de Oliveira into the union. Pereira de Oliveira and his chief ally, Claudino Cassus, placed the membership at ten thousand; the PCB, which had estimated the membership at four thousand in May 1926, argued that by October a "decadent" leadership had caused the figure to dwindle to twelve hundred.<sup>1</sup>

Advocates of the Bloco Têxtil emphasized the need of more effective

<sup>1</sup> "Como Decorreram as Eleições para a Nova Directoria da União dos Operarios em Fabricas de Tecidos do Rio de Janeiro," *O Internacional* 7, no. 113 (January 1, 1927).

organization in the face of miserable wages, made all the more unbearable by capitalists' reduction of the work week to "three or four days." The Bloco Têxtil, they claimed, was supported by the victims of Marshal Fontoura, by international proletarian organizations, and by all who were unselfish and sincere. Listing its foes, they mentioned Pereira de Oliveira, Antônio and Claudino Cassus, Amaro de Araújo, Agripino Nazaré, "the informers, the yellow superpatriots, labor autocracy, opportunists, agents of Fontoura and company owners, lackeys of the bourgeoisie, the Yellow Syndicate of Amsterdam, the League of Nations, and the nauseating Bureau of Albert Thomas."<sup>2</sup>

Pereira de Oliveira, the Communists said, had been caught telephoning Colonel Bandeira de Melo from a labor union office, and it was rumored that he benefited from secret funds, which the adroit colonel used in dealing with "yellow leaders."<sup>3</sup>

Shortly before the election, scheduled to begin on December 18, 1926, the Bloco Têxtil claimed to have persuaded eight hundred to join the union. But the confidence of the PCB was shaken when Pereira de Oliveira, in a dramatic address to union members on the night of the seventeenth, tearfully spoke of receiving a letter in which Communists threatened his life. Hastily Brandão and two others printed handbills. Given to union members on their way to vote, they read: "Operário! The letter mentioned by Pereira de Oliveira is false. Vote against the police."<sup>4</sup>

On December 18 and 19, 554 men and women participated in the balloting. The Bloco Têxtil could proudly compare the voter turnout with the results of "the good old days," when the union had fifteen to twenty thousand members and the elections drew 600-odd voters. The Bloco Têxtil added that the result would have been far more impressive had not thousands of workers, influenced by its propaganda, been barred from the election because they were too poor to pay union dues.<sup>5</sup>

The Communist press announced that the outcome, a 444-88 victory for the Bloco Têxtil, made the event "the greatest battle of the proletariat" since the days of 1917-1920. Not since that "golden age have we seen a similar struggle. . . . Today," cried the victors, "the union has two thousand members, but we must raise this to six, then twelve, twenty-four, and finally thirty thousand."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, Rio de Janeiro, August 30, November 14, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "Como Decorreram as Eleições."

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

The union election result encouraged the PCB to plan for a Congresso Sindical Regional in order to found a Federação Sindical Regional do Rio. The new Federação was to be part of the future CGT.

### 13. Preparing the Bloco Operário

After his election to the Municipal Council on March 1, 1926, Maurício de Lacerda wrote long letters, first from the São Clemente police barracks, and, after May 1, 1926, from barracks of the Fire Department. He revealed immense satisfaction with his electoral victory and personal conduct. The victory, he wrote Agripino Nazaré, would have been impossible if he had allowed himself to be overwhelmed by suffering or fear—or if he had accepted promises of liberty in return for desisting.<sup>1</sup>

Maurício saw his victory as a great advance in the movement begun in 1910 to do away with professional politics and “electoral castles” built on “the vassalage of the vote.”<sup>2</sup> Determined to fight on, he explained to Everardo Dias that once the “rampart of official politics” had been demolished, it would become easier to carry out the “noble campaign for social justice.”<sup>3</sup> He wrote Brandão that the political revolution was the “pregnancy period,” which would lead, if all went well, to the social revolution, or “childbirth.”<sup>4</sup>

Clearly Maurício did not go along with “theoretical revolutionaries” when they sought to depreciate the July 5 movement by calling it a “small-bourgeois revolution.”<sup>5</sup> He doubted the practical value of the attention given by Communist leaders to theory. Recalling attacks by Florentino de Carvalho, he reminded Brandão that he had been “almost stoned by the doctors of the temple” because he had rejected the suggestions of “would-be moral leaders of the proletariat” who had wanted to apply “abstract principles, unrelated to life.”<sup>6</sup> “We cannot,” he wrote Everardo Dias,

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Agripino Nazaré, of *Vanguarda*, given in Mauricio de Lacerda, *Entre Duas Revoluções*, appendix (“Da Masmorra”), pp. 40–44.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Everardo Dias in *ibid.*, pp. 140–152. See especially, appendix, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, appendix, p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Octavio Brandão in *ibid.*, appendix, p. 153.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, appendix, p. 154.

"continue in this magnificent isolation. . . , placed in the ivory tower of theories and mental purisms."<sup>7</sup> Action was necessary: "action in the subsoil of the people." This action, "legal in form" for the present, would be "fundamentally revolutionary," the letter writer promised.

Maurício de Lacerda believed he could best fight the political battle if he remained independent. He would not, he wrote Brandão, subordinate himself "to precepts and rules, whose rigidity would limit" his movements.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, he asked political revolutionaries and social revolutionaries to bring their misunderstandings to an end and to carry out "parallel" action, designed to save both their revolutions. Occasionally his ideas strayed beyond "parallel action." Telling Everardo Dias that "you know the proletarian field and I know the political field," he spoke of a "convergence of forces" in a "perfect vanguard," which could be created by a "political coalition of the proletarian groups."<sup>9</sup>

Such a coalition, a dream of PCB leaders, seemed quite possible after Washington Luís was inaugurated president on November 15, 1926. For although remnants of the Prestes Column were known to be still at large somewhere in Mato Grosso, the new president planned to let the state of siege expire at the end of the year.

To create a "political coalition," the PCB prepared to launch the Bloco Operário, originally announced in *A Classe Operaria* back in June 1925, when the PCB had the 1926 municipal elections in mind. This time the PCB hoped to play a role in the federal congressional elections, scheduled for February 24, 1927.

Before the state of siege ended, PCB leaders invited Congressman João Batista de Azevedo Lima and Maurício de Lacerda to join the Bloco Operário, agree to its program, accept its support in the Second District, and give their backing to the candidacy of João da Costa Pimenta in the less proletarian First District. Azevedo Lima, whose medical practice had earned him a large electoral clientele, and who had collaborated with the PCB's campaigns against Luís de Oliveira and Carlos Dias, accepted.

Maurício de Lacerda, still under arrest, was back in the Casa de Saúde São Sebastião, when Brandão asked him "officially" if he would join forces with the Bloco Operário and Azevedo Lima. Lacerda declined but spoke of "parallel action" and repeated what he had said at the Centro Cosmopolita just before his arrest: he would remain a friend of the

<sup>7</sup> Letter to Everardo Dias in *ibid.*, appendix, p. 148.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to Octavio Brandão in *ibid.*, appendix, p. 153.

<sup>9</sup> Letter to Everardo Dias in *ibid.*, appendix, pp. 147-149.

PCB.<sup>10</sup> To Brandão, Maurício seemed haughty as he explained that the working class should keep away from "politics of collusions," especially in the First District, which he described as "the dirtiest" in the entire country as far as "shady deals" were concerned.<sup>11</sup> Lacerda said that a party of ideas, such as a working class party, should initially stick to candidates from its own class and should avoid "deals" for the delivery of bourgeois votes by electioneering chieftains without convictions.<sup>12</sup> The PCB, he insisted, ought to develop a base—leading to a victory of principles and not of men—by participating in one election after another.<sup>13</sup> As for himself, Lacerda mentioned his reluctance to join parties and his particular interest in supporting the reelection of Adolfo Bergamíni, who had defended his father and himself during their recent tribulations.<sup>14</sup>

Brandão said it was unnecessary for Lacerda to join any party: if he would simply back the program of the Bloco Operário, he would be its candidate. Lacerda asked to see a copy of the program, and Brandão offered to furnish one.<sup>15</sup> But, by the end of 1926, when the state of siege expired, Lacerda had not yet received the promised copy.

<sup>10</sup> Report of speech by Mauricio de Lacerda in *Correio da Manhã*, February 9, 1927.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Mauricio de Lacerda, *Entre Duas Revoluções*, p. 191.

<sup>13</sup> Report of Speech by Mauricio de Lacerda in *Correio da Manhã*, February 9, 1927.

<sup>14</sup> Testimony of Alberto Sales Duarte (Juiz de Fora journalist), given in Mauricio de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 419.

<sup>15</sup> Mauricio de Lacerda, *Entre Duas Revoluções*, p. 192.

BOOK VIII: *In the Open, January–August 1927*

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## 1. *A Nação*

Leônidas de Resende, a law professor with a combative temperament, was in hiding during much of the 1924–1926 state of siege because of the anti-Bernardes articles he and Maurício de Lacerda had published in *A Nação*, a daily whose last number had appeared on June 14, 1924.<sup>1</sup> While hiding, he read books by Marx and Engels and wrote papers about them and Auguste Comte, whom he also admired.<sup>2</sup> He decided to become a Communist.

Shortly before the end of the state of siege he called on Astrogildo Pereira and offered *A Nação*, which was registered in his name, to the PCB. Communists praised him for placing entire publication of the daily, not just control of its political views, in the Party's hands. They pointed out that he had resisted "vulgar corruption"—payments offered by Minas politicians, who, they said, had subsidized *A Nação* in the past.<sup>3</sup> (Mention was not made of the two thousand mil-réis that the Communists paid to *A Nação*.)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Leonidas de Rezende e Mauricio de Lacerda," *A Nação* 2, no. 305 (February 12, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, Rio de Janeiro, December 14, 1968. Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> "Leonidas de Rezende e Mauricio de Lacerda."

<sup>4</sup> "Balanço da *A Classe Operaria* desde Outubro de 1925 a Abril de 1928," *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 1 (May 1, 1928), shows this expenditure: "Oferta a jornal *A Nação* em 1927 . . . 2:000\$000."

*A Nação* appeared on Monday, January 3, 1927, with the hammer and sickle and appropriate maxims (such as "the poor have no rights; everything is permitted of the rich"). Readers were reminded that it was Luís Carlos Prestes's twenty-ninth birthday. A long unsigned editorial by Leônidas de Resende explained the change in *A Nação*: "We used to be a liberal newspaper. Only liberal. We used to be within the principles of the French Revolution, wanting only this: that all be free and have equal rights." But, the editorial continued, after the bourgeoisie had broken the carcass of feudalism, it had set up "rights" in a way that allowed itself to engage in business unrestrictedly, without any restraint by government. *A Nação*, not content with "rights established by the bourgeoisie and for the bourgeoisie," described itself as preparing to do in Brazil what Lenin in 1902 had wanted done in Russia: it would stir up the workers against the exploiters. "We used to be the liberal *A Nação*; today we are the Communist *A Nação*."<sup>5</sup>

Leônidas de Resende appeared on the masthead as director. Each day he would submit to the editorial board one of the articles he had written while meditating on Marx and Comte during the state of siege. Brandão would oppose their publication because they were "bricks"—long and heavy—and because to him they resembled a tossed salad of Catholicism and materialism, sprinkled with Marxism and doused with buckets full of Comte's positivism. At editorial meetings Brandão was backed by Paulo de Lacerda ("Comte has nothing to do with us"), but Astrogildo was careful not to offend Leônidas de Resende.<sup>6</sup>

To observe the third anniversary of Lenin's death, *A Nação* declared the week ending January 22, 1927, Lenin Week. For Sunday, January 23, it planned a meeting in the Textile Workers' Union hall, where Lenin was to be the topic of discussion by nine speakers,<sup>7</sup> including Leônidas de Resende, Otávio Brandão, Astrogildo Pereira, João da Costa Pimenta, Azevedo Lima, and Rodolfo Coutinho (back from Russia and Germany).

The new Fourth Delegado Auxiliar Pedro de Oliveira Sobrinho summoned the president of the Textile Workers' Union to warn that he would be "held responsible for the consequences" if the "subversive" meeting took place. Although *A Nação* canceled the meeting, Edgard de Castro Rabelo, the newspaper's lawyer, submitted a habeas corpus petition on behalf of the scheduled speakers. A lower court decision against

<sup>5</sup> "Viva o Sol; Abaixo a Noite," *A Nação* 2, no. 270 (Rio de Janeiro, January 3, 1927).

<sup>6</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, Rio de Janeiro, December 14, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> *Diário de Justiça, Distrito Federal*, June 1931, p. 3671.

the petition was overruled by the Supreme Court on May 2. Dissenting Judge Edmundo Lins observed that it would be “infantile” to believe that a triumphant Soviet regime would allow the bourgeoisie to meet to propose “reestablishment of the present regime, which guarantees all rights and protects all liberties.”<sup>8</sup>

After hundreds attended the delayed Lenin memorial meeting in the Textile Workers’ Union hall on May 13,<sup>9</sup> Oiticica published his comments. The Rio police, he wrote, would not have disturbed the original plans for “the inoffensive ceremony” had they known anything about the situation in Russia. It was true, he wrote, that the Bolsheviks made “a great hullabaloo about communism”; but what they had really done was to institute a capitalistic, conservative, parliamentary state, which sought financial assistance, issued codes, stabilized the currency, established banks, offered concessions to foreigners, and installed discipline in the Army. Oiticica found the soviets no different from parliaments in other countries. Their members, he said, were selected by the dictatorship, and their “decisions” were those indicated by party leaders. “Rulers of Brazil, don’t be afraid,” Oiticica wrote.<sup>10</sup>

Among the officers of *A Nação* were João Freire de Oliveira and Paulo Mota Lima.<sup>11</sup> Rodolfo Coutinho served as treasurer for two months. When he tried to step aside, Brandão argued that his post had been assigned by the Party, making it impossible for him to quit without approval of the Party leadership. Coutinho therefore formally resigned from *A Nação* at a Party CEC meeting. He was then assigned to use his knowledge gained in Russia to organize peasant leagues in Brazil.<sup>12</sup>

Because *A Nação*’s financial situation was desperate, a fund-raising drive was undertaken to save the newspaper. Brandão, sent to São Paulo with a one-way ticket, called on Everardo Dias. The two men covered the city, extolling *A Nação* for its role in the fight against the *lei celerada* (criminal law)—a proposed piece of legislation aimed at antigovernment proletarian associations, newspapers, and leaders. Many poor people contributed, but what saved *A Nação*—for a while—was the large, unexpected donation of a Paulista who was visited because he had once written a letter to the newspaper.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 79.

<sup>10</sup> José Oiticica, “Não Temer,” *A Plebe* 11, no. 253 (June 11, 1927).

<sup>11</sup> *A Nação* 2, no. 354.

<sup>12</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, Rio de Janeiro, December 14, 1968.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

## 2. *A Nação's* Open Letter of January 5, 1927

*A Nação* plunged into the congressional election campaign on January 5, 1927, with the publication of an open letter from the PCB's CEC to Maurício de Lacerda, Azevedo Lima, the Socialist party, and a number of proletarian political groups.

In dealing with Maurício de Lacerda and the Socialist party, the letter displayed the PCB's customary lack of diplomacy when seeking allies. It could, it said, in no way agree with Lacerda's "individualistic, nonparty politics, which only creates confusion and misunderstandings and which can only serve the enemies of proletarian politics." But it recognized his popularity and past "brilliant struggles for public liberties." The PCB, wishing to gain the confidence in Lacerda that it presently did not have, proposed the united front to him in the name of the proletariat.<sup>1</sup>

Azevedo Lima, the PCB recognized, had his own strongly regimented electorate and could win without help. In spite of "certain ideological contradictions," the Party felt that he had earned a halo for "indomitable bravery" when fighting for popular causes in the last legislative session—"as in the case of the campaign against Luís de Oliveira."

Addressing the Socialist party (PSB), the PCB said: "We are intransigent adversaries of the malign, reformist, confusionist, collaborationist politics of the PSB." But the Socialists were also invited to join the Bloco Operário. Their refusal, the PCB wrote, would demonstrate their lack of sincerity, and if they accepted it would help "the proletarian interest, which is the interest of Communism—which commands, in such moments, the cohesion and unification" of the forces.

The platform of the Bloco Operário called for its candidates to "subordinate their parliamentary activity to the control of the laboring mass." They were to work for the establishment of diplomatic, commercial, and cultural relations between Brazil and the Soviet Union, for the amnesty of all political prisoners, and for indemnification payments to the survivors of the Clevelândia Colony, or to the families of those deceased. Social legislation was to include the eight-hour day, forty-four-hour week, col-

<sup>1</sup> Open letter of the PCB's Central Executive Commission to Maurício de Lacerda, Azevedo Lima, the Socialist party, and others, published in *A Nação*, January 5, 1927, and reproduced in Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, pp. 87-100.

lective labor contracts, a minimum wage, “effective protection” to working women and children, the prohibition of work by those under fourteen, social security, and the vigorous repression of gambling and alcoholism. Candidates of the Bloco Operário were to combat the press law, the law for expelling foreigners, and the Adolfo Gordo Law. Only the rich, said the PCB, should pay taxes.<sup>2</sup>

Maurício de Lacerda was furious. He had been waiting for Brandão to furnish a copy of the program of the Bloco Operário so that he could study it. Now it appeared that if he were to learn about the program he would have to read it in the newspaper, which he considered to have been “stolen” from him by “a disloyal and dishonest associate.”<sup>3</sup> He decided not to answer the letter published in *A Nação*.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Entre Duas Revoluções*, p. 192.

### 3. Elections in Rio, February 24, 1927

*A Nação* announced that the invitation in the open letter had been accepted by Azevedo Lima and the “proletarian centers” of Gávea and Niterói and that the Bloco Operário’s candidates were João da Costa Pimenta in the First District and Azevedo Lima in the Second. It also advised that Nicanor do Nascimento opposed the Bloco.<sup>1</sup>

*A Nação* lauded Azevedo Lima: “When *A Nação* reappeared, unfurling the Red—and dangerous—banner of Communism, and then when the open letter was published . . . , who emerged . . . , without a moment of hesitation, offering himself for the rough and dangerous battle? Azevedo Lima!” The physician from Rio’s São Cristóvão industrial area was described as “the most relentless, the most powerful, the most feared of all who fought the Bernardes dictatorship in the political field.”<sup>2</sup>

Maurício de Lacerda, campaigning in the Second District with Adolfo Bergamíni at his side, defended himself against attacks in *A Nação*—attacks that he said were made by those who, a few hours earlier, had

<sup>1</sup> *A Nação* 2, no. 305 (February 12, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> “O Único Político do Districto que Está de Pé: Azevedo Lima,” *A Nação* 2, no. 305 (February 12, 1927).

wanted to make him their candidate. Addressing Central do Brasil Railroad workers at the shops at Engenho de Dentro, he branded as "slanderous" the charge that he had been at the service of Bernardes and was now at the side of Washington Luís. He could, he said, have received from the president a congressional seat to represent the state of Rio de Janeiro if he had supported the regime's political arrangements for that state, but he preferred to fight on behalf of a people enslaved by professional politicians.<sup>3</sup> He condemned *A Nação* for its attempts to smear the sincerity and "the honor of his sacrifice" and said that even Bernardes had not done this.

Lacerda asked the masses to choose between his twenty years of struggle and the "fifteen days of journalistic business" by the "pseudo-doctrinarian" director of *A Nação*, who, he charged, could just as easily deal with crooks to collect votes as negotiate with the police agent who arrested Lacerda in 1922.<sup>4</sup>

A few days later *A Nação* replied with an article, written by the Presidium (top council) of the PCB, entitled "Down with Those Who Degenerate from Communism to Fascism!" Leônidas, the Presidium wrote, had come to Communism after being "an adept of Herbert Spencer" in mid-1924, whereas in the same two and one-half years, Maurício had retrogressed from Communism to fascism. The article told of Maurício's fall from better days when, according to the PCB, he had thrice declared himself a Communist (first on June 19, 1924, then in a "solemn declaration" at the Centro Cosmopolita on the next day, and finally in a statement printed in *A Rua* on July 5, 1924). While Leônidas was said to have read and understood Communist literature, Maurício was said to have read Trotsky and Lenin "only superficially" and to have failed to digest a book "as elementary as Stalin's *Theoretical and Practical Leninism*. . . . He tumbled backwards, from *Comunismo de goela* [Communism of the throat, or tongue] to reformist socialism, from reformism to a tepid, lukewarm liberalism, and from this to reactionary nihilism. And at the rally at Engenho de Dentro he reached prefascism, which will take him all the way to pure and simple fascism."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Account of speech of Mauricio de Lacerda at Engenho de Dentro, *Correio da Manhã*, February 9, 1927.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. In *Historia de uma Covardia* (p. 379) Mauricio de Lacerda wrote of "agitators diverted from their ideal in order to serve hatreds and electoral maneuvers."

<sup>5</sup> O Presidium do PCB, "Leonidas de Rezende e Mauricio de Lacerda: Abaixo os que Retrogradam do Comunismo para o Fascismo!" *A Nação* 2, no. 305 (February 12, 1927).

At the rally to which the Communists referred, Maurício de Lacerda had promised that, in spite of his divergence with a proletarian faction, he would, when elected, be the same friend of the proletarian cause in Congress as he had been for twenty years.<sup>6</sup> The Presidium of the PCB wrote: "Leônidas does not condition his adherence to Communism to a triumph in bourgeois politics. And Maurício? He declares he will unfurl the proletarian flag only after getting into the Chamber of Deputies."<sup>7</sup> Paulo de Lacerda, a CEC member, attacked his brother and became a chief target of jeers and derisive shouts from Maurício's supporters whenever he appeared at rallies.<sup>8</sup>

*A Nação* proclaimed "solemnly" that only João da Costa Pimenta and Azevedo Lima had a revolutionary program and had assumed commitments to the workers.<sup>9</sup> "Only the Bloco Operário represents the interests of the proletariat!!" Tickets to Bloco Operário rallies were available at the Textile Workers' Union, the Rio Union of Graphic Workers, the Centro Cosmopolita, the Association of Sailors and Rowers, the Resistência dos Cocheiros (taxi drivers), the Associação dos Operários em Calçado (Communist rival of the anarchists' Alliance of Shoemakers), and the Federação Operária do Estado do Rio.<sup>10</sup>

Mário Rodrigues, a candidate in the Second District, used *A Manhã* to hit Maurício with what one of their former jail companions felt were "insulting disparagements" of character.<sup>11</sup> Other newspapers, financed by the new government leader in Congress, Júlio Prestes of São Paulo, formed what Maurício called a "journalistic united front" against him.<sup>12</sup>

Maurício suddenly launched the candidacy of far-away Luís Carlos Prestes for congressman in the First District. Infuriated Communists declared in *A Nação* that Maurício's move was designed to draw votes away from João da Costa Pimenta.<sup>13</sup>

At the polls on February 24, the electorate of the First District gave all five congressional seats to progovernment candidates (Henrique Dods-worth, Nogueira Penido, Machado Coelho, Cândido Pessoa, and Flávio Silveira). With each elector casting four votes, the range for the victors

<sup>6</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 9, 1927.

<sup>7</sup> O Presidium do PCB, "Leonidas de Rezende e Mauricio de Lacerda."

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, Rio de Janeiro, August 30, 1970.

<sup>9</sup> *A Nação* 2, no. 303 (February 10, 1927).

<sup>10</sup> "A Campanha do Bloco Operario," *A Nação* 2, no. 305 (February 12, 1927).

<sup>11</sup> Testimony of Alberto Sales Duarte in Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, pp. 415–420.

<sup>12</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, pp. 376–377.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376. Octavio Brandão, interview, August 30, 1970.

was from 13,324 (for Dodsworth) to 6,620 (for Silveira). Among the losers were Nicanor do Nascimento (with 6,122 votes), Bartlett James (5,249), Luís Carlos Prestes (3,141), and João da Costa Pimenta (2,024).

Oppositionists Adolfo Bergamíni and Azevedo Lima, both with over 11,000 votes, led the field in the Second District. They were followed by three victorious government supporters, Sales Filho, Albérico de Moraes, and Júlio Cesário de Melo, whose totals ranged from 9,299 to 7,989. The losers included Maurício de Lacerda (5,202 votes) and Mário Rodrigues (about 4,500).

In the state of São Paulo, the Partido Democrático elected only three federal congressmen: Paulo de Moraes Barros, José Adriano Marrey Júnior, and Francisco Morato. Preparing to expand from a state to a national party, it blamed its overwhelming defeat in the state on fraud.<sup>14</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, which had become its organ, was better pleased with the results in the Federal District, where it saw the victories of Azevedo Lima, Bergamíni, and Irineu Machado (in the Senate race) as evidence that the electorate hated the recent Bernardes administration.<sup>15</sup>

Bergamíni, who "could not hide his grief" at the defeat of his "dear friend," Maurício de Lacerda, attributed the loss to Maurício's efforts to help him. Maurício modestly declared that Bergamíni did not owe his election to him. But he added that his own defeat might have been avoided, in spite of official pressure, if he had campaigned thinking solely of his own election, accepted the invitation of the Bloco Operário, and not sacrificed some friendships and newspaper support. He explained that he had acted as he did because he was already on the Municipal Council and felt it important to have Bergamíni in the Chamber of Deputies. With Irineu Machado in the Senate, Maurício said, "We have three voices for fighting, in three different positions."<sup>16</sup>

Explaining the defeat of Luís Carlos Prestes, Maurício said that Machado Coelho, his "young capitalist" opponent in the First District, frankly told the press that he won over Prestes by distributing money to electoral *cabos* (chiefs), who bought the necessary votes.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> A journalist supporting the Partido Democrático declared to *Folha da Noite*: "Fraud did not manifest itself: it reigned!" (see *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 6, 1927).

<sup>15</sup> "Eleições Federaes no Districto Federal," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 28, 1927.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Irineu Machado had been barred from the Senate by the Bernardes regime, after being elected to it in 1924.

<sup>17</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Historia de uma Covardia*, p. 380.



According to Azevedo Lima, the election showed that the workers were "beginning to make their strength felt, thanks to the vanguard of the proletariat."<sup>18</sup> He planned to defend them in the Chamber of Deputies and mobilize them for future electoral victories.

Astrogildo Pereira has written that the electoral campaign directed by *A Nação* had an "enormous repercussion. . . . It was eight weeks of intense work of agitation, propaganda, and regimentation—regimentation not only of electors but also of new Party members. And the election of February 24, in spite of the extreme sectarianism of the campaign, constituted a great victory for the Bloco Operário."<sup>19</sup>

This appraisal, written years after the event, was not shared in March 1927 by *A Nação*, which lamented that "the poor voters cast their ballots for rich candidates." The paper wrote: "We need dozens of Communist congressmen and municipal councilmen and we have only Azevedo Lima." It concluded that "the Communist Party is not the force that it should be."<sup>20</sup>

But *A Nação* could gloat over the defeat of the Socialist party, which it called the "Party of the Servants of the Bourgeoisie." The "servants" were Agripino Nazaré, who lost in Bahia, and Carlos Dias, "who represents two people: the traitor Carlos Dias and the hangman Artur da Silva Bernardes."<sup>21</sup>

Carlos Dias, returning from Geneva in August 1926, reported that the International Labor Conference had been useless because participating nations never ratified the Labor Board's resolutions. "With desolation" he had noted that the delegates were mostly lawyers and government officials, and he was the only delegate to come directly from a job in a plant. He proclaimed that he continued to be an anarchist, "more and more anarchist each day—but of a serene and calm type."<sup>22</sup>

Three voters apparently cast twelve votes for Carlos Dias in the congressional election of 1927. *A Nação* therefore called him the Rio candidate of the "Party of the Three Servants of the Bourgeoisie" and proudly printed: J. C. Pimenta 2,024 votes; Carlos Dias 12 votes.

"The three members of the Party of Three," *A Nação* wrote, "should throw three handfuls of earth over the corpse of the Party of Three."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "Eleições Federaes no Districto Federal."

<sup>19</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, pp. 76–77.

<sup>20</sup> "A Solução," *A Nação* 2, no. 325 (March 10, 1927).

<sup>21</sup> "A Licção das Urnas," *A Nação* 2, no. 325 (March 10, 1927).

<sup>22</sup> Report in *O Jornal*, August 28, 1926, quoted in *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 3 (May 12, 1928).

<sup>23</sup> "A Licção das Urnas."



The electoral farce. (*A Plebe*, February 26, 1927)

*A Plebe*, which began circulating again as a fortnightly on February 12, 1927, condemned the “deceitful program” of the Bolshevik candidates<sup>24</sup> and told its readers that to place faith in laws and congressmen was to insult the memory of companions who perished in the Oiapoque region.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> “A Ultima Farça Eleitoral,” *A Plebe* 6, no. 247 (March 12, 1927).

<sup>25</sup> “A Proxima Feira Eleitoral,” *A Plebe* 6, no. 245 (February 12, 1927).

#### 4. Domingos Passos and the Anarchists

Following the elections of February 1927, the PCB concentrated on the reorganization of labor and the Communist Youth movement.

To promote the “unification” of labor in the Federal District and neighboring municipalities, a Congresso Sindical Regional do Rio de Janeiro was held in the last week of April 1927.<sup>1</sup> The congress, according to a PCB report to Moscow, was attended by “representatives from thirty-six trade unions, twenty-three factory committees not belonging to unions, and three revolutionary minorities of unions whose executives opposed the labor unification movement.” “In all,” the PCB claimed, “about 80,000 workers were represented.”<sup>2</sup>

The chief purposes of the congress were to stimulate the formation of more “factory committees” and to advance the realization of the CGT by immediately founding the Federação Sindical Regional do Rio de Janeiro (FSRR). First secretary of the FSRR was Joaquim Barbosa, who had been switched from PCB treasurer to PCB secretary for union affairs (Secretário Sindical) at the Party’s Second National Congress in 1925. João da Costa Pimenta and Roberto Morena became second and third secretaries of the FSRR.<sup>3</sup>

With the CGT in mind, the Rio Union of Graphic Workers proposed a national Federation of Graphic Workers. In the federal capital on May

<sup>1</sup> Before the Congresso Sindical Regional met, the Communist union for civil construction workers in the Rio area, which had already had three different names, was renamed the União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil.

<sup>2</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, February 2, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview, November 19, 1970.

1, after São Paulo graphic workers approved the idea,<sup>4</sup> the national Federação dos Trabalhadores Gráficos was formed at a meeting attended by graphic workers' representatives from the Federal District, Campos (state of Rio), and the states of Bahia, Paraíba, Pará, Amazonas, São Paulo, and Minas Gerais. Mário Grazíni was named secretary-general of the Federação.<sup>5</sup>

These were lively, optimistic days for the PCB. The Congresso Sindical Regional was followed by an "unforgettable, extremely moving" 1927 May Day commemoration at Praça Mauá,<sup>6</sup> where "ten thousand workers vibrated with enthusiasm for the united front, syndical unity, proletarian Russia and China, and shook their fists at imperialism, fascism, and the danger of new wars."<sup>7</sup> *A Nação* pronounced it "the most glorious proletarian demonstration since 1919."

Although some claim that anarchism had no impact in the Brazilian labor movement after the mid-1920's,<sup>8</sup> it did contribute to the obstruction of the PCB drive for "syndical unity." In 1926, after *O Solidario* openly became an organ of the PCB, anarchists in Santos led a successful campaign, sometimes characterized by fistfights, to throw João Freire de Oliveira and other Communists out of the Centro Internacional, the Santos association for hotel and restaurant workers. When the expelled Communists distributed leaflets around Santos, attacking the anti-Communist leaders of the Centro Internacional, the Centro leaders gave the police the names of Communists who they considered responsible for the leaflets.<sup>9</sup>

On January 1, 1927, Santos found itself with a self-declared "libertarian" fortnightly newspaper, *A Verdade*, organ of workers in hotels and restaurants. Its chief purpose was to defeat a Communist slate, headed by Bernardino M. del Valle, in the Centro Internacional election of February 7, 1927. "Reminding" its readers that "Bernardino is the emulator

<sup>4</sup> "Federação dos Trabalhadores Gráficos do Brasil," *O Trabalhador Gráfico* 7, no. 78 (São Paulo, April 2, 1927).

<sup>5</sup> For fuller information about the founding of the Federação dos Trabalhadores Gráficos do Brasil see *Paraná-Gráfico* 1, no. 1 (Curitiba, September 3, 1927).

<sup>6</sup> "O 1º de Maio," *O Trabalhador Gráfico* 7, no. 81.

<sup>7</sup> *A Nação* 2, no. 370 (May 2, 1927). Astrojildo Pereira, writing later in *Formação do PCB* (p. 78), describes the May 1, 1927, commemoration as a vigorous mass demonstration, but not equal to the "exceptional proportions" of the rally of May 1, 1919.

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, March 4, 1970; João da Costa Pimenta, letter, April 14, 1970.

<sup>9</sup> "Campanha Derrotista," *A Verdade* 1, no. 1 (Santos, January 1, 1927).

of J. F. de Oliveira, a failure at everything," *A Verdade* added that, unlike Bernardino, it did not have a "telephone with a direct line to Rio to report to those who have little or nothing to do with our associative life."<sup>10</sup>

After the anti-Communists won, *A Verdade*, appearing less frequently, joined a campaign against the "low morals and idiocy" of the Communist directors of the Centro Cosmopolita. They were accused of "a criminal attempt" to loan Centro Cosmopolita funds to the financially hard-pressed *A Nação*—"a cheap newspaper which besots the workers. . . . The loan is for themselves, or, rather, for the Communist Party."<sup>11</sup>

Domingos Passos set out to revive, "along federalist lines," the old Federação Operária de São Paulo.<sup>12</sup> His first step was to found the São Paulo União dos Ofícios Vários (Union of Various Trades), whose "bases of agreement" echoed the principles adopted by the labor congresses of 1906, 1913, and 1920.<sup>13</sup> Next he listed all the unions in existence in São Paulo: UTG (Union of Graphic Workers), União dos Artífices em Calçados (Union of Shoemakers), União dos Chapeleiros (Union of Hatmakers), A Internacional, União dos Canteiros (Union of Stonemasons), and the new União dos Ofícios Vários. The list, which demonstrated the lack of organization of important sectors (textile and construction workers), contained few unions where anarchism was strong. The Union of Shoemakers, "model" of the anarchists, was in the throes of a damaging split.

Domingos Passos and Domingos Brás wrote and spoke much of their experiences in the Oiapoque region. They supplied *A Plebe* with news of "great libertarian sessions" held in faraway Belém, Pará, by the União dos Operários em Construção Civil de Belém and the Federação das Classes Trabalhadores do Pará.<sup>14</sup> But no information was given about the size of these associations.

<sup>10</sup> "As Últimas Eleições no Centro Internacional," *A Verdade* 1, no. 4 (February 24, 1927).

<sup>11</sup> "Centro Cosmopolita," *A Verdade* 1, no. 6 (May 1, 1927).

<sup>12</sup> Domingos Passos, "A Federação Operaria de São Paulo É uma Necessidade," *A Plebe* 12, no. 254 (June 25, 1927).

<sup>13</sup> "Projecto de Bases de Accordo da União Operaria de Officios Varios," *A Plebe* 11, no. 252 (May 28, 1927). "Mundo Operario," *A Plebe* 11, no. 253 (June 11, 1927), reports that some civil construction workers joined the new União.

<sup>14</sup> Domingos Passos, "Em Belém-Pará," *A Plebe* 11, no. 246 (February 26, 1927). Raymundo Cordeiro, "Vida Operaria em Belém," *A Plebe* 11, no. 248 (March 26, 1927); see also "A Acção Libertaria no Pará," in *ibid.*



The Proletarian World. (News column, *A Plebe*, 1927)



The strong fist of labor shall beat back its enemies. (*A Plebe*, March 26, 1927)

Domingos Brás proposed that Brazilian libertarians “prepare for the struggle” by sending a delegate to the Continental Libertarian Conference, which he said would meet in Buenos Aires on May 1, 1927, at the urging of the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina and the Mexican CGT.<sup>15</sup> He said that with financial assistance from Rio, São Paulo, and Rio Grande do Sul to supplement funds he expected from Pará, it would be possible to send Domingos Passos to Buenos Aires. When nothing came of the project, *A Plebe* blamed the lack of response on “amorphous organizations of little vision” and “enslaved organizations dominated by Bolshevik petty politics.”<sup>16</sup> It spoke also of the “nauseating bile” of the Bolsheviks.

Exemplifying *A Plebe*'s accusations was the Communist campaign against Domingos Passos. *A Nação*'s message to civil construction workers, “The Martyrdom of Domingos Passos is a Myth,” said that Passos had been at liberty during most of the last two and one-half years, receiving good pay as a carpenter. “Like the vainglorious Maurício, he carefully nourished the myth of his martyrdom. He even went beyond Maurício for he spread the rumor of his own death. While Passos enjoyed life tranquilly, the Communists lived in the greatest agony, in the midst of the most appalling tragedy—fleeing from house to house, eating and sleeping here and there, in continual alarm, stretched on a bed as though dead, . . . so that no one would know that in that place there beat a heart of steel, a Bolshevik heart!” The proletarians were asked to choose between Passos, “with his self-worship, hamming, and slander,” and the Communists, “with our hidden martyrdom, which was slowly devouring us.”<sup>17</sup>

*A Plebe*, furious, told of how “the old proletarian militant, comrade Domingos Passos,” was prevented from speaking at the Centro Cosmopolita. The Bolsheviks “threw him out as though he were an agent of the bourgeoisie,” even though it was evident that he was “still ill from the horrors suffered in Oiapoque.”<sup>18</sup>

In Rio on the afternoon of May 1, 1927, Domingos Passos addressed a solemn session of the Centro dos Operários das Pedreiras (Workers in Stone Quarries).<sup>19</sup> Another orator, bewailing labor's “split into two fac-

<sup>15</sup> Domingos Braz, “Vida Operaria Internacional,” *A Plebe* 11, no. 249 (April 9, 1927).

<sup>16</sup> “Congresso Operario Continental,” *A Plebe* 11, no. 250 (May 1, 1927).

<sup>17</sup> “O Martyrio de Domingos Passos É uma Lenda,” *A Nação* 11, no. 325 (March 10, 1927).

<sup>18</sup> “A Intolerancia Bolchevista,” *A Plebe* 11, no. 246 (February 26, 1927).

<sup>19</sup> When the Centro dos Operários das Pedreiras celebrated its tenth anniversary



To the struggle, workers! (*A Plebe*, May 1, 1927)

tions," had just suggested that the quarrymen attend neither the Praça Mauá rally nor the anarchist-sponsored commemoration at Praça 11 de Junho.<sup>20</sup> Domingos Passos, after saying that he had been jailed twenty times and deported to Oiapoque, reminded his listeners that the Chicago martyrs had been anarchists and that May Day was the anarchist day of

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in December 1926, it was congratulated by the Rio Aliança dos Operários em Calçados (shoemakers) for having known how "to exclude all political microbes" (see *A Vida* [organ of the Centro] 3, no. 34 [February 1, 1927]).

<sup>20</sup> Oration of Joaquim Lourenço de Oliveira given in "Sessão Solemne de 1º de maio," *A Vida* 3, no. 38 (June 1, 1927).



protest. They should, he insisted, avoid the *políticos* of Praça Mauá and attend “the anarchist meeting at Praça 11 de Junho.”<sup>21</sup>

Antônio Fernandes, the quarrymen’s anarchist, poetry-writing leader, rose to second Passos’s appeal and then led his followers to Praça 11 de Junho. Fernandes’s spirits were lifted to find a large crowd there. “The brightness of the scene,” he wrote, “was only clouded at the end with the arrival of an emissary of the Russia of the Soviets, a traveling salesman of the commercial export house of Bolshevism. The zeal with which he did his advertising indicated that he must have an interest in the business beyond his salary.”<sup>22</sup>

*Correio da Manhã* ignored the Praça Mauá rally and described the “brilliant” meeting at Praça 11 de Junho, promoted by the Federação Operária, as “literally stuffing the large square.”<sup>23</sup>

Had it not been for Domingos Passos and the anarchists, perhaps the commemoration of 1927 at Praça Mauá would not have fallen below the “exceptional proportions” of the 1919 commemoration.

<sup>21</sup> Domingos Passos, speech in *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Antonio Fernandes, “O Comício do Dia 1º de Maio na Praça 11 de Junho,” *A Vida* 3, no. 38 (June 1, 1927).

<sup>23</sup> “O Dia do Trabalho,” *Correio da Manhã*, May 3, 1927. *O Jornal* (May 3, 1927) stated that the proletarian attendance, “enormous” at both Praça Mauá and Praça 11 de Junho, was larger at Praça Mauá, where it reached “several thousand.”

## 5. *A Plebe* in 1927

In March 1927, as in March 1922, *A Plebe* published an Anarchist Manifesto, which its authors hoped would reactivate the movement. The manifesto stressed that “the present moment, more than ever,” required “a united battle front” of all anarchists. Pleading for “reapproximation and activity” by those who had withdrawn for personal or doctrinary reasons, it asked all to “extinguish from heart and spirit” the recollection of any causes of past divisions.

The manifesto contained “an ardent appeal” to “everyone with anarchist tendencies,” including “all the workers (anarchists who do not know they are anarchists).” They were asked, after reading the manifesto,

to adhere to anarchist groups. Adherence was to "constitute a sort of moral commitment."<sup>1</sup>

In outlining a program emphasizing the role of communes, the manifesto declared that "anarchists are not utopians." It was because "centralism has proven its impotence both politically and economically," and because "the spirit of association and federalism becomes more and more prevalent," that anarchists "support social organization founded on the commune, a local agglomeration sufficiently vast . . . to organize production and distribution, utilizing the best technical processes. . . . The libertarian commune will be like a large family." Based on "a moral and material pact" accepted by "all the inhabitants of a certain territory," the commune would guarantee the material, intellectual, and moral conditions necessary for the "maximum well-being and happiness compatible with productive possibilities. . . . The job of the commune, to be accomplished in assemblies where all are represented, is to harmonize the work of the productive organisms with the needs and requests of the consumer organisms." As it was visualized that communes would lack some goods and overproduce others, the manifesto spoke of barter arrangements to be made by communes directly among themselves, or else with the help of national or world federations.<sup>2</sup>

Alongside the Anarchist Manifesto, *A Plebe* carried an article in which Edgard Leuenroth declared that "the Bolshevik newspaper in Rio" was slandering anarchist militants, one by one. Like every Communist newspaper in Brazil and one in Argentina, *A Nação* printed repeated stories about Leuenroth's trip to the United States. Leuenroth emphatically denied having represented any newspaper on his trip or having attended a single session of the Pan American Press Congress; he explained that he had gone to Washington solely to help with an exposition of Brazilian newspapers.<sup>3</sup> A letter to Leuenroth from Communist Nereu Rangel Pestana, who had urged that he make the trip, was also published in *A Plebe*. Rangel Pestana expressed amazement at what *A Nação* had written, since "the truth had been known by Astrogildo Pereira and Otávio Brandão as soon as they spoke to me about your trip." Rangel Pestana stated that Edgard had done nothing on his mission that he, a PCB member, would not have done, and he concluded by telling Edgard that *A Nação's* story was, in his opinion, part of "an unhappy personal campaign."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Manifesto Anarchista-Comunista," *A Plebe* 11, no. 248 (March 26, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Edgard Leuenroth, "As Calumnias Bolchevistas," *A Plebe* 11, no. 248 (March 26, 1927).

<sup>4</sup> Letter (dated April 16, 1927) from Nereu Rangel Pestana to Leuenroth,



This is capitalism. (*A Plebe*, July 23, 1927)

Brazilian anarchists admitted that “the so-called Communists” were making advances in the labor unions.<sup>5</sup> *A Plebe* could see the helping hand of the Red International of Labor Unions, which, according to Rudolf

given in Edgard Leuenroth, “As Calumnias Bolchevistas,” *A Plebe* 11, no. 251 (May 14, 1927).

<sup>5</sup> Gavroche, “Chicotadas,” *A Plebe* 11, no. 252 (May 28, 1927).

Scarfenstein and the International Workingmen's Association, had spent all of its Third Congress organizing a worldwide campaign in which "Moscow gold" and systematic slander were to be used to "demoralize the really revolutionary elements."<sup>6</sup>

José Oiticica used *A Plebe's* columns to condemn what he called Communist slander against the German syndicalists.<sup>7</sup> Discussing the schism among the Soviet leaders, he attributed it to "three Jewish leaders, Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev, who affirmed the impossibility of realizing state socialism in Russia alone, . . . and preached the maintenance of private capital, without which Holy Russia would revert to the ominous times of black hunger." Oiticica concluded: "It is easy to predict the victory of Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev."<sup>8</sup>

After *A Nação* wrote "Why are there thieves? Because there is private property," *A Plebe* showed that this old refrain was applicable to Russia by publishing a news item from Moscow telling of the conviction of a Russian gang of criminals. Why had they committed the crimes? "To rob" was the explanation given in the cable from Moscow.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "As Calumnias Bolchevistas," *A Plebe* 11, no. 249 (April 9, 1927).

<sup>7</sup> José Oiticica, "Vicio Funesto," *A Plebe* 12, no. 255 (July 9, 1927).

<sup>8</sup> José Oiticica, "Brigam os Amos," *A Plebe* 11, no. 252 (May 28, 1927).

<sup>9</sup> Gavroche, "Chicotadas," *A Plebe* 11, no. 249 (April 9, 1927).

## 6. Basbaum Organizes Juventude Comunista

Early in 1927 the PCB's CEC was looking for someone to take over the national directorship of Juventude Comunista (JC—Communist Youth). For one thing, the PCB's young founder, Luís Peres, who had served as JC director, was moving from Rio to the interior of São Paulo State for personal reasons.<sup>1</sup> For another, national membership in JC had dwindled to eight.<sup>2</sup>

In April 1927, when Leôncio Basbaum, nineteen-year-old Rio medical student from Recife, reported to the CEC his success in organizing a Recife branch of JC during his recent vacation, he was surprised with an

<sup>1</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos—Memórias," p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 131.

offer to take Peres's post. Basbaum accepted and was made a voting member of the CEC.

In Recife over two years earlier, Basbaum had been introduced to Communism when Manuel de Sousa Barros and the Karacik brothers (Raul and Manuel) took him to Cristiano Cordeiro's home. Still in 1925—this time in Rio—Sousa Barros introduced Basbaum and Manuel Karacik (Basbaum's closest friend and fellow medical student) to Astrogildo Pereira in a café frequented by the PCB leaders. The two students returned to the café from time to time and became rather well acquainted with Astrogildo, Otávio Brandão, João da Costa Pimenta, Paulo de Lacerda, and Manuel Cendon (whose intelligence and knowledge they admired). To Basbaum it seemed that the thin, dark-complexioned, deep-eyed Brandão had the "face of the classic anarchist conspirator." He found "the white-faced, bespectacled" Astrogildo very different. Usually carrying books and a briefcase, Astrogildo revealed a keen sense of humor, laughed much, and enjoyed a glass of beer—"which rarely happened with Brandão, who drank only milk."<sup>3</sup>

Astrogildo gave Basbaum and Manuel Karacik copies of Bukharin's *The ABC of Communism* and Brandão's recently published *Agrarismo e Industrialismo*.<sup>4</sup> Influenced by these works and deeply impressed by the speeches of May Day 1926, the two students decided on May 6, 1926, to join the PCB. Along with another medical student from Pernambuco, João Celso de Uchoa Cavalcânti (related to Prestes Column detachment leader João Alberto Lins de Barros)<sup>5</sup> they met with Astrogildo Pereira, who was PCB secretary for organization as well as secretary-general. It was decided that, as a PCB cell could be formed with a minimum membership of three, the new members from Pernambuco would constitute the PCB cell of the Rio School of Medicine. Astrogildo furnished more books. In a week's time Basbaum half digested Marx's *Das Kapital* and began giving a course about this work to thirty textile workers. But Basbaum, who came to feel that only two or three of his students were sufficiently prepared to take such a course, lost interest in it, and it was never completed.<sup>6</sup>

After taking over JC in April 1927, Basbaum set up a provisional directorship, made up of himself, Manuel Karacik, and Francisco Mangabeira (of a politically prominent Bahian family). The director-

<sup>3</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

ship supplied JC placards and a JC orator for the Praça Mauá rally on May Day 1927, and it contributed articles about the working youth to *A Nação*. Within a few months JC, for Communists under twenty-one, had approximately one hundred members, 90 percent of them workers between the ages of fifteen and nineteen.<sup>7</sup>

JC was formally established at a meeting at the recently reorganized Rio UTG (Union of Graphic Workers) on August 1, 1927, International Youth Day. The national directorship consisted of four workers and three students (Leôncio and his younger brother Artur, and Manuel Karacik). Leôncio was named secretary-general of JC, a post he held until early 1929, when his age disqualified him from JC membership.

In August 1927 JC applied to Moscow for admittance in KIM, the Communist International of Youth. With the favorable reply came a three-year scholarship to send a young Brazilian worker to the Lenin Institute in Moscow. JC's selection of Heitor Ferreira Lima, a twenty-one-year-old tailor, was a high tribute to his intelligence, seriousness, and militancy; other things being equal, JC would have sent Moscow a young worker from a "basic industry."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55–56.

## 7. No Amnesty for the Rebels

Popular interest in Luís Carlos Prestes was enormous. Therefore it was a journalistic triumph for Assis Chateaubriand's *O Jornal* when in the first half of 1927 it ran two series of front-page articles based on interviews that its "special reporters" had conducted with Prestes and some of the six hundred other Brazilians who were in exile with him in La Gaíba, Bolivia—many of them earning a living working for Bolivia Concessions Limited, a British colonizing company that was opening roads and preparing fields for crops.

Rafael Correia de Oliveira, director of *O Jornal*'s São Paulo office and author of the first series of articles,<sup>1</sup> reported that the Prestes Column

<sup>1</sup> *O Jornal*, March 11–19, 1927.

had not been defeated. Its general staff, he said, had decided to yield to public opinion, "eager for peace," after it had noted in January 1927 the end of the state of siege, the liberation of political prisoners, the return of the Clevelândia survivors to their homes, and the freedom enjoyed by the press.

When Rafael Correia asked Prestes about the objectives of the revolutionaries, he was told: "The revolution has a program that all of us swore to uphold and carry out. It has been amply divulged throughout the country and was summed up by Sr. Assis Brasil<sup>2</sup> in two words: 'Representation and Justice.' If we could return to Brazil in an atmosphere of liberty we would strive for the political reforms of our program."

Rafael Correia was able to assure only the common soldiers that they could return in liberty to Brazil. He had learned from General Álvaro Mariante, who had fought the Prestes Column in Brazil, that President Washington Luís was issuing orders that all soldiers, including those imprisoned in combat, were to enjoy freedom, but that rebel officers were under arrest.<sup>3</sup>

A general amnesty for all who had rebelled against Bernardes was demanded by the oppositionist press. However, the military leaders of the revolution made it clear that they were not seeking amnesty for themselves. In Libres, Argentina, in March 1927, Isidoro Dias Lopes released a manifesto to reveal that in January he had addressed a letter to Washington Luís asking for complete amnesty for all the rebels with the exception of himself, Miguel Costa, Luís Carlos Prestes, Djalma Dutra, Siqueira Campos, Cordeiro de Farias, João Alberto, and Ari Salgado.<sup>4</sup> Neither his suggestion nor the more inclusive amnesty, which oppositionist lawmakers were proposing, was acceptable to the president. In June Senator Adolfo Gordo explained the presidential view, which was to guide the congressional majority: "The head of the government, who has his hands on the heart of the nation, who feels its pulsations, and who, more than anyone else, desires pacification in order to achieve his program, feels that the hour for amnesty has not yet arrived. Therefore the most elementary prudence tells the Senate to vote against the [amnesty] project."<sup>5</sup>

Luís Carlos Prestes gave his opinion about amnesty and Brazilian

<sup>2</sup> Joaquim Francisco de Assis Brasil, of Rio Grande do Sul, who was named "Civilian Head of the Revolution" by Isidoro Dias Lopes and Luís Carlos Prestes.

<sup>3</sup> *O Jornal*, March 15, 1927.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, March 27, 1927.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, June 11, 1927.

politicians to Luís Amaral, the author of *O Jornal's* second series of articles about the exiled column.<sup>6</sup> Amaral, who brought 17:000\$000 (seventeen contos), which had been donated to the fund that *O Jornal* and *Diário da Noite* were raising to help wounded and sick revolutionaries, opened his extensive series by praising Washington Luís for getting the prisoners out of Clevelândia, but he called La Gaíba, Bolivia, "another Clevelândia" and wrote of six hundred Brazilians "suffering, languishing, and dying, the victims of malaria and hunger, in a sad and desperate situation."<sup>7</sup>

Amaral reported that Prestes wanted amnesty for the sake of his "companions and soldiers, all this multitude which accompanies me in exile. . . . I and all the responsible chiefs spontaneously decline any right or benefit. We assume full responsibility for what occurred, in order that soldiers and civilians might be granted amnesty as soon as possible." But Prestes feared that amnesty would be a long time in coming. Explaining that the ruling politicians were unconcerned with the voice of the people, preferring to harken to "the voices of their own whims" and the mandates of selfish interests, he asserted that: "To such men the idea of amnesty is repugnant."<sup>8</sup>

Prestes admitted that many common soldiers and civilians were returning to Brazil without being bothered, but he pointed out that others refused to accept this uncertain freedom, which depended on the charitable attitude of the government. All his men, he said, wanted amnesty by law.

Amnesty alone, Prestes hastened to warn, would not solve the political problem of Brazil nor be a guarantee of lasting peace. Then he pointed out that the political problem had been "perfectly defined" by Antônio Carlos de Andrada, Minas governor and presidential hopeful, when he had said: "It is necessary that the government make the revolution before the people make it." Prestes found it significant that these words had been uttered by one of the men "responsible for the present situation."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, May 21–July 13, 1927.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, May 21, 1927.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, May 22, 1927.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*



## 8. Senator Artur Bernardes

Late in May 1927 Artur Bernardes came to Rio from Minas Gerais to take his seat as federal senator from that state and then to depart at once on the *Bagé* for a sojourn in France. To boo and insult the former president, a large crowd faced contingents of police infantry and cavalry on the side of Monroe Palace (the Senate building) that he was expected to enter when he arrived from his brother's Rio residence. The crowd was unpleasantly surprised when it learned that Bernardes, accompanied by his son and Afonso Pena Júnior, made his entrance by a doorway on another side of the building.

The crowd booed anyway, bringing Senator Irineu Machado to one of the windows of the building to praise what he called the public's "civic reaction." In his speech from the window Machado told the crowd that "the murderer from Viçosa has just been invested with the senatorial mandate due to fraudulent acts by Minas officialdom—and not by the free will of the noble and proud people of Minas." According to Machado the police bayonets and cavalry squadrons had held back the crowd, "making it possible for Bernardes to take—not a Senate seat, where he did not sit for a single second, so terror-stricken was he by the tremendous uproar—not a legislative mandate, which he is unable, and will be unable to exercise—but the salary, the money of the Treasury, where, once more, he puts his villainous hands in order to go abroad and enjoy the reward of his crimes."<sup>1</sup>

Irineu Machado, constantly interrupted by applause, recalled that "in this same building from which I speak," José Joaquim Seabra, an "important victim of Bernardismo," had orated in the past. After calling on the Carioca people to elect Seabra to the Rio Municipal Council in 1928. Machado compared the fates of Seabra and Bernardes. The former, he said, had returned, a poor man, to his native state of Bahia after his right to be seated in the Senate had been denied, whereas Bernardes, "about to leave for Paris, is to receive from the people six contos per month for not exercising his mandate. . . . The *Bagé* now has the mission of disinfecting this city, and Brazil, from the putrid assassin of Viçosa."

From a window in the office of the newspaper *O Globo*, Maurício de

<sup>1</sup> *O Jornal*, May 26, 1927.

Lacerda amused a crowd by suggesting May 25, the day that Bernardes took his Senate seat, be known as the "Day of the Cow." In the *bicho* (animal lottery), the number 25, he explained, corresponded to "the cow."<sup>2</sup>

The reception given by the Cariocas for Joaquim Francisco de Assis Brasil, when he came to take his seat as an oppositionist federal congressman from Rio Grande do Sul, was in striking contrast to that given Bernardes. The "Civilian Chief of the Revolution," who was calling for full amnesty for the rebels, electoral reform, and the secret vote,<sup>3</sup> was acclaimed in the streets and from the galleries of the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>4</sup> "The manifestation that I have received," he said, "is one more proof that the ideal of the revolution is an ideal that grips all of Brazil."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., May 26, 1927.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., March 6, 1927.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., May 25, 27, 1927.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., May 25, 1927.

## 9. The *Lei Celerada*

Because the Brazilian government was trying to negotiate a loan from British bankers, it was quick to heed a British complaint that subversive elements were alarmingly active in Brazil. Aníbal de Toledo introduced the project of a law that became known as the *lei celerada*, or criminal law. It stipulated one- to two-year jail sentences for anyone found to have used threats or violence to get workers to leave their jobs, and it broadened the government's powers to close associations, unions, and civil societies that engaged in acts harmful to the public good. It also required the government to prevent "the distribution of propaganda contrary to order, morality, or public safety," and to close down "organs of publicity" issuing such propaganda.<sup>1</sup>

In May 1927, while the proposed legislation was being considered by Congress, Rio newspapers carried alarming police reports of a possible strike at the Light and Power Company. As a "pretext" for the strike, "those who spread the doctrine of setting up a Communist regime in

<sup>1</sup> Legislative Decree 5221 of August 12, 1927.

Brazil" were said to be planning to use the "worn-out" complaint that the company was not complying with the Vacation Law.

In June the police force announced that one of its agents, pretending to be a dismissed employee, had attended meetings of conspirators and uncovered a terrible plot: former employees, mostly foreigners, planned to cooperate with the strike by cutting the cables that brought power to the distributing station on Frei Caneca Street.<sup>2</sup> The conspirators, plotting the final details, were said to have been surprised by the arrival of the *viúvas alegres* ("merry widows"—police cars with sirens).

The police reported that bulletins, signed by "the Commission," called on "comrades" to strike the next day for better wages and shorter hours. All the thirteen arrested "conspirators," the police said, were Portuguese, except for two Spaniards, one Italian, and one Brazilian. The public was assured that the Light and Power Company was being well guarded and that "the foreign agitators" would be tried and deported.<sup>3</sup>

According to *A Plebe*, all that really happened was the arrest of a few peaceful, unarmed Light and Power Company workers in a bar. The anarchist organ went on to say that newspaper stories about "a ghastly conspiracy to overthrow the Republic and implant communism" served to warn the proletariat that it could expect the worst. In fact, *A Plebe* wrote, the mere mention by the press of discontent among Light and Power Company employees was enough to send the "reaction" into battle against the working class. *A Plebe* declared that with the new "cudgel" law—*lei celerada*—it would be "more difficult than ever for the proletariat to defend itself against the ever-increasing tyranny of international capitalism which dominates this nation."<sup>4</sup>

In the middle of June, after the proposed bill had been approved by the Justice Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, *A Nação* told its readers that "Comrade Azevedo Lima, the congressman of the Bloco Operário," would rise to the defense of the proletariat, "already martyred for years by the Adolfo Gordo Law."<sup>5</sup>

Evaristo de Morais could find no reason for the new repressive measure. Asserting that the socialist movement offered no threat, he wrote that ever since the advent of the Republic, when he started following the movement, it had been superficial, more theoretical than practical—

<sup>2</sup> "A Cidade Ficaria Sem Luz e Sem Bondes," *Correio da Manhã*, June 5, 1927, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> "A Reação Contra o Proletariado," *A Plebe* II, no. 253 (June 11, 1927).

<sup>5</sup> *A Nação*, June 15, 1927.

almost platonic.<sup>6</sup> He mentioned the "intelligent activity" of a "group of Communists" who were trying to attract the working classes and said that this group included "some of the most competent adepts of social reform." But, the lawyer added, the workers, interested only in wages and working conditions, were not inspired by "the doctrinaires," and therefore "the doctrinaires" were too weak to bring about any strike.

The sponsors of the new law, Evaristo de Moraes wrote, were acting from a fear of Communism that was unfounded and were making the situation worse by relying on repression when they ought to be enacting helpful measures and carrying out Brazil's international commitments about labor legislation. He described the Labor Code as bogged down in Congress, the Accident Law as "harmfully defective," and the Vacation and Railroad Pension laws as "disregarded."

In July *A Plebe* declared that Washington Luís was a thousand times worse than "the degenerate from Viçosa" (Bernardes), because he sought by legislation to establish "forever" what Bernardes had done by means of the state of siege.<sup>7</sup>

Late in July Congressmen Bergamíni, Azevedo Lima, Maurício de Medeiros, and Marrey Júnior, of the parliamentary Left, delayed the passage of the *lei celerada* by raising procedural questions.<sup>8</sup> Congressional leaders spoke of "serious Bolshevik documents" in Aníbal de Toledo's hands, which perhaps should be considered in a "secret session" of Congress and which they felt surely justified a rigorous law to defend Brazil from the subversive plans of the Third International.

According to the documents, as described in the press on the following days, the Executive Committee of the Third International in a secret meeting on April 13, 1927, had chosen Brazil as the main object of Communist activity in South America and had decided to subvert order in Brazil by sending four "secret agents" there with U.S.\$125,000, and by assisting Brazil's "129 Bolshevik nuclei" with an additional credit of U.S.\$50,000. The funds would be remitted to Montevideo, where Russia

<sup>6</sup> Evaristo de Moraes, "Está Perigando o Direito da Greve?" *Correio da Manhã*, June 14, 1927. A year earlier *O Solidario* wrote that Evaristo de Moraes had been "expelled from the Socialist party for being too pink" (see "A Frente Unica Multicolor," *O Solidario*, no. 45 [June 27, 1926]).

<sup>7</sup> "Mais uma Lei contra os Trabalhadores," *A Plebe* 12, no. 256 (July 23, 1927).

<sup>8</sup> *O Jornal*, July 27, 1927. Other members of the parliamentary Left were Congressmen Francisco Morato, Moraes Barros, Plínio Casado, Batista Luzardo, and Assis Brasil, and Senators Soares dos Santos, Antônio Moniz, and Barbosa Lima (who was ill) (see *O Jornal*, May 31, 1927).

had a legation and trading company. One of the first tasks was to bring about a general strike in Brazil “to force the governor of Massachusetts to commute the death sentences” of Sacco and Vanzetti.<sup>9</sup> Opponents of the Aníbal de Toledo project, including *O Jornal* publisher, Assis Chateaubriand, ridiculed these reports, calling them updated versions of unreliable information that Police Colonel Carlos Reis had obtained a year earlier from White Russian refugees in Switzerland. It would, *O Jornal* scoffed, amuse intelligent and experienced Russian Bolsheviks to know that Brazilians believed them so ignorant as to think that Brazil could be subverted by “such puerile and flagrantly inefficient methods.”<sup>10</sup>

On July 28, 1927, after the congressional minority failed in its motion to have nominal voting on the criminal law, it was passed. Article 2, the controversial section allowing the government to close associations and newspapers, was approved 115 to 27.<sup>11</sup>

Without waiting for the Senate to follow Adolfo Gordo’s suggestion that it ratify the law quickly,<sup>12</sup> or for President Washington Luís to promulgate it, the authorities began a new “reign of terror.” On August 1 João Freire de Oliveira, manager of *A Nação*, was arrested. Agreeing to go peacefully to jail if he could first leave some keys at the *A Nação* office, he ran away when his request was rejected. Three shots by the police did not prevent his escape.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, the São Paulo police arrested fourteen workers (mostly shoemakers, textile workers, and civil construction workers).<sup>14</sup> Among them were Leuenroth, Domingos Passos, and Aristides Lobo, who had come from Rio to São Paulo in 1925 to help graphic worker Mário Grazíni build up the PCB.<sup>15</sup>

After the *lei celerada* was signed by Washington Luís on August 12, *A Plebe* and *A Nação* went out of existence. *A Plebe*, in its last number to appear for over five years, refrained from attacking Bolsheviks and even described the attempted imprisonment of João Freire de Oliveira as an act against “a militant of the social movement.” Angered and dismayed, *A Plebe* had to report also that Sacco and Vanzetti would be

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, July 26, 27, 28, 1927.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, July 27, 1927.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, July 29, 1927.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, August 3, 1927.

<sup>13</sup> Report from Rio de Janeiro, transcribed in *A Plebe* 12, no. 257 (August 6, 1927).

<sup>14</sup> “A Perseguição,” *A Plebe* 12, no. 257 (August 6, 1927).

<sup>15</sup> Aristides Lobo, letter to Grazíni, Jr., São Paulo, August 23, 1967.



The supreme ruler. (*A Plebe*, June 11, 1927)

executed later in August because "the insatiable hyena of capitalism" was unwilling to listen to the cries of protest of all men of good conscience throughout the entire world. "Sacco and Vanzetti will die, dedicated to their ideal. But anarchy will never die!"<sup>16</sup>

*A Nação*, which had piled up a deficit of fifteen thousand mil-réis,<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *A Plebe* 12, no. 257.

<sup>17</sup> "A Nação," *O Internacional* 12, no. 119 (June 11, 1927).

announced in its last number (August 11) that, instead of waiting for the police to close its doors violently, it was slamming them shut in the face of the police. The PCB leaders also explained that the newspaper had lost its reason for existing because "the ill-disguised bourgeois dictatorship" was making the Party illegal. They cited "the very grave economic and financial crisis"<sup>18</sup> and forecast a period of destitution and repression for the workers. "The only remedy is the indissoluble union of all the workers in their unions and federations, and the cohesion of the proletarian mass around the Communist vanguard."<sup>19</sup>

In a publication of the Communist International, Brandão wrote: "The result was that London granted a loan to the amount of more than seventeen million pounds sterling. That was the price for which the proletariat of Brazil had been sold like a flock of sheep." He added that "the Police have transformed the Brazilian country into a kind of tsarist Russia."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Between January 3, 1925, and July 9, 1927, the quotation for ten kilograms of Santos No. 4 coffee (at Santos) had fallen from 43\$500 to 23\$700 (data from *O Estado de S. Paulo*).

<sup>19</sup> Manifesto by the PCB directorship and the editors of *A Nação*, given in *A Nação*, August 11, 1927, and quoted in part in Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, pp. 81–83.

<sup>20</sup> Octavio Brandão in *International Press Correspondence*, May 10, 1928. Leoncio Basbaum (in "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 58) writes that soon after the *lei celerada* was signed he was jailed for eight days at the central police building; among the other prisoners he saw were João da Costa Pimenta and Josias Carneiro Leão.





BOOK IX: *The Semilegal PCB Forges Ahead,*  
1928–1929

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## 1. Astrogildo Visits Prestes

The promulgation of the *lei celerada* placed the PCB in jeopardy. The Communist leaders therefore decided to carry on its work through the Bloco Operário, which was to have "centers" all over the country. Hoping that the Bloco Operário would attract peasants, they renamed it the Bloco Operário e Camponês (BOC—Labor and Peasant Bloc).

The BOC of São Paulo ("affiliated with the BOC of Rio de Janeiro") was formally launched on February 1, 1928, at a rally where speakers called for a labor code and full compliance with the Vacation Law.<sup>1</sup> Although the CEC of the PCB wanted all BOC's to be directed by local PCB leaders,<sup>2</sup> non-Communist Nestor Pereira Júnior, head of the São Paulo Association of Employees in Commerce, became president of the São Paulo BOC and its candidate in the approaching state assembly elections.<sup>3</sup>

In the latter part of 1927, the CEC, which often met in the homes of Joaquim Barbosa and Otávio Brandão,<sup>4</sup> appraised the policies of the Party.

<sup>1</sup> "Bloco Operario e Camponez de São Paulo," *O Trabalhador Graphico* 7, no. 92 (February 7, 1928).

<sup>2</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico* 7, no. 92 (February 7, 1928).

<sup>4</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 53. Basbaum writes that at least one meeting was held at the home of Pedro Mota Lima, "a sort of 'secret member' of the Party," and that the meetings were never held at Astrogildo Pereira's Niterói home.

Most of its members, feeling that the Party had been too sectarian, discussed possible alliances. They particularly had in mind an alliance with the Prestes Column, then interned in Bolivia.

The matter was discussed at several meetings, the last of which took place in Joaquim Barbosa's home.<sup>5</sup> Among those present were Astrogildo, Brandão, Paulo de Lacerda, João da Costa Pimenta, Joaquim Barbosa, Manuel Cendon, Hermogênio Silva, Rodolfo Coutinho, and Leôncio Basbaum. Coutinho and Joaquim Barbosa maintained that to unite with the Prestes Column—"a small-bourgeois movement"—would be to betray the proletariat and "all the teachings of Marx and Engels."<sup>6</sup> Coutinho, arguing on behalf of uncontaminated purity for the Party, made use of a large stack of books written in German; but when he quoted Karl Kalsky he was told that Kalsky was a socialist traitor. Coutinho's own work of forming peasant leagues in the state of Rio de Janeiro was criticized, on the grounds that he approached only "kulaks," or relatively prosperous farm workers. When a vote was taken, Joaquim Barbosa abstained and Coutinho cast the lone vote against seeking to associate with the Prestes Column.<sup>7</sup>

Late in December 1927 Astrogildo set off to speak with Prestes in Bolivia; he carried a reporter's credential, furnished by Pedro Mota Lima of *A Esquerda*, and a suitcase filled with all the Marxist-Leninist texts (mostly in French) that could be found in Rio. At Corumbá, on the Bolivian border, Astrogildo was surprised to see Colonel Bandeira de Melo. The colonel, probably on the lookout for Prestes Column men, did not see Astrogildo.<sup>8</sup>

Prestes came from the center of Bolivia to Puerto Suárez, a town on the Bolivian side of the Brazilian border; there, accompanied by two officers of the column, he met for almost two days with the PCB's secretary-general. Astrogildo, the reporter, heard Prestes discuss the Long March of the column and declare that "for Brazil there no longer exist solutions within the legal framework."<sup>9</sup> As the representative of the PCB's CEC, Astrogildo proposed "an alliance between the revolutionary proletariat, under the influence of the Communist Party, and the popular masses, especially the peasant masses, under the influence of the column and its

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>7</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 107.

<sup>9</sup> [Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro* 3, no. 36 (January 1939): 136.

commander."<sup>10</sup> Astrogildo turned over the books to Prestes, explaining that the Communist leaders wanted him to study the theory and practice that they sought to instill in the Party, so that he might learn about the principles guiding their work and the solutions that Marxist science provided for the social problems of the times.<sup>11</sup>

The serious-minded "revolutionary general" took the books, returned to his work in the Bolivian interior, and began a careful study of Marx and Lenin.

Bernardes-hating newspapers celebrated Prestes's thirtieth birthday, January 3, 1928, as the "Day of the Cavalier of Hope."<sup>12</sup> Even though *A Nação* had said that *Vanguarda* was owned by "millionaire Geraldo Rocha, . . . the man who offered five hundred contos for the head of Prestes,"<sup>13</sup> *Vanguarda* heralded the day with an eight-column headline and pages of pictures and articles about "Brazil's greatest soldier."<sup>14</sup> Maurício de Lacerda and the widow of Nilo Peçanha (Bernardes's 1922 election opponent) were part of the crowd that observed the occasion at a solemn Mass at the Lapa Church.<sup>15</sup>

Brandão eulogized Prestes: "He lives in a miserable shack. He eats little. He falls ill from malaria. And this frail, pallid, impoverished man is the hope and strength of the Brazilian people!"<sup>16</sup> Getúlio Vargas, the governor-elect of Rio Grande do Sul who had served as Washington Luís's finance minister, called Prestes "a great character, taken by circumstances to the front of the revolutionary current." "But," Vargas added, "I have the impression that he is a man more for constructing than for destroying."<sup>17</sup>

A month after the birthday observances, Prestes's admirers commemorated the first anniversary of the internment of the Prestes Column in Bolivia. *A Esquerda*, which had sent Astrogildo to see Prestes, declared that the Prestes Column was "definitely identified with the democratic and liberal ideas of the epoch" and that its leader was "the serene and virile symbol of an enslaved but unconquered nationalism." *A Esquerda*

<sup>10</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> The term "Cavalier of Hope" was first applied to Luís Carlos Prestes by *A Esquerda*, directed by Pedro Mota Lima.

<sup>13</sup> *A Nação*, March 10, 1927.

<sup>14</sup> "O Dia do Cavaleiro da Esperança," *Vanguarda*, January 3, 1928.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Jorge Amado, *O Cavaleiro da Esperança: Vida de Luiz Carlos Prestes*, p. 211.

<sup>17</sup> *O Jornal*, January 4, 1928.

explained that Prestes and his heroic companions, having carried out a march "unequaled in the military traditions of the universe," and believing in the appeals made by the new government, had agreed to expatriate themselves in order not to block the concession of amnesty, "which the nation still demands as an essential condition for its greatness and happiness."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *A Esquerda*, February 3, 1928.

## 2. Fatal Shots in the Rio Printers' Union

Early in 1928, PCB leaders engaged in an all-out campaign against José Pereira de Oliveira, who was not without followers among textile workers.<sup>1</sup>

As a first step, the PCB urged workers to attend a meeting on the evening of January 18 at the Textile Workers' Union to demand industry compliance with the Vacation Law. A note in *A Esquerda* promised that it would be "a very interesting meeting," dealing with "a vigorous movement to defend the workers' interests."<sup>2</sup>

To the approximately one thousand who attended, Congressman Azevedo Lima declared that the textile workers had in their midst a very dangerous spy, whose job was to give the police the names of those who should be jailed or expelled from Rio because of their passion for the proletarian cause. The BOC congressman charged that the guilty one—the "despicable stool pigeon" who accepted money from the police in return for betraying his comrades<sup>3</sup>—was José Pereira de Oliveira.<sup>4</sup>

Azevedo Lima did not pursue the matter, nor did Pereira de Oliveira defend himself, because the presiding officer, João da Costa Pimenta, disliked having "syndical affairs made into instruments of Communist Party politics."<sup>5</sup> Pimenta told Azevedo Lima to stick to the subject an-

<sup>1</sup> João da Costa Pimenta has said (interview, September 7, 1970) that José Pereira de Oliveira still had "much prestige among textile workers."

<sup>2</sup> *A Esquerda*, January 18, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, February 14, 1928.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*; *Correio da Manhã*, February 15, 1928.

<sup>5</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, September 7, 1970.

nounced for the meeting. He felt that the police, always seeking an opportunity to accuse unions of being unruly Communist propaganda centers, was ready to intervene, and that if an inquiry to "unmask" Pereira de Oliveira was necessary, it should take place at a small, special session, held for that purpose. Azevedo Lima quieted down,<sup>6</sup> but not without promising to furnish proofs in the future against Pereira de Oliveira.<sup>7</sup>

Before Pimenta left for São Paulo to give a Graphic Workers' Day oration and attend to other affairs, he warned that the Pereira de Oliveira matter should not, as some wanted, be brought up at a meeting at the Rio Union of Graphic Workers (UTG).<sup>8</sup> The PCB ignored the advice, and Azevedo Lima formally requested use of the UTG headquarters to "help the proletarian cause" by denouncing Pereira de Oliveira. When the UTG's Executive Commission expressed concern about possible disturbances, the BOC congressman assumed responsibility for whatever might occur. He said he would limit himself to an analysis of documents and promised to avoid dangerous oratory and heated discussion.<sup>9</sup>

The UTG assembly room was therefore put at his disposal on the evening of February 14, 1928. The meeting, sponsored by graphic workers and cabinetmakers, attracted reporters, photographers, and police investigators as well as workers and labor leaders. Justifying the presence of the police, *O Paiz* wrote that some UTG members "defend Communist doctrines that are not always in accord with social order and public tranquility." It added that "the government happily has the policy of taking steps to prevent such doctrines from spreading and gravely injuring the nation."<sup>10</sup>

With cabinetmaker Roberto Morena presiding, Azevedo Lima presented his "proofs," the main one being a handwritten document, signed by three workers, declaring that Pereira de Oliveira had turned them over to the police. After other speakers argued that Pereira de Oliveira was guilty, one worker came to his defense, creating considerable commotion. The meeting became tumultuous when Pereira de Oliveira insisted on defending himself, as Morena had promised he might.<sup>11</sup> The

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> *A Esquerda*, February 14, 1928. Octavio Brandão (letter, May 25, 1971) says Pereira de Oliveira was working with Colonel Bandeira de Melo.

<sup>8</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, September 7, 1970.

<sup>9</sup> A Comissão Executiva da UTG, "A Atitude da UTG em Face dos Acontecimentos," *A Esquerda*, February 17, 1928.

<sup>10</sup> *O Paiz*, February 15, 1928.

<sup>11</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, February 15, 16, 1928; *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 16, 1928; *O Trabalhador Graphico* 7, no. 93 (São Paulo, March 6, 1928).

lights went out and shots were fired. After policemen rushed in and took control, ambulances carried away six of the ten persons wounded in the conflict. Not much later, two of them, a graphic worker and an anarchist shoemaker (Antonino Domingues), died in a hospital.

*Correio da Manhã* blamed the shooting on a police agent, Ferreira Bastos. Among those jailed was UTG Acting Secretary João Daladéia, a linotypist of *O Paiz*. The police closed down the UTG headquarters and sent soldiers to block its entrance.<sup>12</sup>

Azevedo Lima, interviewed later, showed that his revolver had all of its bullets intact and unused. He also showed a wound, which he attributed to the fall of a table during the tumult. Like most of the Communist leaders, he charged that the shooting had been started by a police agent who had attended the meeting, and he blamed Pereira de Oliveira "for a bloodbath, for the death of brother workers."<sup>13</sup>

A statement by the Executive Commission of the Rio UTG revealed Azevedo Lima's premeeting assurances and said that "unfortunately human forces failed." It concluded "the UTG cannot, should not, and will not be made responsible for the incident." Although Evaristo de Morais, "patron of the UTG,"<sup>14</sup> sought legal reasons for reopening the UTG, the government, citing Aníbal de Toledo's *lei celerada*, kept the UTG closed.

On February 17, *A Esquerda* published a facsimile of the document in which the three workers accused Pereira de Oliveira of turning them over to the police.

<sup>12</sup> Among the several stories in José Oiticica, *Ação Direta*, that are difficult to believe, is the one about the shooting of February 14, 1928. According to Oiticica and his biographer, Roberto das Neves (*Ação Direta*, pp. 34, 255), the Communists, having failed once again to "hitch Brazilian labor organization to the totalitarian cart of Russian colonialism," commissioned two "Communist gunmen" (one being Pedro Bastos, jeerer of Carlos Dias) to murder Oiticica during the confusion that was to be stirred up while Oiticica spoke. Brandão, who was present, writes (letter, May 25, 1971) that Oiticica was not there and that the charge of a Communist plot to murder Oiticica is a "shameful lie."

<sup>13</sup> Declaration of Azevedo Lima to *A Esquerda*, reproduced in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, February 16, 1928.

<sup>14</sup> *A Esquerda*, February 17, 1928.



### 3. The PCB Schism of 1928

João da Costa Pimenta could not be sure whether the killings in the Rio UTG were "the work of the police or were due to the struggle" among rival factions in the proletarian movement.<sup>1</sup> But he was highly critical of the PCB leadership for "provoking" the tragedy.

Pimenta, who wished to remain primarily a labor leader, rejected the idea of becoming a BOC candidate in the 1928 elections for the Rio Municipal Council; he disagreed with the concept, advanced by Brandão and Astrogildo, that the masses were destined to play a significant role in PCB politics and were not to limit themselves to participation in "a mere syndical movement."<sup>2</sup>

Joaquim Barbosa also disagreed with the PCB's top leaders. They wanted him to accept a salary from the Party and devote full time to his post of Party secretary for labor union affairs.<sup>3</sup> Barbosa preferred to earn his living doing tailoring work at his home, attending to PCB duties at night without charge.<sup>4</sup>

At a February 1928 Party conference dedicated to labor matters, Barbosa and Pimenta, respectively the first and second secretaries of the Federação Sindical Regional do Rio de Janeiro (FSRR), found the PCB's top leadership "immensely more disciplinarian than it had been in 1924."<sup>5</sup> Barbosa and Pimenta were "called to account," criticized for the ineffectiveness of the FSRR, and "ordered to carry out the assignments of the Party in the syndical movement."<sup>6</sup> The Party wanted to assure itself of a large electorate for the 1928 municipal elections, thus avoiding a repetition of the 1927 "loss."<sup>7</sup> But Pimenta believed that the PCB's electoral drive did not show a proper understanding of the "very opportunistic" nature of the workers.<sup>8</sup> Barbosa, who agreed with Pimenta's criticism that Party leaders sought to convert syndical matters into political matters,

<sup>1</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, November 22, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview, November 19, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, September 7, 1970.

<sup>6</sup> See Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 134.

<sup>7</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, September 7, 1970.

had another objection: the PCB leaders were issuing orders without providing any opportunity for discussion. This, he has asserted, led to the discontent that caused the schism of 1928.<sup>9</sup>

After receiving the reprimands and directives, Barbosa resigned as secretary for labor union affairs and issued an open letter of complaint to the Party's Central Executive Commission. He pointed out that in 1925, when the Conselho Nacional do Trabalho (National Labor Board) had invited labor unions to send delegates to a meeting which was to consider suggestions for making the proposed vacation law effective, the CEC had unwisely disregarded his suggestion that the work of the delegates be accompanied by demonstrations by laborers to exert pressure on the government. Barbosa also complained that in 1927 articles in *A Nação* had employed "the most untimely methods of attack," thus alienating unions and workers and frustrating the Party's plans for a *congresso sindical* (labor union congress) of all the different local worker organizations.<sup>10</sup>

Joaquim Barbosa's open letter made him leader of a small rebellious faction known as the Oposição Sindical, or Labor Union Opposition. During an immense amount of arguing, Barbosa and his Cell 4R—with about forty members, most of them tailors—left the Party. João da Costa Pimenta supported Barbosa but did not participate actively in the tailor's opposition work. He remained in the Party a little longer than Barbosa and Cell 4R, and left it "informally."<sup>11</sup>

At the same time a group of intellectuals, who had no contacts with the masses, broke with the PCB leadership for reasons distinct from those motivating Barbosa and Pimenta.<sup>12</sup> Some of the dissident intellectuals left the PCB, and others remained as a leftist opposition within the Party. Among those who left was Lívio Xavier, a young writer who had joined the PCB in 1927. He and his friends were disappointed to detect what they felt was a strain of nationalism in the theories enunciated by the PCB leadership. Maintaining that Communism should be thoroughly international—a part of the International Revolution—they took the matter up with the directorship. A majority of the directors opposed Xavier's position and declared they would accept no divergence from the

<sup>9</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview, November 19, 1970.

<sup>10</sup> Edgard Carone, *A República Velha: Instituições e Classes Sociais*, pp. 332, 339, 340, based on Publicações do Grupo Braço e Cérebro, *A Cisão do Partido Comunista do Brasil*, pp. 10–11.

<sup>11</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, November 22, 1968.

<sup>12</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview, November 19, 1970.

"official view." Xavier and his friends, called "heretics" by Astrogildo,<sup>13</sup> had become attracted to a leftist opposition to Stalinism that was developing among Communists in France, and this interest led them to sympathize with views expressed by Trotsky.

Another Party member to resign was Rodolfo Coutinho, who had seen something of Trotsky in Russia,<sup>14</sup> and who had joined Barbosa in opposing a PCB alliance with Prestes. Coutinho, a teacher at the Pedro II School, was influential in Juventude Comunista (JC). When four members of JC's Central Committee favored the Oposição Sindical, Brandão was sent by the Party to speak with them and Basbaum.<sup>15</sup> Basbaum stuck by the Party leadership, but the four youths, including sixteen-year-old Hílcar Leite, broke with it.<sup>16</sup> Aristides Lobo, who was trying to form Juventude Comunista Paulista, sided with the Oposição Sindical.<sup>17</sup>

In mid-1928 the Party directorship started publishing *Auto-Critica*, a special organ in which Party members were to submit their views about the issues that had provoked the schism. The resulting material, it was felt, might yield something worthy of study by the Third National Congress, scheduled for the end of 1928. In the six numbers published before the congress and the two published early in 1929, a wide range of subjects was discussed.<sup>18</sup> The PCB, for example, used *Auto-Critica* to issue detailed instructions for the formation of a Federação Regional do

<sup>13</sup> Lívio Xavier, interview, São Paulo, November 9, 1967.

<sup>14</sup> Edmundo Moniz, interview, December 14, 1967.

<sup>15</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 5, 1968.

<sup>16</sup> Hílcar Leite, interview, December 8, 1967. Leoncio Basbaum ("Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 57) writes that "the Antunes brothers left JC, accompanying Rodolfo Coutinho, whom they greatly admired."

<sup>17</sup> Hermínio Sacchetta, interview, November 5, 1968.

<sup>18</sup> In the first six numbers the principal subjects debated were: activities in labor unions, the PCB policy and tactics in the BOC, peasants, Juventude Comunista, the character of the Brazilian revolution, the fight against anarcho-sindicalists and Yellows, and Party discipline (see Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 111). Manuel de Souza Barros writes (letter, November 13, 1971) of a "criticism" signed by himself, Josias Carneiro Leão, and Pedro Mota Lima, which was published in *Auto-Critica* in 1929 and which "caused our expulsion, only Pedro Mota Lima returning later to the Party." Their criticism, Souza Barros writes, was that "the PCB orientation at the time was entirely apart from Brazilian conditions and was a copy of the general guidelines of the International. . . . I recall that the principal criticisms were against . . . words of order without any repercussion, such as 'land to the peasants' in a country where the rural workers were not called peasants, and against party isolation—a quasisectarianism that prevented greater organized political action."

Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>19</sup> Astrogildo, analyzing *Auto-Critica* thirty years later, found that it revealed the leadership's firm resolution to defend Party unity. As to theory, he found the discussion "on a low level," displaying "general confusion, the fruit of the general theoretical insufficiency."<sup>20</sup>

The PCB's Third National Congress listed the "small-bourgeois" characteristics of the opposition: (1) leftist phraseology; (2) an underestimation of the strength of the laboring class, and pessimism and defeatism in the work of creating the FSRR; (3) surviving anarcho-syndicalist ideas, making for conflict between political and "economic" work (between parliamentary and syndical work); and (4) individualism and personalism.<sup>21</sup>

The "leftist phraseology" was provided by the opposition's intellectual wing. All the other sins were attributed to Joaquim Barbosa.

Barbosa, who considered himself more realistic than Astrogildo about overall labor federations, has said that "Astrogildo, in one of his untrue reports to the Communist International, asserted that the syndical organization for Latin America existed. . . . All that existed was a committee, supposed to establish such an organization."<sup>22</sup> Barbosa regarded the FSRR as "premature." Brandão, replying in *Auto-Critica* to Barbosa's open letter, argued that if the FSRR was premature, then it could be said that the founding of the PCB and plans to set up the CGT were all premature, and that everything should be liquidated. In particular he accused Barbosa of wanting to "liquidate" the FSRR.<sup>23</sup>

As Barbosa and most of the tailors who followed him worked at their homes, they were described by Brandão as artisans with an anarcho-syndicalist spirit, similar to that found in anarchist shoemakers who also worked in their homes. Brandão accused Barbosa of having poor contacts with workers and of speaking to them as though they were not his equals.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> "Um Plano de Assalto às Organizações do Rio Grande do Sul," *Ação Directa*, Rio de Janeiro, May 1, 1929. Anarchists made use of Joaquim Barbosa's open letter and *Auto-Critica*. Astrogildo Pereira has written that the discussions in *Auto-Critica* were "exploited by the reactionary press and by the anarchists and social reformists" (see *Formação do PCB*, p. 113).

<sup>20</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 113.

<sup>21</sup> Third PCB Congress resolution quoted in *ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>22</sup> Joaquim Barbosa, interview, November 19, 1970.

<sup>23</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 5, 1968; letter, September 16, 1971.

<sup>24</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 5, 1968; November 14, 1970.

#### 4. *O Internacional* and A Internacional

In September 1927 it seemed that the Communists might lose their mouthpiece in São Paulo, the seven-year-old *O Internacional*. Ferrari and Buono refused to print any more numbers unless something were done about the six hundred mil-réis owed them by Apolinário José Alves, director and chief editor of what had by then become a monthly newspaper.<sup>1</sup>

To rescue *O Internacional*, the PCB sent two militants, one from Rio and the other from Santos, to São Paulo. They also found a financial problem at A Internacional, the association for workers in hotels, restaurants, and cafés, which had been weakened by internal conflicts. Over the years the semiannual elections of officers had been followed often by walkouts and sometimes by the formation of rival associations. Workers, the two newcomers reported, did not "even want to speak of A Internacional."<sup>2</sup> The association's monthly income from initiation fees and dues was down to about three hundred mil-réis, far from enough to pay the headquarters' rental of one conto (1:000\$000).

Since the two outsiders and the four Paulistas with whom they now worked had the money and credit necessary for saving A Internacional, they were invited to take over its directorship. The outsiders pledged their own credit to borrow five hundred mil-réis from the São Paulo Union of Graphic Workers. Matias Lopes, who became treasurer of A Internacional, loaned the association six hundred mil-réis himself and personally guaranteed several other loans totalling over six hundred mil-réis.<sup>3</sup> The new directors stimulated a membership drive by temporarily suspending initiation fees. They reported that, although members who were behind on their dues dropped out, many workers joined the association each day. Rio's *Voz Cosmopolita* said that A Internacional's comrades were going through a stage that "we went through some time back in the Centro Cosmopolita—that is, the struggle against the divisionist

<sup>1</sup> *O Internacional* 8, no. 148 (December 15, 1928).

<sup>2</sup> "As Eleições na 'A Internacional,'" *O Internacional* 8, no. 131 (April 1, 1928).

<sup>3</sup> *O Internacional* 8, no. 148 (December 15, 1928). According to João da Costa Pimenta (interview, September 7, 1970) the PCB was at this time receiving financial assistance from the Communist International.

yellows." It recommended that the São Paulo comrades publish the names of the "lackeys of the proletariat" who "criminally" sought to divide the São Paulo association.<sup>4</sup>

The Communists decided that *O Internacional's* editor-director Apolinário J. Alves was guilty of corruption. Although he had not pocketed for himself the well-known payments made by the large regular advertisers of alcoholic drinks, such as the Brahma and Antarctica companies, he was thought to have benefited from forty-six advertisements for which he said payments had not been received. Besides, the Communists found that Apolinário had been insufficiently forceful in promoting the three campaigns of the vanguard of the proletariat: (1) "the exaltation of the formidable work of proletarian Russia on behalf of its suffering brothers" and the attack on fascism; (2) the attack on the "divisionists, deceivers, and traitors, who, by all means, including direct alliances with the bourgeoisie, impede indispensable syndical unification"; and (3) the advocacy of the participation of workers in politics. "Does *O Internacional* want, perhaps, to defend the Democratic and Republican bourgeois parties?"<sup>5</sup>

After a commission studied *O Internacional's* financial situation and produced a report with which Apolinário refused to agree, a new report was written with his help and signed by him. The Communist directors of the newspaper then assumed personal responsibility for the six hundred mil-réis owed to the printing firm. Therefore, on November 1, 1927, after a lapse of two months, the newspaper reappeared—this time as a fortnightly. Its new Grupo Editor drew up guidelines for itself which said: "We believe we have the same rights as those who call themselves libertarians, yellows, etc. Those who are nonpolitical carry out bourgeois politics in favor of company owners, and we, the *políticos*, carry out politics of the proletarian class in favor of the workers."<sup>6</sup>

While *O Internacional* backed Nestor Pereira Júnior, BOC candidate in the February 24, 1928, state assembly elections, the Grupo Editor prepared for the election of *A Internacional* officers, scheduled for March 15. Declaring itself "the vanguard of *A Internacional*," the Grupo Editor presented its slate in the March 1 issue. Criticized because of names on the slate that were unknown to the membership, the Grupo Editor met

<sup>4</sup> J. Carioca, "Os Divisionistas de São Paulo e as Tarifas da 'A Internacional'," *Voz Cosmopolita*, January 1, 1928, reprinted in *O Internacional* 7, no. 127 (February 1, 1928).

<sup>5</sup> *O Internacional* 8, no. 148 (December 15, 1928).

<sup>6</sup> *O Internacional* 8, no. 134 (May 15, 1928).

with some of "the discontented faction" and issued what it called a "conciliatory slate." Feeling that it had achieved harmony, it stopped electioneering and then professed itself amazed when another slate was presented on election day "in opposition to the will of the majority of the associates."<sup>7</sup>

After the balloting, the Grupo Editor announced that the conciliatory slate had won a majority but that it was necessary to annul the election because "the total number of ballots was not in accord with what our statutes prescribe." For the rescheduled election of March 22, the Grupo Editor, "no longer under any illusion about conciliation," presented its own slate. Expecting much "enthusiasm" for an opposing slate, it assigned tasks to its members "to guarantee victory for the Grupo Editor, regardless of the number of voters in the contest that day." Thereupon, according to the Grupo Editor, the opposition, "seeing this decisive attitude, and fearful of defeat, abstained."<sup>8</sup>

The opposition, headed by anarcho-syndicalist Vítor M. Saavedra, then founded the Centro dos Copeiros Cosmopolita with statutes declaring that its members were "philosophical" and that their society was neither political nor religious. "What a bunch of simpletons!" wrote *O Internacional*.<sup>9</sup>

Campaigning against the new Centro, *O Internacional* labeled it the "Club of the Chicken-hearted," a gang of strike breakers, lackeys of capitalists—scoundrels who had gone off with money of A Internacional and were now setting up a low-down gambling joint, a ramshackle trap, whose purpose was to kill A Internacional.<sup>10</sup>

At the 1928 May Day commemoration at Concórdia Square in Brás, *O Internacional* spied another "lackey. . . . The renegade, Edgard Leuenroth, the man who . . . , among other infamies, represented the bourgeois press in Washington . . . , grasping at any straw to save his sinking ideology, discharged his bile against the supporters of proletarian politics." Fortunately, according to this report, the workers were so familiar with such deceivers that his attacks were ineffective. But, to make perfectly sure, a BOC representative at the commemoration refuted all of "Edgard's allegations" and made the point that proletarian legislators would

<sup>7</sup> "As Eleições na 'A Internacional'," *O Internacional* 8, no. 131 (April 1, 1928).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> "Que Beocios!" *O Internacional* 11, no. 159 (July 1, 1929).

<sup>10</sup> "Cuidado, Senhores Arrepiados!" *O Internacional* 8, no. 132 (April 15, 1928).

be in an unusually good position to defend labor's cause because of the immunities enjoyed by congressmen.<sup>11</sup>

In September 1928, after what the Grupo Editor called "internal skirmishes," the anti-Communists won control of A Internacional. "We, who had taken the association out of the quagmire, were forced to step aside."<sup>12</sup> But the Grupo Editor still ran *O Internacional*, in which it published letters of support for its policies from the São Paulo unions of electrical workers and graphic workers. Explaining that the fight in A Internacional was having repercussions in the principal labor centers of the nation, it spoke of pro-Grupo Editor resolutions adopted in Rio, Porto Alegre, Santos, and Ribeirão Preto.

Reviewing what it called its many accomplishments, the Grupo Editor said that *O Internacional* had shown a profit of 2:750\$000 between November 1927 and December 1928—a profit that would have been greater but for a payment of 370\$000 to the BOC, and one of 600\$000 to discharge Apolinário's indebtedness to the printer.<sup>13</sup>

Late in 1928 *O Internacional* campaigned against the employment of girls as barmaids (*garçonetes*),<sup>14</sup> and in favor of the election of Everardo Dias and João Freire de Oliveira to the São Paulo and Santos municipal councils. As 1929 opened, *O Internacional* criticized A Internacional's directors for having abandoned a plan to set up worker subdivisions in the association according to their trades.<sup>15</sup> When employees in cafés threatened to form an organization outside of A Internacional, *O Internacional* encouraged them, observing that it preferred "a separate organization to disorganization."<sup>16</sup>

A statewide flavor was given to the work of establishing a Federação Sindical Regional de São Paulo because the invitations asking unions to form a pro-Federação committee came from workers in Catanduva, S.P. *O Internacional* and *O Trabalhador Graphico*<sup>17</sup> urged all to accept the invitation.

<sup>11</sup> "As Comemorações do Dia 1º de Maio," *O Internacional* 8, no. 134 (May 15, 1928).

<sup>12</sup> *O Internacional* 8, no. 148 (December 15, 1928).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* See also "As Garçonetes," *O Internacional* 9, no. 153 (March 1, 1929), the reprint of an article in *O Estado de S. Paulo*.

<sup>15</sup> "Commentarios sobre a Ultima Assembléa," *O Internacional* 9, no. 149 (January 1, 1929).

<sup>16</sup> *O Internacional* 9, no. 151 (February 1, 1929).

<sup>17</sup> *O Trabalhador Graphico* 7, no. 96 (São Paulo, May 1928).



## 5. Elections in São Paulo, 1928

During the state and municipal election campaigns in São Paulo in 1928, Communists said that the oppositionist Democratic party was as bad as the Republican party. *O Internacional* called the venerable Democratic party leader, Antônio Prado, "a feudal and anarchist reactionary."<sup>1</sup>

Communists denied that proletarian representatives in legislatures would be corrupted by their surroundings. Astrogildo Pereira tried to help João Freire de Oliveira and the Coligação Operária in Santos by writing in the *Praça de Santos* that the candidate of a party, once elected, would be subject to the party's control, and could carry out, in the Câmara Municipal (Municipal Chamber), only the impersonal politics of the party. He added that the councilman representing the proletariat would attend specially called assemblies of unions and *sociedades de resistência* and would be present at the docks and other working places to receive instructions that would make him "the true voice of the laboring mass."<sup>2</sup> *O Internacional* wrote that "our representatives must subordinate their activities to the direction of the BOC and of the conscientious vanguard of the proletariat, and they must participate in illegal work."<sup>3</sup>

In the state capital on the evening of February 16 the BOC held a rally on behalf of Nestor Pereira Júnior, its candidate in the February 24 state assembly elections. On the speakers' stand with the candidate were Ísis de Sílvio, of the *O Combate* printing plant, and Plínio Gomes de Melo, a Communist who had studied law and become a reporter of *Folha da Noite* and the São Paulo correspondent of *A Esquerda*. After they used "vibrant and energetic" expressions, Ísis de Sílvio and Plínio Melo were arrested on the orders of Police Delegado Ibraim Nobre.<sup>4</sup>

To the consternation of the Rio-based Central Committee (CC) of the BOC, on February 20 the São Paulo Regional Committee of the BOC issued a manifesto withdrawing the candidacy of Nestor Pereira Júnior and advising the BOC's supporters to vote for candidates of the Demo-

<sup>1</sup> "Política e Políticas," *O Internacional* 7, no. 123 (December 1, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "O Candidato Operário e Sua Obra Primordial," *Praça de Santos*, January 30, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> "O Porque de Sermos Partidários da Política," *O Internacional* 7, no. 127 (February 1, 1928).

<sup>4</sup> "Reação Policial em São Paulo," *A Esquerda*, February 17, 1928.

cratic party. It was taking this step, it said, because of despotic police repression unleashed against Paulista BOC leaders: the jailing of two orators, threats of imprisonment to other speakers, and "the detention" of several BOC militants.<sup>5</sup>

The CC, which had not been consulted, read the news in the press on February 22, when it was too late to do anything except reprimand the São Paulo Regional Committee. In a public statement, the CC said that two dailies, *O Combate* and *Praça de Santos*, had agreed to publish BOC electoral propaganda, and it insisted that the São Paulo BOC, in spite of repression, should neither have withdrawn its candidate nor supported a party run by, and on behalf of, discontented members of the bourgeoisie. *O Internacional's* Grupo Editor published a note explaining that, as the CC had subordinated the newspaper to the São Paulo BOC, it had submitted to the latter's decision only out of respect for proletarian discipline, "without which the emancipation of the proletariat is impossible."<sup>6</sup>

Election returns of February 24 indicated that about 7 percent of the seats in the state legislature would go to the Democrats (PD) and the rest to the Republicans (PRP). A PD observer, sent from Rio to "fiscalize" voting in a São Paulo district, asserted that registration certificates ("the ink not yet dry") were made out for voters minutes before they voted. He reported that a PD candidate had encouraged a supporter to vote Republican after the voter tearfully explained that if he voted Democratic his resulting unemployment would leave his family destitute. "Innumerable Democratic tenant farmers were dismissed with their families because they voted against the government," the observer wrote.<sup>7</sup>

For the October 1928 Municipal Council elections, the hope of the BOC in São Paulo City was Everardo Dias, described by *O Internacional* as "the martyr of the Paulista proletariat"—a member of the São Paulo Union of Graphic Workers who had spent the last two years of the Bernardes regime in "the most pestilent of bastilles."<sup>8</sup> Neither he nor João Freire de Oliveira (in Santos) had much chance. Nor, for that matter, did the Partido Democrático, which announced, after the election, that on account of "frauds and violences all over the state" it had ordered an abstention from voting in some areas. José Adriano Marrey Júnior, candidate of the PD—and of Maurício de Lacerda—for mayor of São Paulo, was beaten by José Pires do Rio (Epitácio Pessoa's transport minister)

<sup>5</sup> *O Internacional* 7, no. 131 (April 1, 1928).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Folha da Manhã*, São Paulo, March 3, 1928.

<sup>8</sup> *O Internacional* 8, nos. 142, 143 (September 15, October 1, 1928).

by about 16,140 votes to 8,360. Everardo Dias was thousands short in his race, for he received only 44 votes.<sup>9</sup> Plínio Melo declared that the official figure awarded Everardo Dias should not be taken seriously.<sup>10</sup>

Communists were happier with the outcome in Santos. There, where apparently 5,620 out of 8,859 eligible electors went to the polls, João Freire de Oliveira was given 270 votes.<sup>11</sup> Although this was not enough to win one of the twelve seats, nine of which went to Republicans and three to Democrats, it was pronounced "significant" by the Communists. Praising the 270 workers who had "rejected bribes and coercion," the PCB declared that the Coligação Operária would "certainly win in the next class battles."<sup>12</sup>

In the federal Congress, José Adriano Marrey Júnior, complaining of fraud, called for federal intervention in São Paulo. After he asserted that only "professional politicians" would oppose his suggestion, Alexandre Marcondes Filho, of the Partido Republicano Paulista (PRP), stated that Marrey Júnior's two Democratic colleagues from São Paulo did not seem to care for intervention. Observing wittily that these two could by no means be called "professional politicians," Congressman Marcondes Filho read statements from foes of the PRP to show that the "decline" of the PD and its recent defeat in São Paulo had been due to its own political errors.<sup>13</sup>

Marcondes Filho said that the PD's decision not to run a presidential candidate in 1930 had disgusted many of its former followers and violated its own program of continual struggle to regenerate Brazilian customs. He declared that the policy of electoral abstention, ordered by Morais Barros and Francisco Morato (Marrey Júnior's colleagues) on the grounds of "fraud," had really been applied to hide defeats. He quoted São Paulo Democrats who had expressed their dislike of the PD leadership to an *O Combate* reporter, who, at Marrey Júnior's request, had "observed" the São Paulo elections. From Assis Chateaubriand's opposition newspapers, Marcondes read articles telling of "the bad impression caused by the weakness of the parliamentary action of" the PD.

After Marrey Júnior, during a verbal exchange, admitted that the PD

<sup>9</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 31, 1928.

<sup>10</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 29 (November 10, 1928).

<sup>11</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 31, 1928. In Santos Luís Carlos Prestes was shown as receiving 612 votes for state senator, compared with the victor's 3,239.

<sup>12</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, November 10, 1928.

<sup>13</sup> "O Brilhante Discurso do Deputado Marcondes Filho," *Correio da Manhã*, November 16, 1928.

had made some mistakes, Marcondes described the PD as "completely disorganized" and quoted scathing remarks by the secretary of a PD commission. That man, Marrey Júnior explained, had just left the party because it would not nominate him to run in the elections. Such a resignation, said a Republican, "does not say much for the people of the party."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

## 6. The Rebirth of *A Classe Operaria*

In April 1928, Communists told the directors of the two Rio civil construction workers' unions (the old União dos Operários em Construção Civil and the new União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil) that, with the approach of May 1, "the day of fraternization and world solidarity of the workers," they should bring an end, once and for all, to differences that served only the capitalists. "Almost a year of excessive ideological divisionism" was declared to have been disastrous. "While we lose precious time and waste energy in an inglorious struggle, the enemies of our class laugh at us."<sup>1</sup>

Even though Communists called for the freedom of Domingos Passos,<sup>2</sup> the carpenter whom they had described as a self-worshipping, hamming slanderer a year earlier, Passos's followers in Rio preferred not to join with Communists at Praça Mauá on May 1, 1928. The anarcho-sindicalist Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro, consisting mainly of the União dos Operários em Construção Civil, held its commemoration at Praça 11 de Junho.<sup>3</sup>

"Solidarity of the workers" was less evident than ever in the Federal District on May 1, 1928, because a third commemoration, competing with the usual two, was organized by the local section of the Partido Democrático (PD). At 2:00 P.M. a special train, filled with PD officials and students, pulled out of the Central do Brasil's Pedro II Station for the

<sup>1</sup> Pedro Lino, "Aos Operarios em Construção Civil," *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 1 (May 1, 1928).

<sup>2</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 1 (May 1, 1928); *O Trabalhador Graphico* 7, no. 94 (São Paulo, April 1, 1928).

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 2, 1928.

Bangu suburb, the textile center, where workers conducted the orators and their retinue to a movie theater. Professor Ferdinando Labouriau Filho, who hoped his imprisonment during the Bernardes state of siege would bring him votes for a Municipal Council seat in October 1928, explained to the Bangu workers that the PD's program included "direct and effective representation of capital and labor" in government.<sup>4</sup> Like the other PD orators, Labouriau found a warm response when he called for amnesty for all who had rebelled earlier in the decade.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile the Federação Sindical Regional presided over the Praça Mauá commemoration. The impressive list of sixteen cosponsors included the year-old national Federação dos Trabalhadores Gráficos do Brasil and the more mature União dos Operários Metalúrgicos do Rio de Janeiro, which, under Communist pressure, had dropped Amaro de Araújo from its presidency.<sup>6</sup>

Disappointment in the turn-out was a theme of the speech by the representative of the Brazilian Association of Sailors and Rowers. He regretted that Praça Mauá was "not full of conscientious workers, united with their companions, as in 1919," and declared himself especially grieved to know that many were in saloons. Brandão, representing the BOC, was enthusiastically applauded. He said that the Democratic parties, state and national, were created in order to maintain the sort of politics that "lives for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of the workers."<sup>7</sup>

The fifteen orators at Praça Mauá represented the Federação Sindical Regional, the União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil, eight unions in the Federal District, metallurgical and civil construction workers in Niterói, Juventude Comunista, the BOC, and *A Classe Operaria*.<sup>8</sup>

*A Classe Operaria's* second phase as a weekly began that day. The PCB organ reminded its readers that it had been the most popular labor newspaper in Brazil. In a reference to the estimated PCB membership, it said it was operating with five editors in its office and "five hundred editors scattered amidst the oppressed masses."<sup>9</sup> Although the masthead showed

<sup>4</sup> "Uma Tarde de Vibração na Estação de Bangú," *Correio da Manhã*, May 2, 1928.

<sup>5</sup> "Sessão Cívica em Bangú," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 2, 1928.

<sup>6</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, October 21, 1970.

<sup>7</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 2, 1928.

<sup>8</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 1 (May 1, 1928).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

marble worker Minervino de Oliveira as director, the real editorial directors were Brandão and Astrogildo.<sup>10</sup>

With the reappearance of *A Classe Operaria*, the PCB decided to discontinue publication of *O Jovem Proletario*, the Rio journal of JC that had started in mimeographed form in 1927 and had been issued regularly in printed form (with a circulation of about one thousand) in the first four months of 1928.<sup>11</sup>

*A Classe Operaria* continued to appear as a weekly until late 1929, when the repression of the Washington Luís regime became especially pronounced. Reportedly, fifteen thousand copies of each number were usually printed during this second phase.<sup>12</sup> Starting on October 6, 1928, it was published at the press of Assis Chateaubriand's *O Jornal*, making a larger page size possible.

*A Classe Operaria* campaigned for a Latin American syndical secretariat, an idea set in motion in Moscow when representatives of Latin American labor organizations, observing the tenth anniversary of the Russian revolution, had been called together by the Red International of Labor Unions to examine problems in Latin America. On that occasion, Lenin Institute student Heitor Ferreira Lima, representing "the Minority of the Revolutionary Trade Unions of Brazil,"<sup>13</sup> had joined several Argentines and men from Uruguay, Cuba, Chile, Mexico, and Ecuador in signing a resolution to do their best to bring about a conference in Montevideo late in 1928, "of class-conscious unions of all of Latin America," for the purpose of founding a Latin American syndical secretariat.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Rui Facó, *A Classe Operária: 20 Anos de Luta*, p. 10 n.

<sup>11</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 132.

<sup>12</sup> Facó (*A Classe Operária*, p. 10) puts the figure at 20,000. Americo Ledo (Astrogildo Pereira), in *Brazilia*, p. 17, says 15,000. See also Americo Ledo (Astrogildo Pereira) in *International Press Correspondence*, September 17, 1929.

<sup>13</sup> "Uma Grandiosa Iniciativa," *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 1 (May 1, 1928).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* See also Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America*, p. 49.

## 7. Brazilians at the Sixth World Congress

Soon after the revival of *A Classe Operaria*, Brazilian Communist leaders, responding to invitations from Moscow, picked delegates to the

Sixth World Congress of the Comintern, and to the Fifth Congress of International Communist Youth (KIM) and Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern) Congress, which were to follow. Paulo de Lacerda was chosen to lead the three-man Brazilian delegation to the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern; accompanying him would be Leôncio Basbaum, delegate to the KIM congress, and José Lago Molares (a Spanish-born waiter), delegate to the Profintern Congress.<sup>1</sup> A campaign to raise travel funds became necessary because the Comintern offered to pay the expenses incurred by the delegates, including return passages, only after they had reached Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

In June 1928, leaving Molares to come later, Paulo de Lacerda and Basbaum sailed third class on a German ship to Hamburg. After Comintern agents in Berlin supplied passports to Russia, the two Brazilians joined many delegates from other countries on a boat trip (characterized by singing and drinking) to Leningrad. Although Basbaum was disappointed by the signs of poverty in Leningrad and by the lack of modern buildings in Moscow (where he shared a room in an old luxury hotel with three other delegates), he reflected that the Soviet Union had not yet had the opportunity to accomplish all it had wished.

The Sixth World Congress of the Comintern (July 17-September 1, 1928), where much speechmaking warned of rightist dangers, reflected the turn to sectarianism being taken by the Moscow leadership. It appeared that Stalin, having gotten the better of Trotsky, was appropriating ideas that Trotskyite leftists had advanced when criticizing past Stalinist policies.

The three Brazilian delegates, like all delegates from countries where Communist parties were illegal, used pseudonyms.<sup>3</sup> They studied the theses of the congress, hoping for enlightenment about matters debated during the Party schism in Brazil: the "character of the Brazilian revolution," the attitude of the proletariat toward "bourgeois-democratic revolutionaries" in Brazil, and the question of whether soviets and a Dictatorship of the Proletariat "would solve Brazil's problems."<sup>4</sup> In their discussions, Paulo de Lacerda, Basbaum, and Molares were often joined by

<sup>1</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Basbaum persuaded his father (in Recife) to send him five hundred mil-réis so that he could "finish his studies."

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 69. As Basbaum called himself "Pereira" (a character in one of his unpublished novels), Tristão de Ataíde attributed a speech by Basbaum in Moscow to Astrogildo Pereira.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

Heitor Ferreira Lima, whom they met wearing boots, blouse, and an upswept-visor cap, in the manner of Bukharin, head of the Comintern and momentarily the idol of Russian youth.<sup>5</sup> Ferreira Lima, although not a delegate, attended some Sixth World Congress sessions as well as the meetings at which Comintern leaders Palmiro Togliatti (speaking in Italian) and Jules Humbert-Droz (speaking in French) tried to explain the theses to the South American delegates.<sup>6</sup>

At an early session of the congress, Paulo de Lacerda was given the honor of delivering the "speech of greeting" in the name of the delegates from South America.<sup>7</sup> At a later session he used the words "not quite true" when referring to Bukharin's statement that the Communist movement "has now gripped Latin American countries for the first time." Paulo told the congress that what was true was that "the Communist International has for the first time taken an interest in the Communist movement in Latin America," where, he added, a "tremendous agrarian revolution" was about to take place.<sup>8</sup>

The Brazilian delegation approved all the theses, among them one condemning Trotsky and another declaring that in Germany the greatest danger to Communism lay in Social Democracy.<sup>9</sup> Astrogildo Pereira was elected to the fifty-eight-man Executive Committee of the Communist International along with other world Communist leaders such as Stalin, Bukharin, Molotov, and Dmitri Manuilsky.<sup>10</sup>

At the two-week Fifth Congress of International Communist Youth (KIM), Basbaum objected that all international Communist propaganda sent to Brazilian youths was written in Spanish. Basbaum, after being asked at the KIM congress what language was spoken in Brazil, returned to Rio with the feeling that the European Marxists knew nothing about Latin America. "They felt that everything was semicolonial, and they transported Asiatic problems to Latin America as though everything were the same."<sup>11</sup> He also felt that little progress had been made by the Brazilian delegates in Moscow to gain understanding of "the principal problem that we faced in Brazil: the character of the Brazilian revolution."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, July 25, 1928.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, August 8, 1928.

<sup>9</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 72.

<sup>10</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, November 21, 1928.

<sup>11</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.



## 8. Brandão and Minervino, BOC Candidates

During the last half of 1928 the most exciting campaign of *A Classe Operaria* supported the two BOC candidates for seats in the Rio Municipal Council, Otávio Brandão and marble worker Minervino de Oliveira. On October 28, 1928, twelve councilmen (*intendentes*) were to be chosen from each of the city's two districts by voters casting eight votes apiece (as had been the case two years earlier).

Minervino, picked by Brandão to run after João da Costa Pimenta declined,<sup>1</sup> had the advantage of seeking election in the Second, or "downtown," District, whereas Brandão was candidate in the First District, whose fewer workers were largely concentrated in Gávea. BOC President Azevedo Lima, working to garner votes for the two Communists,<sup>2</sup> had much strength in the Second District.

The two Communists campaigned together, calling at workers' homes, explaining that they represented the BOC, and hoping for a friendly sign, such as an invitation to stay for a *cafezinho*. Sometimes the visits resulted in what might be called small rallies, with approximately thirty people present.<sup>3</sup>

Larger rallies—fifty-nine of them according to Brandão—often resulted from campaigning at factory gates, where the candidates would stand on boxes and expound the program of the BOC—the struggle against imperialism and misery. Trouble could be expected if they held such a meeting at the gate of the Naval Arsenal, where workers were constructing a dike, for, in the opinion of Fourth Delegado Pedro de Oliveira Sobrinho, the area was "forbidden territory" for such affairs.

Minervino, whose bravery impressed Brandão, agreed that they should try campaigning at the arsenal gate. When they did so on September 27, they attracted thousands.<sup>4</sup> Following a brief introduction by Brandão, Minervino was starting his speech when a Justice Ministry car, at the service of the Fourth Delegacia, drove up with police agents. Carrying out orders to end the meeting and arrest the BOC candidates, the agents

<sup>1</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 8, 1967.

<sup>3</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 5, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 5, 1968; August 30, 1970.



BOC political poster, 1928: All the workers' votes for the proletarian candidates.

fired on the crowd. A young Navy Arsenal worker, Raimundo de Sousa Morais, who was standing close to Brandão and Minervino, was killed by a bullet wound in the head.<sup>5</sup> In the Chamber of Deputies on the next day Henrique Dodsworth, Azevedo Lima, Bergamíni, Marrey Júnior, Morais Barros, and Sales Filho asked the Chamber of Deputies for a vote expressing grief for the death of Raimundo de Morais, but the motion was overwhelmingly defeated.<sup>6</sup>

The two BOC candidates were soon released and continued their campaigning. Always aware that policemen might intervene again, they did not dally at crowded public places. When distributing manifestoes at the Central and Leopoldina Railway stations, they worked quickly and then disappeared.

At night, when the streets were deserted, the poster squad went to work with Brandão clutching a bucket of paste, Paulo de Lacerda hugging a bundle of posters, and Leôncio Basbaum toting a small ladder.<sup>7</sup> "Concentrate all eight votes on the only proletarian candidates," the colorful posters read.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, October 20, 1971. This account varies slightly from that in Azevedo Lima's speech, published in Congresso Nacional, *Annaes da Camara dos Deputados*, XII, session of September 28, 1928.

<sup>6</sup> Congresso Nacional, *Annaes da Camara*, session of September 28, 1928. The motion was favored by only three votes, fewer than the number originally sponsoring it.

<sup>7</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 76.

<sup>8</sup> [Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," *O Observador* 3, no. 36 (January 1939).

## 9. The Case of Minervino

As the results of the Rio municipal elections became known, the opposition press hailed the victories of Maurício de Lacerda, J. J. Seabra, and the PD candidates: Professors Ferdinando Labouriau Filho and Raul Leitão da Cunha.<sup>1</sup> It could also assure its readers that "a Communist,

<sup>1</sup> Professor Raul Leitão da Cunha had given medical student Leôncio Basbaum a difficult time in his pathological anatomy course (Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 52). In 1934 Leitão da Cunha became *reitor*

Otávio Brandão," in ninth place in the First District, would not go along with the administration.<sup>2</sup>

Seabra, the veteran politician from Bahia, was in first place in the First District, with over fourteen thousand votes. He was followed by oppositionists Leitão da Cunha and Jerônimo Penido. Brandão received over seven thousand votes from over nine hundred voters. Luís de Oliveira, the Yellow stevedore leader, ended up in twenty-fourth place and thus was not reelected.<sup>3</sup>

In the Second District Maurício de Lacerda and Labouriau gained, respectively, second and eighth places.<sup>4</sup> For a while Minervino de Oliveira was shown in thirteenth place.<sup>5</sup> As more returns were reported, it seemed that he would finish in twelfth place (just good enough for victory), but only a few votes ahead of an administration supporter, Sirínio Carreiro de Oliveira.

*A Classe Operaria* declared: "The first battle is over. In spite of insults, provocations, and successive imprisonments—in spite of the shooting of Raimundo de Moraes—the BOC triumphed."<sup>6</sup> New battles lay ahead: the revision of the election results by the Junta Apuradora (the Checking Tribunal, made up of three judges), and then the final decisions by the Municipal Council, which had the right to annul individual elections "for any reason whatsoever."<sup>7</sup>

*A Classe Operaria*, aware that Fourth Delegado Pedro de Oliveira Sobrinho had asserted that the elections of the Communists should not be recognized, campaigned against "the decapitation of the labor councilmen." The BOC issued its "word of order": if the elections of its candidates were not recognized, strikes were to close down all of Rio. To prepare for the strikes, Brandão, Minervino, and other BOC agitators returned to the factory gates.<sup>8</sup>

The make-up of the Municipal Council was apparently so closely divided between "leftists" and administration supporters that the outcome

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(presiding officer) of the University of Rio de Janeiro (now called the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro). He held this post until 1946. In 1945 he was the minister of education and health in the cabinet of President José Linhares.

<sup>2</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 1, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 13, 1928.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, November 16, 1928.

<sup>5</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 30 (November 17, 1928).

<sup>6</sup> "Contra a Degolla dos Intendentes Operarios!" in *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Article 9 of Federal Decree 12,395, of February 14, 1917.

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 5, 1968.

of the contest between Minervino de Oliveira and Carreiro de Oliveira was of general interest. The courtroom of the Junta Apuradora, where Edgard de Castro Rabelo argued the case of the BOC, was visited by important political figures: Azevedo Lima, Maurício de Lacerda, and Nogueira Penido for one side; Cesário de Melo, Henrique Dodsworth, and Machado Coelho for the other.<sup>9</sup> Maurício de Lacerda told anecdotes and added to his reputation for being a good-humored raconteur. Labouriau followed the discussions with the help of city maps.<sup>10</sup>

The returns from the Third Section of the Engenho Novo area were thrown out as fraudulent, costing Minervino seventy-four votes and Carreiro de Oliveira only eight.

Castro Rabelo and the BOC declared that all sorts of "irregularities" had favored Carreiro de Oliveira in the Espírito Santo area.<sup>11</sup> In its Tenth Section, they said, administration supporters had kept the official voting place closed and operated a clandestine voting place unknown to Minervino's supporters. The BOC insisted that the returns from Espírito Santo's Eighth Section were also fraudulent. But after political boss Cesário de Melo vouched that nothing improper had occurred there, the Junta Apuradora decided to reinstate the Eighth Section votes. Maurício de Lacerda sarcastically asked why the judges did not reinstate all votes fraudulently gained by Carreiro de Oliveira, since the object apparently was "to tear up the diploma of the labor councilman."<sup>12</sup>

During the checking of votes, the two factions prepared rival slates of officers of the new Municipal Council and chose a provisional presiding officer on the basis of age. After no one would admit to being older than Seabra, Maurício de Lacerda assured his conservative colleagues that Seabra's "liberalism was not so great that it would annihilate the council."<sup>13</sup>

As *relator do pleito*, Ferdinando Labouriau had the task of drawing up a report about the Minervino-Carreiro de Oliveira contest. With neither contestant allowed to vote, it appeared that Labouriau's report, expected to be favorable to Minervino, would be defeated by twelve votes to eleven.<sup>14</sup>

An editorial in *Correio da Manhã* declared that the BOC's opponents

<sup>9</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 24, 1928.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, November 17, 1928.

<sup>11</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, November 10, 1928.

<sup>12</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, interview in *Correio da Manhã*, November 21, 1928.

<sup>13</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 24, 1928.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, December 1, 1928.

were raising the Communist issue and calling for resistance to the "Red wave" from Russia. But, it added, Russian Communism and Italian fascism, while antagonistic, were nevertheless "representative institutions" — "the fruits of popular impositions, genuinely democratic." "Worse, much worse," the editorial said, was Brazilian "oligarchic individualism. . . . Was Washington Luís chosen by the nation? Was the Congress, which blindly backs him?"<sup>15</sup> The editorial's signer, M. Paulo Filho, felt that the seating of the Communist councilmen would be a democratic step.<sup>16</sup>

Prado Júnior, mayor of the Federal District, said that he had no objection to seating the Communists. He was sure that Minervino and Brandão, unlike other councilmen, would never come to seek favors from him.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> M. Paulo Filho, "O Outro Comunismo," *Correio da Manhã*, November 30, 1928.

<sup>16</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

## 10. Resolving the Case of Minervino

Early in December 1928, a hydroplane, the *Santos Dumont*, set forth with a commission of dignitaries to take greetings to the famed Brazilian pioneer of aviation, Alberto Santos Dumont, who was arriving in Rio by steamer. The hydroplane fell into the bay, killing all fourteen who were aboard. Among them were Ferdinando Labouriau Filho and his wife.<sup>1</sup>

Tens of thousands of people participated in Labouriau's funeral procession. Some carried crepe-covered flags, and others carried wreaths (one of which bore a card from Luís Carlos Prestes). The hearse came to a stop in front of the Câmara dos Intendentes (Chamber of Municipal Councilmen) and the mourners paused to hear Maurício de Lacerda speak. Viewing the enormous throng, Maurício said, reminded him of Nilo Peçanha's funeral in 1924. He recalled the time he had embraced Labouriau, after the professor's "hard and successful" fight for a Municipal Council seat, and he repeated what he had told Labouriau: "It is not your victory, nor that of the Democratic party. It is the victory of the nation!"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, December 4, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, December 8, 1928.

Municipal Councilman Nelson Cardoso, "leader of the friends of Cesário de Melo," replaced Labouriau as *relator do pleito*. He asked Castro Rabelo whether, in view of the vacancy caused by Labouriau's death, it might be legal to declare his election null and through this "friendly understanding" seat both Carreiro de Oliveira and Minervino, thus avoiding a new election to fill Labouriau's place. Castro Rabelo replied that, while he recognized that such a solution might promote social peace, he felt that it would be neither legal nor fair to the electorate. He suggested that Nelson Cardoso inquire of Maurício de Lacerda.<sup>3</sup>

Maurício de Lacerda and Azevedo Lima agreed with Castro Rabelo. Like the Partido Democrático and the opposition press, they insisted that the election of Labouriau be recognized. But when Nelson Cardoso drew up his *relator's* report, he quoted legal opinions of such noteworthy judges as Sebastião de Lacerda and Otávio Kelly to show that Labouriau had become "ineligible." Cardoso's report put Carreiro de Oliveira a place ahead of Minervino and suggested that they both be given seats. While the administration forces in the Municipal Council, strengthened by Labouriau's death, prepared to vote favorably on the report, the BOC and other oppositionists attacked it.

Maurício de Lacerda requested five days in which to draw up his opposition opinion. When the Municipal Council's majority pointed out that the Câmara regulations only allowed him three days, he made a speech that prompted *O Paiz* to criticize him for its "inelegant" references to "patriotic statesmen." The progovernment newspaper accused him of "courting popularity" among curiosity-seekers in the galleries.<sup>4</sup>

The Partido Democrático, incensed by the "decapitation of Labouriau," asked the people to gather in front of the Câmara dos Intendentes at 5:00 P.M. on December 20 to protest Nelson Cardoso's "monstrous report." The PD warned that the "pillaging" Municipal Council planned to "tear up the diploma that the electorate had bestowed on Ferdinando Labouriau, and seat someone who had not earned this honor from the electorate."<sup>5</sup>

When the crowd assembled to hear Maurício and other speakers, Fourth Delegado Pedro de Oliveira Sobrinho, accompanied by civil guards and police agents, ordered the meeting place moved from the steps of the Câmara dos Intendentes to the steps of the Municipal The-

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, December 9, 1928.

<sup>4</sup> *O Paiz*, December 17, 1928.

<sup>5</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, December 21, 1928.

ater. Lacerda led the crowd to the assigned spot and opened the speech-making. He was followed by Brandão, who spoke calmly but at length of the program of the BOC and declared that the BOC would not be a part of "the shady deal." Federal Congressmen Bergamini and Moraes Barros also spoke.<sup>6</sup>

On the evening of December 21, while President-elect Herbert Hoover was being greeted in Rio, the Partido Democrático filled the galleries of the Câmara dos Intendentes with its supporters. Thus it was amidst shouts about the need to honor the memory of Labouriau that the councilmen approved, twelve votes to ten, the Nelson Cardoso report.<sup>7</sup> A rule allowed Minervino to vote on the report provided his doing so did not affect the outcome; it was therefore possible for both Communists to vote against the arrangement that assured the Communists of two council seats.

When it was Brandão's turn to make the customary pledge to uphold the laws, he said: "I so promise, but subordinating them to the interest of the working class." Councilman Floriano de Góis, brother of Police Chief Coriolano de Góis Filho, remarked: "That isn't proper, Sr. Brandão." Minervino followed Brandão's example. When Maurício de Lacerda made the pledge he added the words "with restrictions."<sup>8</sup>

After it was over, *A Classe Operaria* exclaimed: "Victory! Victory! For the first time in the history of Brazil, after 428 years of struggles, the workers forced an opening in the formidable ramparts of the legislature and penetrated the enemy city."<sup>9</sup>

Brandão had prepared a speech on Herbert Hoover to deliver in the Municipal Council before Hoover left Rio on December 24. When the presiding officer refused to let him take the floor, Brandão quoted the Câmara's rules of procedure. However, the presiding officer declared the session closed.<sup>10</sup>

Brandão had to be content with the publication of his attack on Hoover in *A Classe Operaria* and *A Esquerda*: "Hoover, that is, the Republican party, represents the ever-increasing oppression of the people of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, and Santo Domingo. Hoover, that is, North American imperialism, is the enslavement of Liberia by Firestone. Hoover helped the imperialists crush China in 1900. And he participated

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, December 21, 1928.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, December 22, 1928.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 36 (December 29, 1928).

<sup>10</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 5, 1968.



in the imperialist war of 1914 to 1918. He represents the twilight of London finance and the zenith of Wall Street. . . . Luís Carlos Prestes and his companions must study seriously imperialism in general and Anglo-American imperialism in particular."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 36 (December 29, 1928).

## 11. "The Return of the Reprobate"

A few days after Herbert Hoover left Rio, Artur Bernardes arrived from Europe. *Correio da Manhã*, covering the story under the headline "The Return of the Reprobate," reported that the people, prevented by the police from approaching the docks, had nevertheless found several opportunities to jeer in the streets at the "coward from Viçosa."<sup>1</sup> The newspaper printed an enormous old picture of troops protecting the "reprobate."

A document in *Jornal do Commercio*, issued in the name of "the labor associations," revealed a different view. It expressed gratitude to "the great statesman, Artur da Silva Bernardes," for having done so much for the workers "during his useful and patriotic" term as president. It was signed by the Stevedores' Union, the Stokers' Union, the Association of Workers in Waterfront Warehouses and Coffee, and the Association of Coachmen and Chauffeurs.

Minervino de Oliveira, secretary-general of the FSRR (Federação Sindical Regional do Rio), issued a protest to the document of the "yellows."<sup>2</sup> The protest was also signed by the heads of two organizations

<sup>1</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, December 28, 29, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> The protest document claimed that the FSRR spoke for the following: the União dos Operários em Fábricas de Tecidos (textiles), the União dos Operários Metalúrgicos do Brasil, the União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos, the União dos Operários da Indústria de Bebidas (beverages), the Associação dos Trabalhadores da Indústria Mobiliária (furniture), the Centro dos Operários Marmoristas (marble workers), the Centro União dos Confeiteiros (confectioners), the União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil, the Centro de Auxiliar dos Operários em Calçados (shoes), the Centro dos Operários em Caldeiras de Ferro (boiler-makers), the União Geral dos Trabalhadores em Transportes Marítimos e Portuários do Brasil, the Liga Operária da Construção Civil de Niterói, and the

that did not belong to the FSRR: Mário Grazíni of the Federação dos Trabalhadores Gráficos do Brasil, and Américo Ferreira of the Centro Cosmopolita. It declared that the four signers of the pro-Bernardes manifesto had no authority to speak in the name of Rio's workers. "Only his lackeys have reasons to rejoice at the return of the hangman. . . . Bernardes did do much for the workers but it was all very bad." The protest said that he had sent "hundreds" of workers to die in Clevelândia and that his government had been "four years of state of siege, deportations, and the persecution of conscientious workers."<sup>3</sup>

Continuing its coverage of Bernardes, Bittencourt's newspaper wrote on January 1, 1929, that "the reprobate took advantage of the Sunday calm to visit the Senate."<sup>4</sup> Later in the month it commented on a letter that "the reprobate, while still in Europe, wrote to Washington Luís, giving his favorable opinion of an amnesty, on the grounds that the nation had been entirely pacified." *Correio da Manhã* declared that such an amnesty was "wanted by no one."<sup>5</sup>

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Aliança dos Operários da Indústria Metalúrgica do Estado do Rio (*Correio da Manhã*, December 27, 1928).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, December 27, 1928.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1, 1929.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, January 13, 1929.

## 12. The Third National Congress of the PCB

The Third National Congress of the PCB, meeting in a country house in Niterói from December 29, 1928, through January 4, 1929, was attended by twenty-five voting members: ten belonged to the outgoing CEC, thirteen were delegates of six regional organizations, and two represented JC.<sup>1</sup>

The congress considered a memorandum received from a majority of

<sup>1</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 114. The regions having representation were the Federal District, Rio State, São Paulo State, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Sul, and Espírito Santo. With three nonvoting delegates and three observers, the total attendance was thirty-one: sixteen workers, six "employees," six intellectuals, and three "various."

those who had left the Party as members of the opposition of 1928. The memorandum's signers reaffirmed the accusations made earlier against the directorship but asked for readmittance to the Party. The congress decided that the incoming Party directorship should deal with the petitioners on an individual basis, asking each to (1) agree that the dissident group be dissolved, (2) recognize that he had participated in "an act of criminal desertion," and (3) accept the "absolute discipline" of the Party.<sup>2</sup> Most of the dissidents accepted the terms.<sup>3</sup>

Third National Congress documents show the influence of the theories adopted at the Second National Congress. The military revolts of 1924-1926 were attributed to the antagonism between British imperialism (associated with the Brazilian agrarian and conservative bourgeoisie) and United States imperialism (linked to the "supposedly liberal" Brazilian industrial bourgeoisie).<sup>4</sup>

Attention was to be given to the "third uprising," which the PCB said would be caused by the simultaneous occurrences of a political crisis (due to the presidential election of 1930) and the economic and financial crises (due to "catastrophe in the coffee policy").<sup>5</sup> As this revolt was expected to be a "fuller and more radical" continuation<sup>6</sup> of the "democratic, agrarian, anti-imperialist revolution started in 1922-1924,"<sup>7</sup> the PCB was called on "to conquer, by successive steps, not only the leadership of the proletarian faction, but also the hegemony of all" of the forthcoming revolutionary movement.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> Lívio Xavier, interview, November 9, 1967. Commenting on the 1928 schism, Joaquim Barbosa (interview, November 19, 1970) has stated that it was not very important and that the opposition lacked good leadership. The discontented could not agree on a program.

<sup>4</sup> Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 118. It is interesting to note that the Comintern was describing the Escobar rebellion of 1929 in Mexico as "a struggle between American and British capital, with the American supporting the government and the British backing the rebels. The Communists should not have had any part in such a struggle, declared the Comintern" (quotation from Robert Alexander, *Communism in Latin America*, p. 327).

<sup>5</sup> Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 116.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> "Theses e Resoluções do III Congresso do PCB," quoted in *A Luta de Classe*, May 1, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 119. In this book (published in 1962) Astrogildo Pereira says that the theses of the Third Congress reveal that the PCB directorship "misconstrued the character of the Brazilian revolution"; he adds that the nature of the 1930 movement shows the theses to have been in error (see

Hoping to keep the PCB a revolutionary party, the Third National Congress warned that it must not lose its character by limiting its political work to that espoused by the BOC. The congress recommended that the PCB spread, in its own name, propaganda that was not confined to "legal possibilities."<sup>9</sup>

PCB leaders could also see that the Party lacked full control over the BOC. Azevedo Lima, already reprimanded in *A Classe Operaria* in November 1928 for not having expressed "a single word of comfort" for the Rio graphic workers, whose union continued closed,<sup>10</sup> received from the Party congress a "severe admonition" for his "opportunistic deviations."<sup>11</sup>

Electoral maneuvers of the BOC of São Paulo, which had withdrawn its candidate in favor of the PD in February, were condemned.<sup>12</sup> The Party congress, appreciating that ever since the PCB had been formed its position in São Paulo had been "very precarious," passed a resolution calling on the incoming directors to implement a new word of order, "For the Conquest of São Paulo."<sup>13</sup>

During a discussion about the department of the BOC city councilmen in Rio, Leôncio Basbaum unleashed a violent attack. Although the BOC councilmen had been in office hardly a week before the Third National Congress met, Basbaum accused them of engaging in "a policy of conciliation and cooperation with the bourgeoisie." He said they were "like two bourgeois politicians dealing with small problems, such as the paving of streets," and were disregarding "the great political problems of the nation." Basbaum said that, after entering the council, they had "forgotten the masses and neglected to return to the factory gates to render accounts to the masses."<sup>14</sup>

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pp. 115-116). Fernando de Lacerda (in *Imprensa Popular*, March 1, 1957) writes that the PCB directors in 1928 had high hopes for what they believed would be the "democratic-bourgeois" first stage of the "Revolution" in Brazil.

<sup>9</sup> Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 125.

<sup>10</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 29 (November 10, 1928).

<sup>11</sup> Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 126.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 76. Basbaum writes that his attack on Brandão was the reason why Brandão was not reelected to the PCB's Politburo, the powerful body that usually consisted of approximately five Central Committee members. Brandão writes (letter, October 20, 1971) that he was not a member of the Politburo in 1929 because in that year he

The growth of JC and the role of workers in it made good reading for the Party congress.<sup>15</sup> However, the congress was dissatisfied with the size of the PCB. It found that the Party had not learned how to recruit members, nor, as 50 percent of the new members dropped out, how to retain them. It complained that many who remained in the PCB did not carry out Party jobs.

The Party leaders were also depressed to find only "approximately 100,000" labor union members in a nonagricultural work force of 1,500,000.<sup>16</sup> To make matters worse, they found that almost all the unions were badly organized and that the great majority of the workers showed no interest in labor federations or in the PCB. The Party congress reported the existence of only one national industrial federation (that of the graphic workers) and only two regional federations (the FSRR and the União Geral dos Trabalhadores de Pernambuco).

According to revised Party statutes, the CEC became the CC (Central Committee). One of the new members of the Party directorship was graphic worker Mário Graziñi, who was intelligent although poorly educated.<sup>17</sup> Others were José Casini, metallurgical worker, and José Caetano Machado, baker. Still another was Fernando de Lacerda. Fernando, younger than Maurício and older than Paulo, was a former doctor of the Hospital de Pronto Socorro (First Aid Hospital) in Rio. He had been a conservative Catholic, interested in grammar, the classics, and scholarly Jesuit writings, before his wife, Ericina Borges (of a family of wealthy Pará rubber merchants), and his brother Paulo had led him to Communism. Now he was prepared to devote himself as zealously to Communism as he had to Catholicism.<sup>18</sup>

Leôncio Basbaum was also elected to the CC of the PCB. Having be-

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was completely "absorbed by work in the Municipal Council and by the extra-parliamentary struggle."

<sup>15</sup> The Third Congress reported that the Federal District had about 25 JC cells (5 of them at plants), with 120 members (Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 132). Leoncio Basbaum (*História Sincera da República*, II, 315) reports that late in 1928 JC had approximately 250 members, about half of them in the Federal District, and about 90 percent of them workers. He estimates that the PCB membership was, at that time, a little over 1,000, of whom 80 percent were workers. Basbaum's estimate of the PCB membership appears high; Astrogildo Pereira told Moscow that the Party had 800 members at the end of 1928 (see Astrogildo Pereira [pseudonym Americo Ledo], *Brazilia*, pp. 17-18).

<sup>16</sup> Pereira, *Formação do PCB*, p. 121.

<sup>17</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 78.

<sup>18</sup> Carlos Lacerda, interviews, September 17, 1968; July 3, 1971.

come twenty-one in November, he switched from the JC representative position in the Party directorship to the representation of the Party directorship in the CC of JC. As such he attended the optimistic First National Congress of Juventude Comunista do Brasil, held in January 1929, after the conclusion of the PCB's Third National Congress. Among those elected to JC's new CC were Manuel Karacik and Artur Basbaum.

At about this time Astrogildo Pereira wrote to advise Cristiano Cordeiro that he had been chosen to take a short course (about one year) at the Lenin Institute in Moscow. Cordeiro, who had been dismissed from his job of government clerk because he had participated in planning the Cleto Campelo uprising, was teaching in the interior of Pernambuco. Although Astrogildo urged him to come quickly to Rio, he arrived there too late to make the steamer on which passage had been secured. He found that Astrogildo had gone to Russia in his place.<sup>19</sup>

Astrogildo remained abroad from February 1929 until January 1930. Modest Cristiano Cordeiro, asked by PCB leaders to serve as acting secretary-general during Astrogildo's absence, held the post for about two months.<sup>20</sup> Then, convinced that he was not "the right man in the right place,"<sup>21</sup> he returned to Pernambuco and his family and was succeeded by Paulo de Lacerda. Paulo's hesitancy to make decisions or act resulted in a directorship troika, which consisted generally of Fernando de Lacerda, Mário Grazini, and Leôncio Basbaum.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, letter, September 4, 1971.

<sup>20</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, letter, September 4, 1971.

<sup>22</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 83.

### 13. The Communist Municipal Councilmen in 1929

Brandão and Minervino turned over to the PCB two-thirds of the salary they received as municipal councilmen<sup>1</sup> and abided by Party discipline in the Câmara. As their speeches were limited to texts carefully reviewed by

<sup>1</sup> José Oiticica, "Caiu Fora," *Ação Directa* 2, no. 6 (May 1, 1929), reproducing Oiticica's article in *A Patria* of March 13, 1929. Otávio Brandão (interview, November 14, 1970) states that he and Minervino kept six hundred mil-réis apiece per month and turned the rest over to the Party.

the PCB leadership, it became necessary for Brandão on one occasion to stop in the middle of a speech and announce that he hoped to give the conclusion at a later time. Someone had stolen his last pages.<sup>2</sup>

Rules of the Municipal Council required three signatures on law project amendments if they were to be considered. Therefore, whenever proposed amendments were submitted by Brandão and Minervino, Maurício de Lacerda added his signature,<sup>3</sup> although he seldom read their proposals.<sup>4</sup> *A Classe Operaria* was willing to concede that this acquiescence made Maurício "a valuable ally of the BOC." However, it criticized him for announcing that his reason for signing was the need of three signatures. "This declaration cannot fail to harm the struggle of the proletariat and middle class against the common enemy."<sup>5</sup>

BOC Secretary Brandão, besides directing *A Classe Operaria* with the help of Danton<sup>6</sup> and José Jobim, carefully attended to Municipal Council affairs, thus allowing Minervino to concentrate on organized labor.<sup>7</sup> Brandão also spent much of early 1929 making speeches in the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and in the Federal District—so much so that in April he lost his voice and fell ill with grippe.<sup>8</sup> But early in June he returned to the Câmara dos Intendentes to give a long speech describing the "revolutionary movement," which he said was sweeping the world. Pointing out that "revolts in Morocco, Syria, Indonesia, and Nicaragua—and the formidable Chinese revolution—represent steps in this struggle between the past and the future," he said that it had become Latin America's turn. "This is proved by the Brazilian fermentation and the movements of the Indians of Ecuador, the workers of the Chilean nitrate mines, and the banana workers of Colombia. Millions of slaves of the Pound and the Dollar aspire to independence and therefore begin to bring their forces together in unions, in federations, in the Brazilian Confederation, and in the Latin American Confederation.

"Slowly but inevitably the thirty-odd millions of Brazilians are being awakened to complete the movements of 1922 and 1924—to take them to their final revolutionary conclusions."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Carlos Lacerda, interview, September 17, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, no. 73 (September 14, 1929).

<sup>4</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, no. 73 (September 14, 1929).

<sup>6</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," pp. 77, 80.

<sup>7</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, May 25, 1971.

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, June 27, 1971.

<sup>9</sup> *O Jornal*, June 4, 1929.

In July 1929 Brandão explained why he refused to support a Municipal Council resolution paying tribute to the memory of PD leader Antônio Prado. Brandão said: "In 1924 Lenin died. Did the Municipal Council pay its respects to his memory? No! Why not? Because Lenin represented the proletarian class, and the conservative majority of the council was an instrument of the capitalist class. And today? Would the present conservative majority of the council vote to pay its respects to the memory of Lenin? Never. How, then, can it expect us to pay our respects to representatives of the capitalist class?"<sup>10</sup>

Through Brandão and Minervino, the PCB presented law projects designed to help poor employees of the municipal government. Some dealt with minimum wages and vacations. One would have provided tenure for all who had been employed for over five years. Another would have allowed workers to arrive on the job fifteen minutes late. Still another was designed to prevent the delay in paying wages—which sometimes amounted to several months. As the councilmen did not even bring these projects up for vote, petitions supporting them were submitted by poor bureaucrats. "Many of us do not have bread for our children," these people wrote.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *O Internacional* 11, no. 159 (São Paulo, July 1, 1929).

<sup>11</sup> "Ao Conselho Municipal," *A Classe Operaria*, no. 73 (September 14, 1929).

#### 14. Communists Spoil the Construction Workers' Strike

Before founding the CGT late in April 1929, the PCB strove to revitalize, under its leadership, the class struggle by labor unions. It induced São Paulo graphic workers to strike for better wages on March 23, 1929, and in Rio it persuaded bakery workers to propose a new wage schedule to the Association of Bakery Owners.

A rejection of the schedule by the Association of Bakery Owners was followed by a successful strike in which the anarchists claimed to have cooperated with the Communists.<sup>1</sup> On April 8, the first day of the strike, it was reported that, of more than six hundred bakeries in Rio, twenty-

<sup>1</sup> "Historia de uma Traição," *Ação Directa* 2, no. 6 (Rio de Janeiro, May 1, 1929).



nine accepted the workers' demands, twenty-six agreed to do almost as well, and twenty-five preferred to close down.<sup>2</sup> Coriolano de Góis, whose police arrested seventy-two strikers for assaults on bakeries (during which an owner was murdered),<sup>3</sup> refused the owners' request that he arbitrate the strike. The Association of Bakery Owners then left it up to individual owners to make their own settlements. After most of the owners accepted the workers' demands, the association declared that the strike was over and prepared to increase the price of bread.

On April 16, when Rio bakery workers were back at their jobs and while São Paulo graphic workers were still on strike, the anarcho-syndicalist União dos Operários em Construção Civil struck in Rio, leading some government spokesmen to express fears that the strike movement was growing to dangerous proportions.<sup>4</sup> However, the Communists' determination to dominate the labor movement adversely affected the construction workers' strike.

The União dos Operários em Construção Civil had been a favorite target of the authorities ever since its establishment in 1919. Unlike other labor associations, it had to remain closed until the very end of the "Bernardes" state of siege. During this interval the Communists founded a rival association, first calling it the *Círculo dos Operários em Construção Civil* and later renaming it the *Círculo Beneficente dos Operários em Construção Civil*. By the time the state of siege ended it had still another name, the *União dos Pintores e Anexos* (Union of Painters and Those in Related Trades).<sup>5</sup>

After the old União dos Operários em Construção Civil (UOCC) reopened its doors in January 1927, its leaders worked hard to rebuild it, but they were obstructed, they said, by the "slander and insults" of five or six Communists in their midst.<sup>6</sup> The Communists were expelled from the UOCC and returned to the União dos Pintores, whence they had come. Subsequently the União dos Pintores was renamed the União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil and was referred to in short as the "Regional" or UROCC to distinguish it from the anti-Communist União dos Operários em Construção Civil, commonly called the "União" or UOCC.

The União leaders prepared a tabulation of minimum wages they felt

<sup>2</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, April 9, 1929.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, April 9, 10, 13. Castro Rabelo defended the accused strikers.

<sup>4</sup> *O Jornal*, April 20, 1929.

<sup>5</sup> "História de uma Traição."

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

would be fair to workers and acceptable to many of the construction company managements. During a seven-month campaign to persuade construction workers to strike in case managements rejected the tabulation, they pointed out that the construction workers had been lethargic too long and that the considerable demand for such workers would assure them of victory.<sup>7</sup>

Leaders of the Communist-dominated Regional described the União's preparation as a "trick to attract members."<sup>8</sup> At an assembly of the Regional on April 15 it was decided that the União's proposed minimum wage tabulation was not good enough for the workers, and that the União was proposing a strike without having made basic studies about its probable duration or about assistance to strikers' families. After censuring the União for not having organized "a solid system of working committees," the Regional decided that the best way to support the União's proposed strike would be "to provide it with a more practical orientation and to establish the bases for a united front."<sup>9</sup> Three members of the Regional were authorized to represent it at the assembly the União had called for the following evening, April 16, in order to vote on the strike issue.

According to the anarchists, the crowd of about two thousand in the União's assembly hall on April 16 included a few hundred, recruited by the PCB, "who have no will of their own, who vegetate in Rio labor unions, obedient to the 'word of order' of the Party, and whose only mission consists of clapping or hooting and jeering according to the signal."<sup>10</sup>

After a message was read in which the Regional presented its three representatives, a secretary of the assembly declared that the three could attend only as construction workers and not as delegates of the Regional. Although other União leaders arose to express agreement with the secretary, one of the Regional members, "speaking in the name of the Regional,"<sup>11</sup> asked for a vote on the "united front" proposal. Since the anarchists regarded "the old, discredited 'united front'" as "the most efficient element of discord that the Bolshevik petty politicians had ever used,"<sup>12</sup> they were unmoved by the Regional member's argument that only with a united front could the workers win.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> *O Jornal*, April 17, 1929.

<sup>10</sup> "Historia de uma Traição."

<sup>11</sup> *O Jornal*, April 17, 1929.

<sup>12</sup> "Historia de uma Traição."

After a vote was taken (all who favored the united front were told to stand up), the presiding officer declared the united front defeated. The Communists and their allies argued that the outcome had not been properly reported, and then they strode out of the meeting, yelling protests. Their disorderly conduct outside of the União headquarters was described by anti-Communists as designed to induce the police to invade the headquarters; but the police limited themselves to breaking up the street demonstrations.

Danton Jobim and other Communists visited some newspapers, including *O Jornal* (where *A Classe Operaria* was being printed), to furnish reports that exaggerated the number of those who had left the União assembly. Meanwhile, at the assembly it was resolved that the civil construction workers should go on strike.

On April 17, when the strike started, *O Jornal* declared it unimportant due to the existence of two currents among the workers: some, it said, wanted an immediate strike without proper preparation, whereas others wanted first to organize local committees to "guarantee permanent contact between the mass of workers and a committee of defense made up of strike directors."<sup>13</sup> Three days later *O Jornal* reported that the clash between these currents had "virtually reduced the strike to naught."<sup>14</sup>

The Regional declared that it had done everything possible to achieve a united front. The União replied that the creation of rival organizations did not achieve unity,<sup>15</sup> and that the proposed united front had taken a "defeatist" attitude about the strike. The Regional, the União said, "was at the service of the Communist Party, or, rather, of half a dozen aspirants for seats in the Municipal Council and Chamber of Deputies."<sup>16</sup>

At a Regional assembly on April 20, Minervino de Oliveira declared that, as the strike had been foolish and inopportune due to a lack of preparative studies, it should be called off and arrangements made to have a better one. It was decided that the occasion should be used to attract as many civil construction workers as possible to the ranks of the Regional. Heitor Marques, president of the Regional, told the press that some civil construction workers were already receiving wages in excess of the minimums proposed in the União's tabulation.<sup>17</sup>

The Police Department used the *lei celerada* to arrest three strikers

<sup>13</sup> *O Jornal*, April 17, 1929.

<sup>14</sup> *O Jornal*, April 20, 1929.

<sup>15</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, April 18, 1929.

<sup>16</sup> *Vanguarda*, April 1929.

<sup>17</sup> *O Jornal*, April 21, 1929.

caught trying to persuade construction workers to leave their jobs. It also issued statistics to show that on April 22 it found 3,499 men on the job compared with 1,690 on April 19. The police concluded that "1,800 workers" had "abandoned the strike" in three days.

TABLE 9  
Police Statistics on the Construction Workers' Strike

Date (1929)	Construction Projects Inspected	Workers on the Job	Workers on Strike
April 19	102	1,690	914
April 20	122	2,935	656
April 22	137	3,499	646

SOURCE: *Correio da Manhã*, April 23, 1929.

"This is the limit!" anarchists exclaimed in telling of how "scabs of the Regional sent a group" to the neighborhood of the União to dissuade construction workers from carrying on with the strike.<sup>18</sup> Anarchists complained about the reporting in *O Jornal, Critica*,<sup>19</sup> and *A Esquerda* and concluded that the Communists had "annihilated" the strike, which had originally promised to be a brilliant triumph.

This new "treason" was added to the list of crimes attributed to the Communists by anarchists: "the dismantlement of the Textile Workers' Union, the quiet sabotaging of the shoemakers' strike, the schism of the shoemakers, the schism of the construction workers, the slandering of Oiticica, Domingos Passos, Marques da Costa and others, the assassination of Antonino Domingues, the systematic campaign of insults against the libertarians, the persecutions against libertarians of the Centro Cosmopolita, etc., etc."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "Historia de uma Traição."

<sup>19</sup> *Critica* was established by Mário Rodrigues in Rio de Janeiro in 1929 to support the presidential candidacy of Júlio Prestes.

<sup>20</sup> "Historia de uma Traição."

## 15. Creating the CGTB

The São Paulo graphic workers' strike, in its fifth week, was on the minds of the approximately sixty delegates<sup>1</sup> who gathered in Rio from April 26 to May 1, 1929, at the National Labor Congress, to review the labor situation and establish the *Confederação Geral do Trabalho do Brasil* (CGTB, sometimes simply referred to as the CGT). At the opening session, held at the headquarters of the Association of Workers in the Furniture Industry, Minervino de Oliveira, the presiding officer, read a motion praising all the unions that had assisted the striking graphic workers. F. Granado, "the well-known peasant leader"<sup>2</sup> who represented farm workers of Itabapuna, São Paulo, described São Paulo as the "leader of the reaction of Brazil";<sup>3</sup> but he proclaimed that the graphic workers would nevertheless be victorious.

The delegates reportedly represented "over one hundred" organizations.<sup>4</sup> Minervino announced that the BOC had contributed eighteen contos (18:000\$000) to help pay the traveling expenses of delegates. Metalworker Salvador Cruz, speaking in the name of *A Classe Operaria*, maintained that the National Labor Congress owed its existence "exclusively" to the work of the proletarian press.

At the opening session, young newspaper reporter Danton Jobim greeted students in the name of the Comitê Pró-CGT. Hugo Antunes spoke for Brazil's young schoolteachers. Medical student Raul Karacik, representing the Anti-Imperialist League of Brazil, expressed his view of imperialism. Brandão, scheduled to speak on behalf of several organizations, was too ill to attend any sessions, and Minervino substituted for him.

During the five days of regular sessions, speakers reported on proletarian misery in areas familiar to them. A Rio chauffeur said that of the five

<sup>1</sup> *Crítica*, Rio de Janeiro, April 27, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, April 28, 1929.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, April 27, 1929.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, April 30, 1929. The labor associations' names were identified with the Federal District, the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Pernambuco, Espírito Santo, Paraíba, and Ceará, and with cities in some of these states and in Mato Grosso, Paraná, and Rio Grande do Norte (see *O Jornal*, April 27, 1929).

categories of drivers, the private chauffeurs were probably the most exploited, and he described a typical day and much of a night in such a worker's life. A delegate from São Paulo said that the *garçonetes*, or girls working in cafés and restaurants, had all become either prostitutes or "semiprostitutes." Dr. Fernando de Lacerda presented a study on the exploitation of working women; speaking of the role of the bourgeois physician, he concluded that the "true therapeutics for the proletariat is syndical and political organization."<sup>5</sup> Considerable time was devoted to the plight of farm workers.

Outlining procedural policies, Mário Grazíni, of the Comitê Pró-CGT, explained that each labor *sindicato* would have one vote at the National Labor Congress. However, in actual practice the resolutions were adopted by "unanimous" acclamation. One of them protested the closing down of the Union of Graphic Workers of Rio.<sup>6</sup> Others sanctioned the statutes of the CGTB and expressed support for the Confederación Sindical Latino Americana, which was to be formed at a labor congress in Montevideo in the second half of May 1929. Another resolution declared the first two weeks of May to be the Fortnight of the Conquest of the Vacation Law (A Quinzena de Conquista da Lei de Férias). An eleven-month campaign for compliance with the law was felt to have been uncoordinated, and it was hoped that the CGTB would be the remedy.<sup>7</sup>

When the CGTB was brought into being at the final regular session on April 30, Minervino de Oliveira was named secretary-general.<sup>8</sup> But the bulk of the work was put in the hands of São Paulo printer Grazíni and Rio furniture maker Roberto Morena. Unfortunately for the CGTB, they did not get along well.<sup>9</sup>

During the National Labor Congress, three workers were arrested for passing out leaflets in the streets urging attendance at Praça Mauá at 2:00 P.M. on May 1.<sup>10</sup> The printout accused imperialism, "frightened"

<sup>5</sup> *Crítica*, April 30, 1929.

<sup>6</sup> *O Jornal*, April 27, 1929.

<sup>7</sup> *Crítica*, April 30, 1929.

<sup>8</sup> The CGTB's name was added to the list of organizations that occupied the office at 246 Senador Pompeu Street: the União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil (UROCC), the União dos Trabalhadores em Indústria Metalúrgica, the Centro dos Jovens Proletários (proletarian youth), the Federação dos Esportes Proletários, the Comitê das Mulheres Trabalhadoras (working women), and others.

<sup>9</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968; Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 166.

<sup>10</sup> *O Jornal*, May 1, 1929.

by the development of iron unity, discipline, and centralized leadership in the proletariat, of founding, with "Yellow Union" support, the Partido Trabalhista (Labor Party)—"agent of imperialism." It called for war on the Partido Trabalhista and the Pan American Federation of Labor.<sup>11</sup>

Praça Mauá attracted a good crowd, estimated at "over 10,000."<sup>12</sup> Fewer workers<sup>13</sup> heeded appeals, made by the FORJ and the União dos Operários em Construção Civil, to gather at Praça 11 de Junho, where Romeu Boléli, Antônio Leite, and their fellow anarcho-syndicalists called for the defense of liberty and the combat of authoritarianism.<sup>14</sup> Catholic workers commemorating May Day heard Father Henrique de Magalhães point out that the Church considered work dignifying and honorable; some attended a Mass at which Archbishop Sebastião Leme officiated.<sup>15</sup>

The meeting at Praça Mauá was opened and closed by Minervino de Oliveira, who spoke in the name of the CGTB. The second of over a dozen orations was made by a representative of the União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil. A Chilean sailor spoke in Spanish, and an American sailor, said to belong to the IWW, spoke in English. Laura Brandão addressed the crowd in the name of her husband and the Committee of Working Women. Journalist Sadi Garibaldi, considered a good student of Marxist theory, represented the PCB. José Jobim, brother of Danton, spoke for Communist Youth. Other speakers represented the Anti-Imperialist League of Brazil, the BOC, *A Classe Operaria*, and Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Sul organizations. In the closing address, Minervino announced that the collection to help the Paulista printers had grown to over 844:000\$000.<sup>16</sup>

"Perfect order" and the "absence of violent expressions" were noted by *O Jornal*, which praised the workers in an editorial hardly calculated to encourage the Communists. Its author concluded that "exotic currents" were losing their strength in Brazil, and that gradually the workers were becoming a force capable of cooperating with other social elements in the common task of strengthening the nation.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Comício Monstruoso," *A Critica*, May 1, 1929.

<sup>12</sup> *O Jornal*, May 2, 1929.

<sup>13</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 2, 1929.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*; *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 2, 1929.

<sup>15</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 2, 1929.

<sup>16</sup> *O Jornal*, May 2, 1929.

<sup>17</sup> "Festa do Trabalho" (editorial), *O Jornal*, May 3, 1929.

## 16. The São Paulo Printers' Strike of 1929

According to João da Costa Pimenta, the "agitated," seventy-two-day São Paulo graphic workers' strike, which began on March 23, 1929, was "carried out under PCB leadership for political reasons."<sup>1</sup> The São Paulo authorities had the same opinion, and as soon as the strike was declared, they pronounced the strike illegal, closed the São Paulo Union of Graphic Workers (UTG), and jailed the UTG Executive Commission.<sup>2</sup> Coordination of the strike fell into the hands of some Communist Youth leaders,<sup>3</sup> sent by the PCB from Rio, and agents of the Comintern's Secretariado Sudamericano de la Internacional Comunista (South American Secretariat of the Communist International), sent from Buenos Aires.<sup>4</sup> In São Paulo they helped form a Comitê de Defesa Proletária.

<sup>1</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, São Paulo, September 7, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> "Boletim Diário da Federação dos Trabalhadores Gráficos," *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro, May 4, 1929; *El Trabajador Latino Americano* 2, nos. 17-18 (Montevideo, June-July 1929): 9.

<sup>3</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, São Paulo, November 15, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> João da Costa Pimenta, interview, São Paulo, September 7, 1970. Following its Fifth World Congress (June-July 1924), the Comintern asked the Communist Party of Argentina to set up the Secretariado Sudamericano de la Internacional Comunista (South American Secretariat of the Communist International). The Secretariat, which began publishing its fortnightly organ *La Correspondencia Sudamericana* on April 15, 1926, was run during the second half of the decade by Argentine Communists: José F. Penelón, until his expulsion from the Communist Party of Argentina in 1927, and then Victorio Codovilla. These men reported to the Comintern's Moscow-based Latin American Secretariat, headed by Jules Humbert-Droz. In 1928 Humbert-Droz traveled in Brazil and parts of Latin America to stimulate Latin American Communist conferences that were held in Montevideo in 1929 (see Rollie E. Poppino, *International Communism in Latin America: A History of the Movement, 1917-1963*, pp. 153-155; Stephen Clissold, ed., *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1918-1968: A Documentary Survey*, p. 10; Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America*, p. 34).

Stephen Clissold writes that Humbert-Droz was "a former Swiss Protestant minister and friend of Lenin during the latter's exile. . . . As an associate of Bukharin, Humbert-Droz . . . incurred the suspicion of Stalin, who censured him at an ECCI meeting on 19 December 1928 for his allegedly Rightist attitude to the German question. He was forced by Manuilsky to make self-criticism (published in *Inprecorr*, 6 Nov. 1930, p. 1043) and at the end of 1931 gave up his Comintern post and returned to Switzerland, where he continued to work for the Communist



Pimenta felt that the strike "submitted the workers and their families to an interminable series of useless sacrifices."<sup>5</sup> Although critical of the strike leadership, he agreed to speak at rallies on behalf of the workers.

Such rallies were part of a fund-raising drive organized by the PCB throughout much of Brazil when it was clear that the approximately five thousand printers and their families were suffering from hunger. Contributing to this situation was a circular issued by the São Paulo Industrialists' Center recommending that its members not employ striking printers. Communists reported that the authorities had taken repressive measures against tradesmen who advanced food or credit to strikers.<sup>6</sup>

The fund-raising drive assumed the characteristics of a crusade. Laura Brandão contributed her only valuable material asset: surrendering her rights to an inherited pension (*montepio*), she was able to donate fifteen contos, a considerable sacrifice to her family, which now included three daughters.<sup>7</sup> Rio newspaper workers met and agreed to make contributions and to send money that had accumulated in their beneficent funds.

Donations were listed in bulletins issued almost daily by the Federação dos Trabalhadores Gráficos do Brasil. These bulletins, telling of rally plans and protesting arrests, were carefully studied by the São Paulo State police officers who were assigned to watch the members of the Comitê de Defesa Proletária.

In Rio the anarchist *Acção Directa*, a supporter of the strike, reported that four minor São Paulo printing plants were willing to accept the workers' demands, but that the influence and attitude of four major firms, as well as the "intransigence" of the São Paulo police, prevented a general settlement.<sup>8</sup>

Over a thousand workers, meeting in São Paulo in mid-April, resolved that after they had won the strike they would return to work only when

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Party until expelled from it in 1943. . . . He was succeeded as head of the Latin American Secretariat by A. Guralsky" (Clissold, ed., *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1918-1968*, p. 62).

<sup>5</sup> "O Operário João da Costa Pimenta, Herói das Jornadas de 1917, Defenderá no Parlamento o Programa do Socialismo: Candidato a Deputado Federal da Esquerda Democrática pelas Oposições Coligadas," campaign brochure, [1945].

<sup>6</sup> O Comitê Central da Federação dos Trabalhadores Gráficos do Brasil, "A Grêve dos Operários Gráficos de São Paulo," *O Jornal*, May 10, 1929.

<sup>7</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, Rio de Janeiro, December 14, 1968; November 14, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> *Acção Directa* 2, no. 5 (Rio de Janeiro, April 10, 1929).

the police, "who arrest and mistreat women and children," released all of their companions.<sup>9</sup>

In Rio on April 18 a BOC-sponsored rally on behalf of the São Paulo graphic workers was addressed by Sadi Garibaldi (representing the Committee to Form an Antifascist Union), Minervino de Oliveira, João da Costa Pimenta, Danton Jobim, and representatives of *A Classe Operaria* and the Committee of Women Workers. Pimenta said that the "new organizing methods" were more effective than those which had prevailed in "the period of anarchism." Jobim heatedly declared that the PCB's word of order was the mobilization of all the proletariat to sustain the São Paulo strike "regardless of anything, regardless of the cost."<sup>10</sup> On the next night the police arrested Paulo de Lacerda when they found him in a bar with four workers. The specific charge was carrying a loaded revolver. A more fundamental reason for the arrest was "the special character" that the Washington Luís administration feared the strike movement was assuming, especially with the recent outbreak of the construction workers' strike.<sup>11</sup>

Early in May a student organization indignantly reported that its effort to serve as intermediary in the printers' strike had been foiled by the "intransigence" of the shop owners. The report, signed by Francisco Mangabeira (nephew of the foreign minister) for the "Rio Committee" and by Antônio Mendes de Almeida for the "São Paulo Committee," accused industrialists of making a "ridiculous" reference to "Moscow gold" and of openly declaring that they would not comply with the Vacation Law and the regulation prohibiting child labor.<sup>12</sup> Compliance with these rulings had become the strikers' most publicized demand.

On May 20 the CGTB announced that a great demonstration on May 23, sixtieth day of the strike, would mark the start of "the Week of the Graphic Strikers." The demonstration, held in São Paulo's Largo da Sé on the twenty-third, resulted in the arrest of Danton Jobim and approximately twenty workers.<sup>13</sup>

Minervino de Oliveira declared that the Week of the Graphic Strikers should be notable for agitation by all wage earners and the oppressed.

<sup>9</sup> Federação dos Trabalhadores Gráficos do Brasil, "A Grêve dos Operários Gráficos de São Paulo," *O Jornal*, April 16, 1929.

<sup>10</sup> *O Jornal*, April 19, 1929.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, April 20, 1929.

<sup>12</sup> "Manifesto Lançado em São Paulo pelos Acadêmicos do Comité pró-Grêve," *O Jornal*, May 4, 1929.

<sup>13</sup> *O Jornal*, May 24, 1929.

On May 24 he and Francisco Mangabeira were summoned to Rio's central police building and told by Pedro de Oliveira Sobrinho that a "mammoth" parade and fund-raising rally, planned for May 25, should not be disorderly. They pledged that all would be peaceful unless police agents provoked the demonstrators.<sup>14</sup>

On the afternoon of May 25 thousands sang "The International" as they marched from the CGTB headquarters to Praça Mauá amidst placards calling for donations to help the São Paulo strikers. However, Minervino, Francisco Mangabeira, and Manuel Karacik (of the Committee Favoring the Right to Strike) were not among the marchers: they had been recalled to the police building and were held there all evening.<sup>15</sup>

Fernando de Lacerda was loudly cheered when he opened the well-attended Praça Mauá rally by mentioning police violence and calling attention to nearby police cars.<sup>16</sup> After other speakers condemned the authorities, Oliveira Sobrinho and Colonel Bandeira de Melo brought in cavalry and infantry contingents. Laura Brandão, wearing her blue and white cape, made an appeal from the statue of Mauá: "Brother soldiers, don't fire on your brother workers."<sup>17</sup> In her speech, which closed the rally, Laura said that the workers should not fear the soldiers, for they, too, were exploited and would some day join forces with the proletariat.<sup>18</sup> The meeting broke up amidst shouts of "Brother Soldiers!" and "Long Live the Soldiers!"<sup>19</sup>

Late in May the PCB instructed the São Paulo Comitê de Defesa Proletária to try to organize other strikes and to attract great public support by holding more rallies. The order caused a split in the Comitê de Defesa,<sup>20</sup> making it doubtful that the "necessary added dynamism" could be expected in São Paulo, and the PCB lost interest in prolonging the strike.<sup>21</sup> The Comitê de Defesa accepted what little it could get from a majority of the shop owners and declared that the "victorious" seventy-two-day strike was over.<sup>22</sup> The PCB repeatedly declared the strike a great

<sup>14</sup> *Critica*, May 26, 1929.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* *Critica* placed the attendance at ten thousand.

<sup>17</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968.

<sup>18</sup> *Critica*, May 26, 1929.

<sup>19</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968. Brandão also says that some soldiers and workers embraced.

<sup>20</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 90.

<sup>21</sup> João da Costa Pimenta (interview, September 7, 1970) says that "finally the PCB washed its hands of the strike."

<sup>22</sup> "Manifiesto del Comité de Defensa Proletaria," given in *El Trabajador Latino*

victory, but the São Paulo graphic workers, in the words of Leôncio Basbaum, "correctly considered it a defeat."<sup>23</sup>

According to the Communist press, the chief accomplishment of the strike was to secure a fuller compliance with child labor regulations. Communists therefore scolded Maurício de Lacerda when he praised Melo Matos, a São Paulo judge who fined violators of the regulations. "It was," *A Classe Operaria* wrote, "the heroic São Paulo graphic workers, demanding compliance with the regulation, who compelled the bourgeoisie to make the judge enforce the law lest the strike spread to other labor organizations."<sup>24</sup>

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*Americano* 2, nos. 17, 18 (Montevideo, June, July 1929), says that "our principal economic demands and the increase of our salaries were obtained in all except four shops, which continue closed. . . . With the heroic resistance of 72 days the workers conquered the authority to impose their rights."

<sup>23</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 90.

<sup>24</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, no. 73 (September 14, 1929).

## 17. Astrogildo Reports to Moscow

In Moscow in July 1929, Astrogildo Pereira told the Comintern Executive Committee that it should devote "constant attention to our small parties in Latin America. . . . Comrades, it was said on the occasion of the Sixth World Congress that the Communist International has discovered Latin America. I believe that Latin America is now sufficiently discovered, and that it is no longer enough to feel satisfied with this happy statement, or with good resolutions on paper. The resolutions must be energetically carried out."<sup>1</sup>

To encourage the discovery of Latin America by the Russian masses, Astrogildo's reports on conditions in Brazil and Argentina were published in Moscow in 1929.<sup>2</sup> According to the report on Brazil, the PCB at the

<sup>1</sup> Speech of July 10, 1929, by Americo Ledo (Astrogildo Pereira), reported in *International Press Correspondence*, September 17, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> Americo Ledo (Astrogildo Pereira), *Argentina* (16 pages), and *Brazilia* (21 pages). Astrogildo also worked to increase Brazilian knowledge of the Soviet Union. Four of his letters from Moscow, dated May and June 1929, were published in Astrogildo Pereira, *U.R.S.S.-Italia-Brasil*.

end of 1928 had 800 members, 600 of whom were organized in seventy cells. It said that, after the Third National Congress, "in Rio de Janeiro alone new members were joining the Party at the rate of 50 per month. Thus the membership is now reaching 1,200, with twenty to thirty new cells."<sup>3</sup> According to Astrogildo, Communist influence in Brazil was greatest among metalworkers, publishing and press workers, food industry workers, builders, carpenters, textile workers, tannery workers, and sailors. He estimated that workers made up 80 percent of the total Party membership, professional men 10 percent, agricultural workers and "small peasants" 5 percent, and "others" 5 percent. Membership of Juventude Comunista do Brasil was put at "over 200."

Of the 100,000 unionized workers, Astrogildo said that 60,000 belonged to the Communist-led CGTB. He pointed out that "yellow trade unions," with 20,000 workers, were "rather strong," particularly among "ship stokers, stevedores, stokers, and carters," but that they had been unable to form a central organization. The anarchists were described as having "created some unions," which had a total membership of 2,000. The influence of the anarchists, once great, was said to have "completely disappeared."<sup>4</sup>

Astrogildo's report ascribed Brazil's "keen crisis of 1921-1922" to "the intensification of imperialistic oppression and intensification of the struggle between British and American imperialism."<sup>5</sup> In view of Brazil's "vast territory and inexhaustible natural resources," Astrogildo believed it likely that Brazil would be "the one Latin American country where the rivalry between the two imperialist powers" would be the sharpest.<sup>6</sup>

Astrogildo praised the Prestes Column and described its views as approaching those of the Communists:

The courageous activities of the Prestes Column exercised great influence in awakening the backward rural masses. Simultaneously the activity spread to broader sections of the population and brought out a few slogans truly capable of attracting the masses. At the time of the 1922 insurrection, and also in 1924, the program of the revolutionaries was limited to elementary democratic and liberal slogans, concerning "freedoms," "justice," etc. But with the development of the movement the slogans changed. The confiscation of landlord property, the liberation of the impoverished peasantry from taxes, the confiscation of

<sup>3</sup> Americo Ledo, *Brazilia*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

large landownings, and the control of the native bourgeoisie and the imperialists were all required by the revolutionaries.<sup>7</sup>

Early in 1929, shortly after Astrogildo reached Moscow, Josias Carneiro Leão arrived there for a one-month visit on behalf of the Prestes Column. His mission, undertaken on his own initiative and known only to Prestes and Miguel Costa, was to persuade the Comintern to assist the column financially. Dmitri Manuilsky, of the Comintern's Executive Committee, told him that it was impossible for Moscow to endorse the program he had in mind.<sup>8</sup>

Heitor Ferreira Lima, who saw Leão in Astrogildo's company in Moscow, believed that Leão was working on arrangements to have prominent Prestes Column members visit Russia.<sup>9</sup> Such a visit did interest the Comintern and was therefore being pursued by its South American Secretariat in Argentina, where some of the column leaders, including Prestes, were residing.

The column's leaders were in disagreement about exploring the possibilities of an alliance with Moscow. After Antônio de Siqueira Campos and Emídio da Costa Miranda accepted invitations to visit Russia, Juarez Távora argued forcefully that they should not go and that if any financial assistance were received by the column from the Comintern it would place the column under commitments of an undesirable nature.<sup>10</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, regarded as the column's civilian representative in Rio, argued that if Prestes went to Moscow his trip would alienate many sectors of the Left, and Prestes might find himself far away from Brazil when rapid action should be undertaken there by the "revolutionaries."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, interview, June 28, 1971.

<sup>9</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

<sup>10</sup> Emídio da Costa Miranda, interview, July 19, 1963.

<sup>11</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, p. 129.

## 18. Prestes Foresees a Revolt by the Masses

**I**n February 1928 Luís Carlos Prestes left Bolivia after the repatriation of most of the column members who were eligible and disposed to make use of Washington Luís's pledge that civilians and soldiers below the

rank of sergeant would not be disturbed. Prestes, riding oxen through Paraguayan marshes, and then boarding a river boat, went to Buenos Aires.<sup>1</sup>

Interviewed in Argentina in April 1928 by *O Jornal's* João Batista Barreto Leite Filho, Prestes said that the Brazilian government's "obstinacy" regarding amnesty reflected its failure to understand the urgent need of fraternization.<sup>2</sup> Asked about the Brazilian political situation, Prestes replied that an oppressive regime was so solidly installed that he personally felt civil war was the only means of solving the problems. When Prestes praised Assis Brasil's radicalism and called him "the only chief authorized to direct the renovating activity in the political field," Barreto Leite asked whether Prestes's viewpoints coincided with those of Maurício de Lacerda, who was then in Rio Grande do Sul describing himself as "sowing the seeds of a renovating movement and preaching a loathing of professional politics."<sup>3</sup> Prestes declared that he and Lacerda thought alike and were convinced of the need for a united front to face the pressure organized by the dominant classes in all of Brazil.<sup>4</sup> Prestes also expressed confidence in the work of the Partido Democrático Nacional.

Prestes, who had just come from visiting with Isidoro Dias Lopes in Libres, Argentina, told Barreto Leite that he was undecided whether or not to return to the work in Bolivia, where "fifty companions" remained. Twenty had married and settled down; the rest were earning money with which to return to Brazil, because the donations sent from Brazil to Prestes in Bolivia had not been quite sufficient to take care of all who wanted to repatriate.

As things worked out, Prestes remained in Argentina. In Buenos Aires he formed a business to sell Brazilian products in partnership with Orlando Leite Ribeiro, who had escaped from a Brazilian prison after leading an unsuccessful revolt in Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo. Prestes also secured employment as an engineer for a road constructing firm, and this work took him to Santa Fe, in the Argentine interior, late in 1928 and early in 1929.

From time to time "General" Prestes, now beardless and sporting a mustache, made pronouncements that were carefully studied in Brazil.

<sup>1</sup> Luís Carlos Prestes, interview, September 5, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> *O Jornal*, April 6, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, April 8, 1928 (Barreto Leite Filho interview with Maurício de Lacerda in Rio Grande do Sul).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, April 6, 1928.

In one of these, given to a reporter in November 1928, Prestes declared that the revolutionary movement, started by the Army to redress affronts inflicted by despotic governments, was becoming a movement of the shamefully exploited masses. The Brazilian "hinterland," he said, was dominated by political chiefs, the owners of enormous landholdings, on which millions of peasant families lived in destitution.<sup>5</sup>

Prestes found that the coming "popular revolution" was being stimulated by political and economic causes. In the latter category he placed "fictitious industries," whose existence depended on protective tariffs. These, he asserted, increased the cost of living and retarded agricultural development.

According to Prestes, the military revolutionaries of the 1920's had "opened the way and prepared the path for renovating uprisings." But "today," he said, "it is up to the people to conclude this work and free themselves from the parasitical organism implanted on Brazil by the policies of the oligarchies." Declaring that the popular revolution, "caused by the plight of the proletarian class," was certain to come, even though a date for it could not be set, he added that "an unmistakable spirit of revolt reigns in the mass of the population." Turning to the future role of the "true revolutionaries" of the past, Prestes said that amnesty would never persuade these men that they should not participate in the new struggle of the people "to free the nation from the usurping apparatuses which bleed and enslave it."

Prestes opposed the idea of setting up, ahead of time, the "structure and pattern of a revolutionary program." He felt that the first task was to overthrow the existing regime, since nothing could be worse than its oppression. The subsequent modifications, he said, would have to work themselves out "in accordance with the specific needs of the Brazilian setting."

Speaking with Maurício de Lacerda in Santa Fe early in 1929, Prestes predicted that the Partido Democrático would abandon the cause of the revolution.<sup>6</sup> Maurício, who considered himself a revolutionary ally of the Cavalier of Hope, gave assurances that some members of the Partido Democrático would contribute funds for the revolution.

Maurício quotes Prestes as telling him that, while a public break with the Partido Democrático would be inadvisable, "indubitably we shall not

<sup>5</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, November 30, 1928. This is a reprint of the interview Rodrigo Soares Júnior obtained from Prestes and published in the *Diário Popular* of São Paulo.

<sup>6</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, p. 121.



make the kind of a revolution that is desired by those on whom we depend to finance our revolution." According to Maurício, Prestes also said that the antiadministration political currents "must believe that they have our support, because then they will believe themselves strong and will go even to civil war."<sup>7</sup>

Back in Brazil, Maurício asked Communists to accept the idea of a revolution in which the small bourgeoisie, the proletariat, and the intellectuals would be allied against the "personal" one-man government. The fall of that government, he said, would benefit all of them, and, in the ensuing regime, the "extremist parties" would have their spiritual and political rights respected.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

## 19. Basbaum Visits Prestes (June 1929)

Following the establishment of the CGTB and the observance of May 1, 1929, a number of PCB leaders went to Montevideo and Buenos Aires to attend Latin American conferences.

Mário Graziñi, representing the CGTB,<sup>1</sup> headed the seven-man Brazilian delegation to the organizing congress of the Confederación Sindical Latino Americana (CSLA), held in Montevideo during the last two weeks of May.<sup>2</sup>

Early in June Leôncio Basbaum, Mário Graziñi, and Danton Jobim were in Buenos Aires to represent the PCB at the ten-day First Confer-

<sup>1</sup> Octavio Brandão, letter, August 28, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> *El Trabajador Latino Americano* 2, nos. 17, 18 (Montevideo, June, July 1929), tells something of the CSLA founding congress and contains caricatures of various delegates, sketched by Mexican delegate David A. Siqueiros. In the case of the Brazilian delegates, only pseudonyms are given in this publication (and in Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America*, p. 51). They represented the CGTB, the União dos Trabalhadores Marítimos e Portuários do Brasil, and the Centro Cosmopolita. Stephen Clissold writes (*Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1918-1968: A Documentary Survey*, p. 12) that the CSLA founding congress was presided over by Aleksandr Lozovsky, head of the Red International of Labor Unions.

ence of Latin American Communist parties, sponsored by the Comintern's South American Secretariat. The thirty-eight delegates from fourteen countries discussed "oppressed racial groups"<sup>3</sup> and the importance of allying the peasantry to the proletariat. Basbaum, who headed the Brazilian delegation, found the meetings well organized but politically unhelpful because conditions differed from country to country. The Brazilian delegates heard much about the plight of acculturated Indians who shared the hardships of the white peasants, which seemed more applicable to Bolivia, Peru, or Paraguay than to Brazil.<sup>4</sup>

As had been decided by the Central Committee (CC) of the PCB, Basbaum took advantage of his stay in Buenos Aires to visit Luís Carlos Prestes and invite him to be the presidential candidate of a PCB-Prestes Column united front. Basbaum, startled to find the Cavalier of Hope without his well-publicized beard, presented two papers: a letter from Maurício de Lacerda and a credential from the CC. Prestes presented two of his companions: Antônio de Siqueira Campos and Juarez Távora. Basbaum was as surprised by the youthful and unrevolutionary appearance of the three column leaders as they were by his own lack of years.<sup>5</sup>

After Prestes inquired about the program of the united front, Basbaum spent part of a night in his hotel room formulating one that would be radical enough to allow him a little bargaining room. He called for (1) nationalization of the land, and division of large landholdings; (2) nationalization of the imperialist banking and industrial companies; (3) repudiation of foreign debts; (4) freedom to organize, and freedom for the press; (5) the right to strike; (6) legality for the PCB; (7) the eight-hour day, vacation laws, wage increases, and other betterments for the workers.<sup>6</sup>

The column veterans, especially shocked at the thought of repudiating foreign debts, found the program too extreme.<sup>7</sup> Távora, who said that he was very Catholic and that Communists were dangerous,<sup>8</sup> opposed negotiation with the PCB and gave Basbaum the impression he wanted to

<sup>3</sup> Alexander, *Communism in Latin America*, p. 36. Victorio Codovilla of Argentina and Jules Humbert-Droz of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) presided over the meetings of the conference.

<sup>4</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86. The program is also given in Leoncio Basbaum, *História Sincera da República*, II, 403.

<sup>7</sup> Basbaum, *História Sincera*, II, 404.

<sup>8</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 86.

rely on a barrack uprising to make Prestes president of Brazil. Siqueira Campos, uninterested in elections, spoke of "arming the workers" and putting them under Prestes's orders in a new column that would conquer cities and defeat government troops.

Although Prestes rejected the offered candidacy and described Basbaum's program as too radical, he did not close the door to a possible alliance. He spoke of the books he had received from Astrogildo Pereira and said he wished to learn more about Communism and Marxism. Therefore Basbaum acquired from Victorio Codovilla, secretary-general of the Argentine Communist Party, more books by Lenin and Marx, as well as the Resolutions of the Sixth World Congress and literature about the Communist Party of Argentina. These he left with Prestes.<sup>9</sup>

When Basbaum asked Prestes to suggest a candidate and a program for uniting the people and the revolutionaries of the 1920's, the Cavalier of Hope amazed Basbaum by naming J. J. Seabra.<sup>10</sup> Prestes's program, presented with the approval of his two companions, was brief: the secret vote; eradication of illiteracy; justice; freedom to organize and freedom of the press; betterments for the workers.

Basbaum could not accept so mild a program. He returned to Rio feeling that the column leaders' lack of knowledge about "real conditions in Brazil" was on a par with their complete lack of humor. He told the CC that meetings with Prestes held no future, that the "revolution" planned by the column was very different from the one planned by the Party, and that the PCB should make its own revolution, with or without Prestes—preferably without him. The CC, however, wanted to prepare for the "third uprising" predicted in the theses of the Third National Congress. It decided to maintain relations with Prestes (either directly or through his representatives in Brazil) in spite of his unacceptable program.<sup>11</sup>

Basbaum writes that this decision marked the beginning of *prestismo* "which would dismantle the Party in 1929 and especially in the following year. Many comrades, abandoning the Party, began to accept the leadership of the Cavalier."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.


<sup>10</sup> Basbaum, *História Sincera*, II, 404.

<sup>11</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.



BOOK X: *Decline of the PCB, 1929-1930*





## 1. Azevedo Lima and the Presidential Election

Throughout 1929 the presidential election, scheduled for March 1, 1930, attracted far more attention than any other matter. The press filled its pages with editorial speculation, advice, propaganda, and the opinions of notables.

Early in 1929 the *Correio da Manhã* reported daily the cumulative results of what it called a public opinion poll. Invariably it showed Luís Carlos Prestes in first place. Bergamíni, a little farther down on the list, was ahead of the three state governors who were the serious candidates: Antônio Carlos de Andrada of Minas, Júlio Prestes of São Paulo, and Getúlio Vargas of Rio Grande do Sul. Maurício de Lacerda trailed them but was far ahead of Azevedo Lima.<sup>1</sup>

While it was still uncertain which of the three ambitious governors would get the official nod from the president, Azevedo Lima dealt the PCB a distressing blow by coming out in favor of his friend and former congressional colleague, Júlio Prestes, the governor of São Paulo. José Oiticica, writing in *A Patria* on March 13, 1929, could not resist telling of the "sad deception" practiced on the PCB by "the boastful Communist (?) congressman, Sr. Azevedo Lima." Azevedo Lima, Oiticica wrote,

<sup>1</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 17, 1929.

"very understandably sent to the devil the Communist gang which had no probable future."<sup>2</sup>

The BOC repudiated Azevedo Lima for not complying with the program he had earlier approved and accepted. "The proletariat," it said, "has faith exclusively in its own force, its own political, syndical, mass organization, such as the BOC, and it does not have the least confidence in these politicians without principles."<sup>3</sup>

Oiticica reminded his readers that it had been the anarchists who had consistently advised the workers to confide only in their own force. "The brains of the Bloco, Marxist to the liver, who turn so much to Marxist explanations to slander others, have revealed themselves to be the blindest of 'historic determinists'. . . . If Azevedo Lima, proclaimed a god by the Bloco, ended up an imposter and traitor, who can affirm that other impostors are not to be found in Castro Rabelo, Brandão, Minervino, Danton Jobim, and all the deceptive Communist clique that has the impudence to acclaim itself a proletarian and syndical organization?"<sup>4</sup>

In July 1929 President Washington Luís chose Júlio Prestes for the candidacy of the unbeatable Republican parties and made it known that the political machines of seventeen of Brazil's twenty states backed Júlio Prestes. Vargas of Rio Grande do Sul became the candidate of the opposition, which called itself the *Aliança Liberal*. It had the support of the *Partido Democrático* and the political machines of the states of Minas, Rio Grande do Sul, and Paraíba.

Most of the press favored the *Aliança Liberal*. In Rio it could count on *Correio da Manhã*, Assis Chateaubriand's *O Jornal*, *Jornal do Commercio* (with Félix Pacheco), *A Manhã* (when run by Adolfo Porto), and José Eduardo de Macedo Soares's recently founded *Diario Carioca*.<sup>5</sup>

Although the PCB opposed both Júlio Prestes and Vargas, Leônidas de Resende, the "Communist" hero of the PCB in 1927, supported Vargas. After serving as the first editor-in-chief of the *Diario Carioca*, he

<sup>2</sup> José Oiticica article in *A Patria*, March 13, 1929, reproduced in José Oiticica, "Caiu Fora," *Ação Directa* 2, no. 6 (May 1, 1929).

<sup>3</sup> From BOC manifesto given in José Oiticica, "Caiu Fora," *Ação Directa* 2, no. 6 (May 1, 1929). After Azevedo Lima gave his backing to Júlio Prestes, Rio Municipal Councilman Osvaldo Moura Nobre, elected by the votes of Azevedo Lima's followers, attacked Brandão calling him a "police agent" (Brandão, interview, June 27, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> Oiticica, "Caiu Fora."

<sup>5</sup> Nelson Werneck Sodré, *A História da Imprensa no Brasil*, p. 427.



joined José Augusto Mota Lima in codirecting the pro-Aliança Liberal *A Esquerda* and *A Batalha*.<sup>6</sup>

Mário Rodrigues founded *Critica*, which supported Júlio Prestes. Other Rio advocates of the administration candidate were *O Paiz*, *A Notícia*, and *A Noite* (of Geraldo Rocha).<sup>7</sup>

The official candidate, certain of victory under the prevailing electoral practices and enjoying the greater financial resources, gained some unexpected converts. One was Senator Irineu Machado. In the Municipal Council Maurício de Lacerda derided Irineu Machado's statement that Júlio Prestes should be supported because "a struggle at this moment might provoke foreign intervention."<sup>8</sup> Maurício said that Irineu Machado had become a conservative, a simple corporal in the new Prestes Column, the Júlio Prestes Column.

The PCB, which had decided to put up its own candidates, explained why it did not favor the Vargas-led Aliança Liberal. For the liberation of "the proletarian masses and the small bourgeoisie," a program was needed that included two essential points: confiscation of large landholdings to be distributed among poor peasants, and a fierce struggle against international imperialism. Neither the "Liberals" nor the "Democrats" could comply with such a program because "they are allied with the imperialists."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 424, 427.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *O Jornal*, September 13, 1929.

<sup>9</sup> "Para Robustecer a Aliança do Proletariado e da Classe Media contra os Inimigos Comuns," *A Classe Operaria*, second phase, no. 73 (September 14, 1929).

## 2. Police Break up the BOC Nominating Convention

Persecution of Communists continued after the end of the long graphic workers' strike. On June 15, 1929, Sadi Garibaldi was arrested.<sup>1</sup> Five days later Rio policemen invaded the rooms on Senador Pompeu Street that housed the CGTB and proletarian youth and women's groups. There the

<sup>1</sup> *O Jornal*, June 16, 1929.

police rounded up seventy-nine, mostly workers' children attending a class organized by the União dos Trabalhadores em Indústria Metalúrgica (Union of Workers in the Metallurgical Industry).<sup>2</sup> Teachers, four women students, and all but the youngest of the children were jailed by the Fourth Delegacia. Besides protesting, Minervino de Oliveira gave notice that the efforts of the authorities to intimidate the workers would be no deterrent to the people's movement.

*O Jornal* decided to publish a series of articles on Communism in Brazil. For this "vast inquiry" about "the views of the extreme Left on national problems,"<sup>3</sup> it sought assistance from Brandão. Although Brandão submitted much written information, none of it was published because, after Fourth Delegado Oliveira Sobrinho saw the introductory article on *O Jornal's* front page, he threatened to close the newspaper if it continued the series.<sup>4</sup> Therefore all that *O Jornal's* readers learned from the "vast inquiry" was some biographical information about Brandão. The municipal councilman was quoted as saying that for Communism he had sacrificed a peaceful existence and his studies of physical chemistry and Hindu literature; he had ruined himself financially and lost his old friends. "Yet, if I had had more, I would have sacrificed more."<sup>5</sup>

In November 1929 *Correio da Manhã* accurately reported that "the police campaign against Communism goes forward," and that "every manifestation of a Bolshevik character brings an immediate reaction by the police."<sup>6</sup>

Agents of the Fourth Delegacia, stationed in front of Brandão's home in the Santa Teresa district on November 6, reportedly arrested about eighty-five persons when BOC leaders and delegates of labor unions gathered there for a convention. The selection of the BOC's candidates for the 1930 elections had to be made at a secret conclave that night.<sup>7</sup>

The Communists planned to make public the names of their candidates at the Praça Marechal Floriano meeting of November 7, held to celebrate the twelfth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. At 4:00 P.M. *viúvas*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, June 21, 1929. The former União dos Operários Metalúrgicos (PCB-oriented) changed its name in 1929 to the more inclusive União dos Trabalhadores em Indústria Metalúrgica.

<sup>3</sup> "Através do Prisma Marxista-Leninista," *O Jornal*, July 19, 1929.

<sup>4</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, Rio de Janeiro, November 14, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Barreto Leite Filho, "A Vida de um Militante Proletário," *O Jornal*, July 19, 1929.

<sup>6</sup> "O Dia Policial," *Correio da Manhã*, November 8, 1929.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

*alegres* were already at the square near the Municipal Theater. The meeting began with a speech in which Minervino de Oliveira condemned the police for what they had done at Santa Teresa the day before.

The crowd cheered the name of each BOC candidate on Minervino's list: for president of Brazil, Minervino himself; for vice-president, railroad worker Gastão Valentim Antunes; for senator, Fenelon José Ribeiro; for federal congressmen, lawyer Paulo de Lacerda and graphic worker Mário Graziúni.<sup>8</sup>

Minervino introduced Graziúni. But the graphic worker could not make his address. Policemen, having learned the candidates' names, decided to break up the meeting, and advanced into the crowd, swinging their sticks and shooting into the air.<sup>9</sup> The crowd dispersed, but not before a few people had been wounded and many arrested. After the policemen left, Otávio and Laura Brandão tried to revive the meeting by making more speeches. "Camaradas, trabalhadores," Laura shouted. But the policemen returned and cut short this second effort.<sup>10</sup>

The police announced that thirty-five were taken from Praça Marechal Floriano to the central police building, identified, and released. The daily press gave the names of six wounded. *A Classe Operaria* wrote that "besides light wounds caused by shots, Comrade Prado had his arm pierced by a criminal bullet of the agents of Sr. Oliveira Sobrinho. . . . The police of Sr. Coriolano de Góis, with the help of blows, jailed about one hundred workers."<sup>11</sup>

The police closed down *A Classe Operaria*.<sup>12</sup> The government's majority in the Municipal Council, which had been in the habit of drowning out Councilman Brandão's speeches, undertook a "determined attack on Communism." The "hailstorm" of speeches and remarks by Councilmen Floriano de Góis, Dormund Martins, Correia Dutra, Clapp Filho, and Vieira de Moura was so aggressive that Brandão was described as "apparently losing his wits."<sup>13</sup> One councilman shouted "Down with Communism! Down with destruction," and another interjected: "These Communists must be swept from Brazil." Dormund Martins declared that "the Brazilian workers hold the true notions of patriotism, family,

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 5, 1968.

<sup>11</sup> Rui Facó, *A Classe Operária: 20 Anos de Luta*, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14. After late 1929 *A Classe Operaria* was printed clandestinely—no longer on the *O Jornal* press.

<sup>13</sup> "No Conselho Municipal," *Correio da Manhã*, November 14, 1929.

and home, whereas the Communists preach the destruction of everything." He went on to tell of how thirty-four Central do Brasil Railroad workers had been drawn to a meeting by false information. Unexpectedly they had found themselves in a Communist group, had been arrested and dismissed from their jobs; now their families were destitute while Communist leaders comfortably enjoyed "their easy chairs in the Municipal Council." Clapp Filho arose to defend with ardor the Central do Brasil workers.

Brandão was given no time to reply. Outside the Council Chamber he discovered insolent groups, said to be made up of former Central do Brasil workers who were furious with the Communists. He refused the protection offered by secret agents of the Fourth Delegacia but agreed to allow two soldiers of the Military Police to accompany him home.<sup>14</sup>

In December 1929 Batista Pereira, known as the municipal councilman who looked after the interests of the Light and Power Company, introduced a motion forbidding the publication of speeches by Communist councilmen in the official record (*Diário de Debates*). After the adoption of this motion, Brandão expressed his views in the form of interruptions (*apartes*) to the speeches of others. Early in 1930 the censorship was extended to the *apartes*.<sup>15</sup>

By then the PCB had set up a five-man Comitê Militar Revolucionário (which included Leoncio Basbaum, José Casíni, and Paulo de Lacerda) to organize Communist military groups to participate in the "third revolutionary explosion" with "arms in hand."<sup>16</sup> To advance this work, the Comitê published a clandestine weekly, *O Triângulo de Ferro* (whose emblem pictured a worker, a peasant, and a soldier). Basbaum conducted what he calls "never-ending 'preliminary conversations'" with *tenentes* Brago Muri, Osvaldo Cordeiro de Farias, and Newton Estilac Leal, and kept in touch with PCB cells in the Navy and Marines.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Os Operarios da Central Pretenderam Aggredir o Intendente Comunista," *Correio da Manhã*, November 15, 1929.

<sup>15</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 5, 1968, November 14, 1970, June 27, 1971.

<sup>16</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," pp. 90-91.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* *O Triângulo de Ferro* was later named *União de Ferro*, and a sailor was added to the emblem.

### 3. Prestes Breaks with Maurício de Lacerda

In a letter to a journalist published in August 1929, Luís Carlos Prestes declared that he and his associates remained independent of all political groups and intransigent in the defense of "the just demands of a people impoverished by tyranny." Prestes added that it was the greatest pleasure to learn from the letter he was answering that "the men who, until yesterday, fought most ferociously against the ideas and principles defended by the Brazilian revolution, reveal themselves today not only sympathetic to, but warm adepts of, these ideas, and are even disposed to use the violent means of revolution to bring about their triumph."

Prestes also said that the attitude of "absolute independence" of the Brazilian revolutionaries might be modified depending on "the sincerity and personal disinterest shown by the present dissidents, and their resoluteness in turning words into action."<sup>1</sup>

Rubens do Amaral, director of Chateaubriand's recently established *Diário de São Paulo*, observed that the declarations of Commander Prestes contained nothing surprising. The veterans of the revolution, he wrote, would only march at the side of the Aliança if they saw that it was determined to take up arms should the officials seek to deprive it of rights gained in the ballot boxes.<sup>2</sup>

In mid-September 1929 *A Classe Operaria* presented the PCB's ambivalent view of the Cavalier of Hope. On the plus side, it said that Prestes had "really made declarations that will push the Brazilian people to the revolutionary front of the masses." It cited "the fearless rebel chief's" statement to Maria Lacerda de Moura that Brazil could not save itself with the "bourgeois revolution" of Aliança supporter Antônio Carlos but only with "an economic revolution of the masses against the lords of landed estates and mills, the enslavers of their workers." On the negative side, *A Classe Operaria* cited declarations in which Prestes recommended that his friends in Pernambuco participate in the Democratic party convention and in which he seemed to believe in the "revolution-

<sup>1</sup> *O Jornal*, August 23, 1929, reproducing letter addressed by Prestes to journalist Barros Cassal, of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul.

<sup>2</sup> Rubens do Amaral, "A Ameaça da Revolução," *O Jornal*, August 29, 1929.

ary" sincerity of well-known "reactionaries."<sup>3</sup> *A Classe Operaria* said that it had proved beyond any doubt that all of these "Liberal" and "Democratic" elements were "manacled" to the international imperialists and even to the enslavers of farm workers mentioned by Prestes.

In Niterói in October 1929, Maurício de Lacerda, presenting himself as the representative of Prestes, asked the PCB's CC to call on the people to vote for Vargas. Brandão challenged Maurício's right to make such an appeal in Prestes's name.<sup>4</sup>

In November Prestes agreed with Josias Carneiro Leão that Maurício was not properly representing him.<sup>5</sup> He therefore dispatched Leão from Buenos Aires with a confidential letter to his "military representative" in Rio, Captain Silo Meireles.<sup>6</sup>

The letter said that a strong step should be taken to disavow opportunistic exploitation by Maurício de Lacerda, "whose candidacy for Congress was launched by Mendes Tavares and Batista Pereira. . . . If we do not break clearly and positively with such *Liberais*, if we do not take advantage of the present political and economic situation to radicalize our program, we shall become ridiculously involved with the Bernardes and Epitácios,<sup>7</sup> compromising, in return for uncertain material help, the great moral force that is ours and which is the fruit of the sacrifices of many companions. Day by day the conviction grows in me that those *Liberais* want everything except revolution."

Prestes further told Silo Meireles that it was no longer possible to believe that men like Bernardes, Antônio Carlos, Borges de Medeiros, and Getúlio Vargas really wanted to "regenerate the Republic" or were "sufficiently naïve to help a revolution that necessarily would have to eliminate them." Therefore, Prestes said, "only one road remains for us—the road that I have been preaching for much time and which consists in our raising with courage the flag of practical and positive popular rights, capable of stimulating the will of the great masses of our impoverished population in the cities and backlands." Prestes proposed the proclamation of "a struggle against large landholders and the owners of industry,

<sup>3</sup> "Para Robustecer a Aliança do Proletariado e da Classe Media contra os Inimigos Comuns," *A Classe Operaria*, September 14, 1929.

<sup>4</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, November 14, 1970, June 27, 1971; Brandão, letter, May 25, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, interview, June 28, 1971.

<sup>6</sup> See *A Noite*, June 3, 1930.

<sup>7</sup> Ex-Presidents Artur Bernardes and Eptácio Pessoa supported the Aliança Liberal.

and against the foreign supporters of those oppressors." He predicted that a drive for such a program would gain immense support, worth much more than the "material help" suggested by "the pseudoliberals."

Prestes stressed the need to act at once, pointing out that continued inactivity and confusion would badly erode "the prestige of the Revolution." The coffee crisis and economic recession, he said, would force the government to seek a foreign loan—"obligating it to a rigorous counter-revolutionary program. The appropriate agreements will be made with petty politicians in order to smash all revolutionary fervor."<sup>8</sup>

Prestes asked Silo Meireles to show his message to Long March veterans Juarez Távora, Siqueira Campos, Osvaldo Cordeiro de Farias, Newton Estilac Leal, and Djalma Dutra.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, he suggested that the revolutionary leaders "of all of Brazil" meet in Buenos Aires "to resolve definitely the attitude to take in this emergency."

As a result of this letter, early in December 1929 Brandão was able to read a note in the Municipal Council. Signed by a confidant of Prestes, it said that Prestes was vexed at Maurício de Lacerda for exploiting Prestes's name for political purposes.<sup>10</sup> The information shocked Maurício, who had recently defended Prestes after Brandão and Minervino repeated the criticism of Prestes carried in *A Classe Operaria*.

Most of the conspiring *tenentes* did not see the struggle as one against industrialists, large landowners, and their "foreign supporters." Feeling that Prestes's letter to Silo Meireles would cost them valuable allies, they kept it secret. Osvaldo Cordeiro de Farias, who directed the *tenentes'* conspiracy from a prison at the First Cavalry Regiment, put the blame for Prestes's letter on Josias Carneiro Leão.<sup>11</sup>

In reply to Maurício de Lacerda's demand for an explanation of Brandão's disclosure, Távora offered to write and wire Prestes. Távora also asked Maurício to remain silent about the matter. For the sake of the revolutionary movement Maurício agreed, even though Silo Meireles urged Maurício to defend himself. Meireles did not agree with Prestes's condemnation of Maurício, and he authorized Maurício to let that be known.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Prestes's letter of November 22, 1929, in *A Noite*, June 2, 1930.

<sup>9</sup> Luís Carlos Prestes was directly in touch with João Alberto Lins de Barros, another prominent Coluna leader.

<sup>10</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, speech in Congress, reported in *Correio da Manhã*, June 6, 1930. Maurício de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, p. 154.

<sup>11</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, interview, June 28, 1971.

<sup>12</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, p. 168.

In Buenos Aires Prestes accepted the invitation of Rio Grande do Sul state officials to discuss the Brazilian situation with Vargas in Porto Alegre. But Prestes's poor opinion of politicians was not modified by his secret meeting in the governor's palace, nor by the conversation he had later, at Vargas's suggestion, with Rio Grande Justice Secretary Osvaldo Aranha and others at Aranha's large home in Porto Alegre. Aranha only impressed Prestes with the amount of money he had available. He offered eight hundred contos to Prestes to use for the revolution, and, after Prestes returned to Buenos Aires, sent that amount to him.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Emídio da Costa Miranda, interview, July 19, 1963. Prestes (interview, September 5, 1963) has stated that he received 100,000 Uruguayan pesos, the equivalent to about eight hundred contos.

#### 4. Vargas on the Social Question

When Getúlio Vargas drew up the program of the Aliança Liberal he consulted Professor Joaquim Pimenta, among others. The socialist from the northeast suggested reforming "the few" labor laws that existed, "beginning with the syndical law of 1907" and including laws about labor accidents, vacations, and cooperatives. He recommended that the pension laws, then limited to railroad and dock workers, be extended to cover all workers. In presenting this "minimal program," the law professor bore in mind that the government "could only be conservative" and that the conservative classes "would naturally oppose a more advanced or more complete plan of social reforms."<sup>1</sup>

Joaquim Pimenta was therefore surprised when he learned about the program of the Aliança Liberal, read soberly by Vargas before a wildly enthusiastic throng in Rio on January 2, 1930. It went, he says, beyond the suggestions he had submitted.<sup>2</sup>

Vargas said that the government should deal with "the social question" in a serious way. He pointed out that Brazil had little social legislation and less yet that was enforced, in spite of her obligations as a Versailles Treaty signer and her membership in the International Labor Bureau.

<sup>1</sup> Joaquim Pimenta, *Retalhos do Passado: Episódios que Vivi e Fatos que Testemunhei*, p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



"If," he said, "our protectionist policy favors industrialists, bringing them private fortunes, we also have the duty to assist the proletariat with measures that will assure it relative comfort and stability, even during sickness and old age. In all civilized nations, factory and commercial work by women and children is governed by special conditions, which are, unfortunately, unknown in this country."

Among the measures recommended by Vargas for helping the proletariat were the extension of the pension programs, the adoption of a labor code, and the application of laws dealing with minimum wages, vacations, and consumer cooperatives. He called for steps that would provide workers with education, hygiene, nourishment, housing, credit, and recreation.

"Similarly we must attend to the situation of hundreds of thousands of Brazilians who live in the backlands, without education or hygiene, poorly nourished, poorly clothed, whose only contact with the government lies in the exorbitant taxes they pay." Vargas spoke of grouping them in agricultural colonies, giving them land and tools, and awakening their interest in economic activity. This would be what he called "the basic valorization that we must initiate at once—the valorization of human capital."<sup>3</sup>

The Aliança program also called for a new election law and the reorganization of the systems of justice and education. It offered amnesty for all the 1922-1926 revolutionaries and fuller guarantees of individual liberties. It promised economic development for the nation as a whole, with specific attention to afflicted regions of Amazônia and the northeast. Federal "protection" for the coffee and cattle-raising industries was offered.

<sup>3</sup> Getulio Vargas, *A Nova Política do Brasil*, I, 26-28.

## 5. PCB Setbacks: Election Day and May Day, 1930

The Vargas "social program" was effective in bringing to the Aliança Liberal much of the proletarian support sought by the BOC. Even more effective, Basbaum writes, was the silence of Luís Carlos Prestes: it allowed the Aliança to picture the Cavalier of Hope as its ally and the

ally of Vargas. Furthermore, although the BOC used the slogan "To Vote for the BOC Is to Vote for the Revolution," much of the proletariat doubted the ability of the BOC or PCB to make a revolution.<sup>1</sup>

To run for election to the federal Senate on March 1, 1930, from the state of Rio de Janeiro, the BOC nominated José Francisco da Silva, its unsuccessful candidate for the Niterói mayorship in September 1929. The BOC selected Duvitiliano Ramos and Domingos Brás as candidates for federal congressional seats from that state. Ramos, a graphic worker, wrote novels and histories that found no publishers.<sup>2</sup> Brás, the Petrópolis textile worker and sonnet writer who had survived Clevelândia, had recently switched from anarchism to Communism.<sup>3</sup>

One of the BOC's candidates for Congress from São Paulo was Aristides Lobo, who had broken with the PCB leadership in 1928. Plínio Melo, the former São Paulo BOC leader who had expressed his "protest against persecutions" by refusing to accept his law degree, became the BOC candidate for Congress from his home state of Rio Grande do Sul.

Authorities affiliated with both Republican and Aliança Liberal state regimes interfered with BOC campaigns. Individuals were arrested for distributing BOC propaganda. It was common practice to jail the BOC candidates and their supporters. In Petrópolis a month before the election, Domingos Brás and two of his backers were arrested and sent to Rio's Fourth Delegacia, where they were still being held on the eve of the elections. In São Paulo, Aristides Lobo was jailed and later expelled from the city. Hundreds of workers, the BOC complained, were arrested in the São Paulo cities of Santos, Ribeirão Preto, Sertãozinho, and Catanduva, and in the state capital.<sup>4</sup> Jailings and prohibitions of BOC rallies were also reported in Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais. In Rio Grande do Sul, Plínio Melo was arrested, beaten, and deported to Uruguay long before election day.<sup>5</sup>

The BOC's brave presidential candidate, Minervino de Oliveira, was

<sup>1</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," pp. 97-98.

<sup>2</sup> Astrojildo Pereira, "Ainda o Trabalho Intelectual," *Imprensa Popular*, December 25, 1956.

<sup>3</sup> As recently as February 1929 the anarchist *Ação Directa* carried an article by Domingos Brás.

<sup>4</sup> A Comissão da Campanha Eleitoral do B.O.C., "Proteste contra a Reacção Votando nos Candidatos do Bloco Operario e Camponez," *Correio da Manhã*, March 1, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> Plínio Gomes de Melo, interviews, November 26, 1968, November 15, 1970.

jailed for several days in Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, when he tried to preside over a Congress of Agricultural Workers, which was broken up. Then in the Bangu section of the Federal District he was arrested together with congressional candidates Paulo de Lacerda and Mário Grazíni. Paulo de Lacerda was arrested again (by a police officer whose brother was an election opponent of Paulo) when he tried to hold a rally at a textile plant in Gávea. Fernando de Lacerda complained of being threatened with violence if he worked on behalf of the BOC in Gávea.<sup>6</sup> Before dawn on February 28, Rio State policemen invaded the home of BOC senatorial aspirant José Francisco da Silva and took him off to jail, where he was being held incommunicado on election day.<sup>7</sup>

As expected, in the contest for the presidency, Júlio Prestes, the Republican favorite of Washington Luís, was declared the winner over Getúlio Vargas. The BOC did miserably even in the Federal District. There, where 59,478 voters were recorded as participating in the presidential contest, Minervino de Oliveira polled only 534 votes and his BOC running mate only 515. The BOC's senatorial candidate in the Federal District was given 629 votes.<sup>8</sup>

To choose ten federal congressmen from the Federal District (five from each district) electors could cast four votes apiece. In the Second District, with its greater proletarian population, the BOC's Grazíni did poorly, receiving only 1,927 votes; in the First District Paulo de Lacerda received 2,799 votes, a long way from the approximately 16,000 needed for winning a seat. When the new Brazilian Trotskyite organ, *A Lucta de Classe*, analyzed the outcome, it pointed out that in the Federal District, where at least 20,000 of the 59,478 electors were "genuine workers," the BOC had polled less than 1 percent of the total in the presidential race, and only 2 percent in the congressional race: 1,182 electors had given Paulo de Lacerda and Grazíni a total of 4,726 votes in the two districts.<sup>9</sup>

Of the five elected to the Chamber of Deputies from the Second District, first place went to proadministration Cesário de Melo, third to Maurício de Lacerda, fourth to Adolfo Bergamíni (now in the bad graces of Maurício), and fifth to Azevedo Lima. Henrique Dodsworth,

<sup>6</sup> A Comissão da Campanha Eleitoral do B.O.C., "Proteste contra a Reacção Votando."

<sup>7</sup> "Factos de Nictheroy," *Correio da Manhã*, March 1, 1930.

<sup>8</sup> "A Actuação do P.C. nas Eleições," *A Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1 (Rio de Janeiro, May 8, 1930). In the Federal District the race between Vargas and Júlio Prestes was close.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

Machado Coelho, and Cândido Pessoa were among the successful five in the First District. Here the frequent loser, Evaristo de Moraes, received about one-third of the votes necessary for winning a seat.

Maurício de Lacerda examined the nationwide contest and declared that "the dictators of the nation have turned the government into a closed club."<sup>10</sup> Day after day the opposition press questioned the authenticity of Júlio Prestes's victory.

On April 17, 1930, *A Classe Operaria*, in one of its sporadic, clandestine numbers, published two conflicting views about the outlook for revolution. One was "the resolution of the Communist International on the Brazilian political situation," the "result of a serious examination, made in Moscow, of the situation of Brazil and of the PCB." It emphasized the sharpening struggle between the two sectors of the directing class: (1) the feudal owners of large landholdings, in control of the federal government and associated with British imperialism, and (2) the "industrial bourgeoisie," backed by United States imperialism. The struggle, the Comintern said, would become aggravated with the worsening economic crisis and constituted "the fundamental premise for the ripening of the revolutionary situation of Brazil." The Comintern added that the PCB "must prepare to take over the direction of the revolutionary insurrection of the great masses," which could break out on account of the presidential elections.<sup>11</sup>

The other article ("What Is New in Politics") was pessimistic about an outbreak by the defeated Aliança Liberal politicians. "The Aliança," it said, "has retreated to strictly legal terrain where the question of the presidential election is to be resolved in a peaceful manner advantageous to the conservative candidate." All that remained, *A Classe Operaria* said, was the likelihood of a pronouncement in the near future by the Prestes Column leaders.<sup>12</sup>

While the Communists thus pondered, the campaign against them continued. Five "dangerous Communists," escorted by eleven soldiers and a sergeant, were transported from Rio Grande do Sul to Rio's Fourth Delegacia, prompting *Correio da Manhã* to report that "Communism goes on infiltrating, a consequence of the quiet propaganda made by the

<sup>10</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, March 9, 1930.

<sup>11</sup> Resolution of the Communist International given in *A Classe Operaria* of April 17, 1930, quoted in "Novidade Política e Confusão Ideológica! *A Classe Operaria* versus P.C.," *A Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1 (Rio de Janeiro, May 8, 1930).

<sup>12</sup> "O Que Ha de Novo na Política," in *A Classe Operaria* of April 17, 1930, quoted in "Novidade Política e Confusão Ideológica!"

defenders of the ideas of Lenin. . . . These individuals who preach Communism are always foreigners and it is difficult for the authorities to find a single Brazilian among them."<sup>13</sup> Pedro de Oliveira Sobrinho announced that the five caught in Rio Grande do Sul—all reportedly foreigners, some of them Russians—would be deported from Brazil.

In Rio the customary public commemorations of May Day were forbidden. The Communists, as usual, had called on the proletariat to participate in a rally at Praça Mauá. But large police contingents were present, and they filled the police wagons with workers and scheduled speakers, among them Minervino de Oliveira, Paulo and Fernando de Lacerda, Sadi Garibaldi, and Laura Brandão.<sup>14</sup>

Astrogildo Pereira and Otávio Brandão were in Buenos Aires attending a conclave at which the South American Secretariat of the Communist International was examining the failings of the PCB—with special emphasis on the failings of Brandão and Astrogildo.

<sup>13</sup> "O Dia Policial," *Correio da Manhã*, March 29, 1930.

<sup>14</sup> "O 1º de Maio: Não Se Realizou Comício em Parte Alguma," *Correio da Manhã*, May 2, 1930.

## 6. Decisions Reached in Buenos Aires, May 1930

**I**n Moscow early in 1930, at a meeting of the presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, Chairman Dmitri Manuilsky directed the Communist parties to "tear asunder the umbilical cord binding them to bourgeois class society." He was, he said, speaking "so firmly that we shall be heard in Latin America," where Communist parties were "finding themselves nowhere in the revolutionary movement, or dragging at the tail of other classes, losing their own individuality and renouncing the struggle for the hegemony in the revolutionary movement of the working class." In the Latin American parties he demanded "a radical change in the whole daily practice, in the direction of independent class policy."<sup>1</sup>

Manuilsky attacked practices that he said were causing Latin American

<sup>1</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, May 22, 1930.

workers' and peasants' blocs to "degenerate" into parties "parallel" to Communist parties. He accused Brazilian Communists of collaborating, "under the guise of the workers' and peasants' bloc," with the "so-called Prestes Column." "This policy," he declared, "literally leads to disaster."<sup>2</sup>

Manuilsky's sectarian directive was the "word of order" at the Buenos Aires meeting of the South American Secretariat of the Communist International held in April and May 1930. Besides considering the "rightist errors" of the PCB leaders, the secretariat made decisions about the PCB's relations with Luís Carlos Prestes and a possible new *tenentista* revolt. The meeting was dominated by August Guralsky, the intelligent Lithuanian who had become the new director of the secretariat. To Brazilian and other Latin American Communists he was known as "Rústico."<sup>3</sup>

The PCB's forthcoming extreme devotion to "obreirismo"—a policy of placing top Party posts in the hands of "genuine laborers"—could be foreseen at the Buenos Aires meetings. Although early in 1930 Astrogildo had brought instructions from Moscow for the PCB to "proletarianize itself" (resulting in the ostensible replacement of some intellectuals, Basbaum among them, on the CC),<sup>4</sup> the South American Secretariat felt that the PCB had not gone far enough. It regarded Astrogildo and Brandão as rightists and members of the small bourgeoisie.<sup>5</sup> Plínio Melo, present to report on conditions in Rio Grande do Sul, was of no help to Astrogildo or Brandão. He asserted that the PCB had been guilty of making concessions to the small bourgeoisie and had not been behaving in a Marxist manner.

Brandão, once the PCB's leading theoretician, was condemned with particular severity.<sup>6</sup> During the two-week meeting in Buenos Aires he had

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> T. Stephen Cheston has furnished information about August Guralsky, who directed the South American Secretariat from 1930 to 1934 in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Paraguay. Said to have received high positions in the Communist Youth movement from Lenin after being active in the Lithuanian revolution of 1917 and joining the Red army, Guralsky (alias Kleine and Lepetit) was Béla Kun's lieutenant in "the March action" of 1921 in Germany and was involved in the German insurrection of October 1923. He appeared in France in 1924–1925. He was a very close associate of Zinoviev and stayed loyal to him to the end. Like Zinoviev he perished in the Moscow purges of the 1930's (T. Stephen Cheston, letter, November 13, 1970, and subsequent telephone conversation).

<sup>4</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," pp. 94–95.

<sup>5</sup> Plínio Gomes de Melo, interview, November 26, 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, São Paulo, November 15, 1970.

to listen to sixteen speeches of attack, including personal attack.<sup>7</sup> Already, in the Communist International's "Resolution about the Brazilian Question," published in *A Classe Operaria* on April 17, 1930, he had been found guilty of preaching the "theory of a democratic, petit-bourgeois revolution, under whose hegemony the proletariat would be able to prepare itself to conquer power." This theory, the Communist International explained, was based on a Menshevik, anti-Leninist, anti-Marxist concept and "denies the hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic-bourgeois revolution as the essential guarantee against the revolution's failure and as the best preparation of the proletariat for the conquest of power."<sup>8</sup> The Communist International (Comintern) denounced the "opportunistic" resolutions of the Third National Congress of the PCB. It pictured them as favoring a policy of "following," not leading, the BOC and of awaiting a so-called third revolt, directed by the small bourgeoisie with the proletariat trailing behind.<sup>9</sup>

In Buenos Aires Brandão revealed great dislike for the new far-Left policy, which opposed alliances with non-Communists and called for a purely Communist revolution, with the institution of soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat in Brazil. He found himself alone in his position. Threatened with expulsion from the Party, he ended up by engaging in dozens of self-criticisms and accepting ideas in which he did not believe.<sup>10</sup>

The PCB, organizing itself to lead its own revolution, was directed to have nothing to do with a possible new revolt of the sort that had occurred in 1922 and 1924.<sup>11</sup> As for Luís Carlos Prestes, the PCB should avoid his influence and see to it that "prestista infiltration" did not creep into its life. This was to be done in a manner that would not alienate the masses with whom Prestes was popular.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Octavio Brandão, "A Política de Quadros," *Imprensa Popular*, October 26, 1956.

<sup>8</sup> From "Resolução da Internacional Comunista sobre a Questão Brasileira," given in *A Classe Operaria*, April 17, 1930, and reprinted in part in "Onde Estão os Menchevistas," *A Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1 (Rio de Janeiro, May 8, 1930).

<sup>9</sup>Luiz Carlos Prestes, "Informe de Balanço do Comitê Central do P.C.B. ao IV Congresso do Partido Comunista do Brasil," *Problemas*, no. 64 (December 1954-February 1955), pp. 47-103. See especially, p. 90.

<sup>10</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 14, 1968; August 30, November 14, 1970. See Octavio Brandão, "A Política de Quadros," *Imprensa Popular*, October 26, 1956. Brandão writes that after returning from Buenos Aires to Brazil he had to appear at fifty meetings to engage in self-criticisms of "imaginary errors."

<sup>11</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

<sup>12</sup> Plínio Gomes de Melo, interview, November 15, 1970.

While Gural'sky made these decisions known to PCB leaders, Prestes, also in Buenos Aires, spent some sleepless nights during which he became convinced that he should no longer delay in publicly declaring that the program of the Aliança Liberal was insignificant and that a "real revolution" was needed. He therefore drew up his Manifesto of May. It explained that all Brazilian income depended on British or American capitalism and that it was "ludicrous" to speak of electoral liberty in the absence of economic independence. "The true struggle," Prestes wrote, was against imperialism. Declaring that such a struggle could only be carried out "by a true national insurrection of all the workers," Prestes mentioned the economic crisis to support his contention that the "present possibilities" of success for "the true struggle" were the very best.

According to Prestes's Manifesto of May, the "agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution" was to establish a government of all the workers, based on councils of urban workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors. Prestes added that such a government, the only one able to guarantee the most essential social claims, should seize lands, parcel out plots to peasants, repudiate foreign debts, and confiscate and nationalize mines, banks, public services, concessions, and all means of communication.<sup>13</sup>

Prestes confided to associates that if the Aliança Liberal failed to lead a successful insurrection, he would be able to lead a "real revolution" in about one year, whereas if the Aliança overthrew Washington Luís, he would have to wait two years.<sup>14</sup> He decided to keep the money he had received from Aranha and use it for the insurrection he had in mind.

From Buenos Aires a copy of Prestes's proposed manifesto was taken to São Paulo and Rio by Emídio da Costa Miranda, who had led Realengo Military School cadets in rebellion in 1922 and demonstrated bravery in the march of the Prestes Column. The Rio police jailed and mistreated Emídio, but not before he had shown the manifesto to Siqueira Campos in São Paulo and to Rio conspirators in the clinic of Pedro Ernesto Batista.

Siqueira Campos and João Alberto Lins de Barros rushed from Brazil to Buenos Aires to try to persuade Prestes to withhold or delay publication of his manifesto. They and Miguel Costa, who was living in Buenos Aires, favored working for an Aliança Liberal revolution and thus represented the overwhelming sentiment among Prestes's old followers. After unsatisfactory discussions with Prestes in Buenos Aires, Siqueira Campos

<sup>13</sup> L. C. Prestes Manifesto of May 1930, in Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, pp. 225-229.

<sup>14</sup> Emídio da Costa Miranda, interview, July 19, 1963.



and João Alberto were flying back to Brazil on May 10 when their plane crashed off the coast of Uruguay—resulting in the death of Siqueira Campos.

## 7. Birth of *A Lucta de Classe*

The character of Luís Carlos Prestes and the problems of the PCB were analyzed on May 8, 1930, in the first number of *A Lucta de Classe*, "organ of the Leninist Communist Group." This anti-Stalinist group, which had attracted labor leaders who had broken with the PCB directors, reflected the ideas of Trotskyite intellectuals, especially Mário Pedrosa. In the late 1920's, while Rodolfo Coutinho and Lívio Xavier had kept alive a small organized Communist opposition to the PCB leadership, Mário Pedrosa had been in Europe, seeing something of Boris Souvarine and other Communists who had been expelled from Moscow-line parties. Back in Brazil in 1930, Pedrosa sought to give the Brazilian organized Left Opposition—made up of about fifty persons—ties to similar groups in Europe and Chile, particularly to the group David Rousset hoped to organize in France.<sup>1</sup>

*A Lucta de Classe* explained that its inception was, "more than anything else, the dialectic consequence of two factors: (a) an objective situation favorable to the work of agitation and organization of the masses, and (b) the aggravation of the errors of the directorship of the Communist Party."<sup>2</sup> It published Lenin's unfavorable "last testament" observations about Stalin's character, and Trotsky's attack on the "mechanical concept" of the Bukharinist-Stalinist program for the Communist International.<sup>3</sup> But the new newspaper devoted itself almost exclusively to Brazilian affairs. If it quoted non-Brazilian A. Lozovsky as saying that "our class should be organized by workers; the directorships of our organizations should be made up of workers,"<sup>4</sup> it did so only to lend sup-

<sup>1</sup> Mário Pedrosa, interview, December 4, 1967.

<sup>2</sup> "Nossos Propósitos," *A Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1 (Rio de Janeiro, May 8, 1930).

<sup>3</sup> Leon Trotsky, "O Que é Radicalização," *A Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1 (May 8, 1930).

<sup>4</sup> A. Losovsky, "O Proletariado e os Intelectuaes" (from *El Movimiento Sindical Latino-Americano—Suas Virtudes e Seus Defeitos*), *A Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1.

port to some of its criticisms of the PCB. These criticisms, incidentally, bore much resemblance to the new PCB policy established in Buenos Aires in April and May 1930. However, *A Lucta de Classe's* repeated charges of excessive "bureaucratization" in the PCB had a clear Trotskyite ring that was missing from the Comintern's new Leftism.

*A Lucta de Classe* pointed out that Astrogildo Pereira and other signers of a Communist manifesto, "For the Agrarian and Anti-imperialist Revolution," were "all journalists, college students, and artists; people of the large urban centers, they belong to the small bourgeoisie that frequents the cafés of the large cities." Not a single agrarian worker had signed it.<sup>5</sup>

The PCB was pictured as directed since early 1929 by well-intentioned young men who had done some traveling but who forgot that a majority of the members of their party were uneducated. Imbued with excessive "bureaucratization" and with a policy they called "centralized," these directors, *A Lucta de Classe* said, released a series of orders—little related to the problems of the workers who were supposed to carry them out—in the expectation that all this paper work "prepared everybody ideologically for the revolution. . . . If anyone imprudently thought of reminding the all-knowing directors about the way things were really going, he was bombarded by a fusillade of criticisms from the directors, who, at the same time, gave orders—we repeat, gave orders—for a rainstorm of manifestations in support of the directorship."

*A Lucta de Classe* found that the most combative part of the proletariat, oriented by an inexperienced vanguard that knew little of what a labor union should be, "has found itself in the last few months unionless and at the mercy of the plant owners." "We must," *A Lucta de Classe* resolved, "take advantage of all the questions that arise each day and are of real interest to the workers in order to help them form a class consciousness and take them to organization."<sup>6</sup>

The failure of the PCB's May Day plans was described as another consequence of the complete lack of proletarian organization, a result of the erroneous "putschist, anti-Communist policy of the PCB directors." The PCB, "guided now by the calendar, and now by a strict notion of discipline, of fulfilling orders, whatever they may be, provided they descend from above," had wanted the proletarian demonstration "only for

<sup>5</sup> "Manifesto-torcida," *A Lucta de Classe* I, no. 1. The PCB manifesto had been published in *A Classe Operaria's* issue of January 16, 1930.

<sup>6</sup> "Notas Sindicadas," *A Lucta de Classe* I, no. 1.

superficial reasons." But workers, the Trotskyite organ observed, only gather in squares to demonstrate when a class consciousness exists, that is, when they are syndically and revolutionarily organized in a strong way. "And what do we see in Brazil? An unorganized proletariat, called uselessly and by inadequate means to a struggle for which it was not prepared."<sup>7</sup>

The PCB's electoral defeat on March 1 was ascribed to the leadership's false policy ("the words of order never corresponded to the aspirations of the proletariat") and to such vast Party disorganization that propaganda leaflets had not been passed out at factories, and the distribution of ballots had commenced only five days before the elections.<sup>8</sup> The Trotskyites blamed the disorganization on "the total absence of a truly Marxist line."

Turning to the Comintern's attack on Brandão's "Menshevism," *A Lucta de Classe* declared that Brandão should not be made the scapegoat for errors that were the responsibility of the entire directorship—"the Brandãos, Paulos, Astrogildos, etc." The newspaper said that all these men had carried on "Menshevik, anti-Leninist, anti-Marxist work"; and it added that the Comintern, whose policy regarding China and the Anglo-Russian Committee revealed the same tendency, was condemning PCB errors only after they had produced failures and considerably later than the denouncements made by the Communist Left Opposition to the PCB leadership.<sup>9</sup>

*A Lucta de Classe's* article on Luís Carlos Prestes revealed him as a man whose excellent military qualities would make him worse than useless in the struggle of the proletariat. Written a few days after *A Noite* had sensationally, but not quite accurately, announced that Prestes had "adhered to Bolshevism," the article predicted that many so-called Communists would rejoice, because the spirit of Messianism, "strong in small-bourgeois cities, has contaminated the Party itself." *A Lucta de Classe* considered Luís Carlos Prestes simply the name of an individual and added that "we do not carry on politics with an individual" but only with the masses. "Individuals have political worth to the extent that they directly represent a class or a party, but Carlos Prestes is nothing of this sort."

<sup>7</sup> "O 1º de Maio e a Demagogia da Direcção do PC," *A Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1.

<sup>8</sup> "A Actuação do PC nas Eleições," *A Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1. In Brazilian elections ballots for each candidate were distributed by the candidate or his party.

<sup>9</sup> "Onde Estão os Menchevistas?" *A Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1.

To illustrate Prestes's extreme legalism, so characteristic of the military, the article pointed out that before revolting in 1924 he had gone through the formality of submitting his resignation from the Army. His life in the barracks was described as having kept him apart from the class struggle. After he had ended his military campaign, "even becoming a man of commerce," a new political stage should have begun for him. But he took no political stance, fearful perhaps of alienating the support he had within the liberal bourgeoisie. He let himself become isolated from events. "Even worse," he permitted his friends and associates to take whatever positions they wanted. "This compromise with friends and associates reveals the disdain or the indifference of General Prestes for the classes. This is precisely the psychological streak of Bonapartism."<sup>10</sup>

Notwithstanding this evaluation, the Brazilian Trotskyites hoped to attract Prestes to their cause. After Prestes's Manifesto of May became known, Mário Pedrosa made a trip to Buenos Aires to try to persuade Prestes to join him and Lívio Xavier in publishing a newspaper that would deal with agrarian reform and be distributed in the Brazilian interior. But Prestes declined this Trotskyite invitation.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "Cavalheiro da Esperança . . . da Burguezia ou Militante Comunista," *Lucta de Classe* 1, no. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Mário Pedrosa, interview, December 4, 1967.

## 8. Reactions to Prestes's Manifesto of May 1930

In May 1930, while the president-elect of Brazil traveled abroad, his opponents were encouraged that multitudes flocked to funeral services held for Siqueira Campos in Rio and São Paulo. In Congress Bergamíni and Maurício de Lacerda praised the late revolutionary—Bergamíni calling him the "true and genuine symbol of vigor of the Brazilian race." But their motion that Congress formally declare its sorrow was defeated by the proadministration majority.<sup>1</sup>

Luís Carlos Prestes, telling the press that he had lost "a brother," released the manifesto that had so disturbed Siqueira Campos. It shocked most of the opposition to the government. Newspaper owners Carlos and

<sup>1</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 13, 1930.

Caio de Lima Cavalcânti, working for an Aliança Liberal revolution in Pernambuco, called the manifesto "Communist."<sup>2</sup> Juarez Távora, chief *tenente* plotter in the northeast, wrote that the workers and peasants could not make the revolution alone. Nor did he favor government by soviets of workers, sailors, and soldiers. Extolling "social equilibrium," he said that if the proletariat were to rule, "the poles of social injustice" would be "inverted."<sup>3</sup>

In the far south Isidoro Dias Lopes declared that the uneducated masses were incapable of governing. The Partido Libertador, whose Joaquim Francisco de Assis Brasil had been named "Civilian Chief of the Revolution" by Prestes and Isidoro, joined the attack on Prestes's new ideas.

In Rio a large number of "revolutionaries of 1922 and 1924" signed a protest against the manifesto.<sup>4</sup> Maurício de Lacerda denounced the "manifesto attributed to the illustrious Brazilian, General Luís Carlos Prestes." Gilberto Amado, antiadministration senator from Sergipe, expressed surprise that Prestes had not followed the "natural consequence" of going on to adopt militant atheism; he added that manifestoes calling for struggle against foreign capital and Anglo-American imperialism did not interest him.<sup>5</sup> *Vanguarda* wrote that "the ex-Cavalier of Hope" had thought of everything in his "preposterous manifesto" except the true problems of Brazil. Pointing out that the backlands needed roads, schools, and sanitation, *Vanguarda* concluded that "if we expel foreign capital we shall be plunged in the most appalling misery."<sup>6</sup> A cartoon in *Vanguarda* showed Prestes near the top of the palm tree of Communism, remarking disappointedly: "This palm tree has no fruit."

Administration supporters exhorted the authorities to struggle with greater spirit against Communism. "The Communist activity of Captain Luís Carlos Prestes" moved journalist Hamilton Braga to wire President Washington Luís: "I judge it absolutely necessary to recommend to all my fellow countrymen, of all parties, to line up solidly and decidedly behind the federal power, the only efficiently organized force capable of preventing the advance of the Mongolian wave, which we shall have to face and annihilate for the good of the Brazilian nation."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, May 31, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> Távora, quoted in Hélio Silva, 1930: *A Revolução Traída*, pp. 421-426.

<sup>4</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, June 3, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> *O Jornal*, June 1, 1930.

<sup>6</sup> *Vanguarda*, June 7, 1930.

<sup>7</sup> "A Ameaça Bolchevista," *O Journal*, June 1, 1930.



Prestes: "Blast! I was fooled! This palm tree has no fruit."  
(*Vanguarda*, June 11, 1930)

Geraldo Rocha's proadministration *A Noite* ran its comments about Prestes's new position under the heading "A Page of Humor."<sup>8</sup> On June 2 it created a sensation by reproducing a facsimile of Prestes's confidential letter of November 22, 1929, to Silo Meireles. When *Correio da Manhã* admonished *A Noite* for making the revelation without permission from either the signer or recipient, *A Noite* replied with a reference to *Correio da Manhã*'s publication of the false letters attributed to Bernardes.<sup>9</sup>

Maurício de Lacerda, until then unacquainted with the letter to Meireles, spent a dramatic hour in the Chamber of Deputies defending himself against the charge of opportunism made by "the man I most admired, most served, and most consistently accompanied." Maurício declared that he had never joined the Aliança Liberal, "the party of Artur Bernardes," and had declined an invitation to attend its nominating convention.<sup>10</sup> He denied that the acceptance of political support from Senator Mendes Tavares and Municipal Councilman Batista Pereira (mentioned in Prestes's letter) meant that he had altered his revolutionary creed; these men, he said, had adhered to his ideas.

In the crowded Câmara, Maurício explained that, as agent of the revolutionary current and at the request of Siqueira Campos and Távora, he had reached understandings with the Aliança Liberal and sought votes for Vargas. Often, he said, he had remained silent in the face of personal attacks in order to continue "inspiring the confidence of the Liberals for the ends we had in mind." In December, when Távora had asked that he make "a sacrifice for the common cause" by remaining silent in the face of Prestes's "exploitation" charge (revealed in the Municipal Council), he had agreed—feeling that he had "enough credit in the nation" to prevent the charge from sticking.<sup>11</sup>

In Buenos Aires on June 20, 1930, Miguel Costa issued a manifesto in which he informed his revolutionary companions that, "helped by the modest guidance" of Távora, he had obtained the view of as many companions as possible and had found a successor to Prestes. The new chief, Costa announced, was João Alberto<sup>12</sup>—the Pernambucano working for the revolution in the south.

<sup>8</sup> *A Noite*, May 30, 1930.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, June 3, 1930.

<sup>10</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, June 6, 1930.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Manifesto of Miguel Costa (Buenos Aires, June 20, 1930) in the possession

Miguel Costa said that the principal problem of the revolutionaries was financial. In a reference to the large sum held by Prestes, he wrote that the revolution's monetary and material resources in Buenos Aires would be demanded, or claimed, by João Alberto.

In João Alberto's name, Miguel Costa recommended that companions avoid "probably disagreeable consequences" by keeping "a prudent distance" from all who had declared themselves in favor of Prestes. He named Prestes's supporters: "Emídio Miranda, Renato Tavares, Alberto Araújo, Fernando Garagorry, Dr. Fernando Orey, and, it appears, Silo."<sup>13</sup>

During his inquiries, Miguel Costa had found that many companions favored a manifesto listing the revolution's program. Agreeing that such a statement would be good, he suggested that it affirm that the revolutionary government would make use of men able to organize Brazilian production, commerce, and industry, "not overlooking the comfort and well-being to which city and field workers have an undeniable right." Labor matters, he added, should be handled by a special ministry—not, "as today," by those who control production.<sup>14</sup>

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of Maurício Goulart (São Paulo); copy, authenticated by Maurício Goulart, is at the University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Luís Carlos Prestes has stated (interview, September 5, 1963) that all the *tenentes* broke with him except for Emídio Miranda and Silo Meireles.

<sup>14</sup> Miguel Costa, manifesto of June 20, 1930.

## 9. The PCB Condemns Prestes's Manifesto of May 1930

On June 2, 1930, Minervino de Oliveira was asked his opinion about Prestes's manifesto. He answered that he would be unable to reply until after his party, the BOC, held a meeting and came out with its "word" on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

The word appeared in *O Jornal* on June 11 in the form of an interview granted by Otávio Brandão. Cautiously *O Jornal* explained that proper journalism required reporting the opinions of all currents, and for that reason alone it was publishing the Brandão interview, "which

<sup>1</sup> *O Jornal*, June 3, 1930.



contains concepts entirely in disagreement with the ideas always held by *O Jornal* and with all of its conservative tradition."<sup>2</sup>

Brandão said that Prestes's manifesto contained some revolutionary words; but, he observed, the words were issued by a petit-bourgeois insurgent who sought the impossible: the substitution of the small bourgeoisie for the proletariat in the leadership of the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution.

No "Menshevik, anti-Marxist" sin of "denying" the proper role of "the hegemony of the proletariat" could be found in the carefully prepared statement that Brandão furnished *O Jornal*. Rather, the sin was attributed to Prestes, and the expression "hegemony of the proletariat" was repeated throughout the statement and sometimes italicized. "The manifesto did not mention the fundamental thing: the directive role of the proletariat in the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution, *the hegemony of the proletariat* in this next step of the Brazilian revolution. The chief of the Prestes Column does not accept, even on paper, the hegemony of the proletariat. . . . By not even mentioning, and much less accepting, the hegemony of the proletariat, the consequence of his manifesto would be a military coup that would make use of the working masses for a movement whose final result would be to the advantage of a Brazilian bourgeois group and the imperialists. The Communist Party, Brazilian Section of the Communist International, affirms categorically and proves that an agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution can exist only under the *hegemony of the proletariat* and never under the hegemony of the small bourgeoisie."

To show that Prestes's manifesto "is not Communist," Brandão pointed out that it neither mentioned the Communist Party nor the role of the Party in directing the laboring masses during the revolution. Nor did it mention the roles of the Communist International and of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the Brandão statement censured Prestes for not acknowledging that the Communist Party alone had seen the situation clearly: the Communist Party alone had denounced the counterrevolutionary roles and bourgeois characters of conservatives and liberals, both "whippers of the workers, and lackeys of the London and New York usurers"; the Communist Party alone had criticized the Prestes Column for remaining silent in the face of "the political blackmail" of the Aliança Liberal, thus becoming its mute accomplice; the Communist Party alone had "unmasked the demagoguery of Maurício de Lacerda" when

<sup>2</sup> The following interview appeared in *ibid.*, June 11, 1930.

Prestes had "only dared criticize this deceiver in secret letters, like that of November 22, and had withheld from the public the tricks of this individual who exploited the Brazilian revolution, that is, the world revolution in Brazil, to advance his candidacy for the Chamber of Deputies."

Brandão said that Prestes, after innumerable vacillations, had taken up some Communist "words of order." But, Brandão emphasized, this had been done due to pressure from the masses—and in order to use the workers and peasants, and the PCB itself, to help the small bourgeoisie. Brandão warned that if the small bourgeoisie ever attained power it would give control to the large bourgeoisie and imperialism. "In Mexico and China, at first the small bourgeoisie fought against the large property owners and imperialists, but it ended up shooting the revolutionary workers."

Brandão stated that the "small-bourgeois" Prestes Column would be unable to create a labor and peasant government based on soviets (councils) of workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors. He criticized the manifesto for failing to stress that all power should be "exclusively in the hands of these councils," and that the proletariat was to be armed while the bourgeoisie was to be disarmed.

"The acceptance, on paper, of some of our words of order signifies nothing. Promises are worth nothing. Promises, Lenin said, 'constitute the only inexpensive merchandise.'"

## 10. Prestes Answers Távora, Maurício, and Brandão<sup>1</sup>

Lúis Carlos Prestes replied to some of his detractors in a series of interviews given to João Batista Barreto Leite Filho, *O Jornal's* intelligent young reporter in Buenos Aires.

Turning first to Távora's declarations, Prestes found that they ignored the fundamental causes of political oppression and economic crises. This hardly surprised Prestes, for Távora, in his opinion, had revealed himself a false revolutionary when he said that proletarian domination would mean "inverting the poles of social injustice." Such remarks, Prestes said, were very useful to true revolutionaries, for they showed

<sup>1</sup> Articles by Barreto Leite Filho in *O Jornal*, July 9, 10, 11, 1930.

that "the pseudorevolutionaries" were ready to support "the foreign imperialism" that sought to gain the edge over its opponent.

At least, Prestes said in another interview, "Captain Távora" had been profoundly sincere in "publicly declaring himself a reactionary." Prestes found no such sincerity in Maurício de Lacerda's speech about Prestes's confidential letter to Silo Meireles, "criminally made public by the police." The Cavalier of Hope said that Maurício—unable to deny the acceptance of assistance from reactionary Rio politicians, "evidently controlled by the coffers of Minas"—declared that the reactionary politicians had adhered to his revolutionary ideas. Explaining that Maurício owed his congressional post to all sorts of voters—reactionary, liberal, and revolutionary—Prestes asked "what line does he represent today in Congress?"

More than once Maurício had said that he sought votes for the Aliança Liberal on Prestes's orders. Now *O Jornal's* reporter learned that after Maurício had so informed the Municipal Council on November 28, 1929, Prestes had wired Távora asking him to make a public denial and telling him to show the telegram to Maurício. But Távora, Prestes said, had not acted because he had sincerely felt that a schism would hurt the revolution. Prestes also had kept quiet, "a grave error," which he had corrected with the manifesto of May 1930.

In giving his reaction to Brandão's criticism of his manifesto, Prestes showed himself to be a non-Communist whose objective was to help bring about exactly what the Communists wanted.

Prestes said that while Brandão's remarks might be perfectly comprehensible to a Communist, to him they seemed "exaggerated, or at least guilty of an omission." Prestes could recognize that since the PCB was a Marxist proletarian party, in which no confusions or deviations from Party doctrine were permitted, it would have been "a serious tactical error" for it to have "frankly backed" his own program. However, Prestes said, Brandão had made a "serious omission" when he failed to refer to "our united front." To prove the "clear" existence of the front, Prestes said that his manifesto called for an agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution by peasants, the proletariat, and the small bourgeoisie, and that the Communist Party recognized the sincerity and honesty of his revolutionary intentions.

Prestes told the young reporter that only the proletariat could resolve, in a firm manner, the problems created by imperialism and the agrarian structure. He therefore urged the proletariat to organize itself in its Party "with a rigorous class spirit." If this were not done, Prestes warned, the

revolution, made with the help of the bourgeoisie, would degenerate, as had happened in Mexico.

## 11. A Poor Start for the LAR

To carry out the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution, Luís Carlos Prestes founded the Liga de Ação Revolucionária (LAR—League of Revolutionary Action) in July 1930. He was assisted by two military men, Silo Meireles and Emídio Miranda, and one civilian, Aristides Lobo. Meireles, a devout Catholic who had recently come to Buenos Aires, belonged to a close-knit family whose home in Rio had been a haven for conspirators since 1922. Aristides Lobo, recently a BOC congressional candidate in São Paulo, was a Trotskyite.

Emídio Miranda, Prestes's courier who took the May manifesto to *tenentes* in São Paulo and Rio, had been released by the Rio police, thanks to lawyer Temístocles Cavalcânti, and had returned to his Montevideo hotel room just after Siqueira Campos's drowned body had been found. He became secretary-treasurer of the LAR, one of whose functions was to take possession of, and administer, the eight hundred contos given to Prestes by Aranha.

Prestes and his LAR associates sent Orlando Leite Ribeiro with about two hundred contos to France to purchase arms that were to be so up-to-date they would give a decided advantage to the revolutionaries. Although Orlando made the purchases, the arms never reached the LAR.<sup>1</sup>

The LAR, according to a new Prestes manifesto of July 1930, had been organized as a "technical organ" to prepare the oppressed masses for a general uprising on behalf of the objectives given in the May manifesto. "Only the proletariat and peasants . . . , fraternizing with their brothers, the soldiers and sailors, and arising together with them, will be able to bring about their own emancipation."

Discussing the relations between the LAR and the PCB, the July manifesto said that the revolution was to be made by the proletariat, the peasant masses, and the part of the small bourgeoisie whose reaction to impoverishment had been to become revolutionary. The existence of the LAR was

<sup>1</sup> Emídio da Costa Miranda, interview, October 5, 1966.

justified by the "need of a bloc able to bring together and organize" those who were not "identified with the proletariat."

The manifesto stressed the importance of the PCB, "the political party of the proletariat—the most revolutionary of the three" sectors participating in the uprising. The PCB, it said, must always be ready to criticize the deviations of the peasants and small bourgeoisie, and must make certain that the hegemony of the revolution be in the hands of the proletariat—thus preventing the revolution from becoming "fatally perverted, as happened in Mexico and China."

In conclusion the July 1930 manifesto asked "the trustful, the oppressed, the proletariat of the cities and countryside, soldiers and sailors, and all middle class revolutionaries (students, small employees, small bureaucrats)—all, in short, who understand the need of a really profound transformation in the state of affairs of the nation—to get in touch with local LAR committees, which are being formed at all points in the nation, or with the Provisional Organizing Committee of Buenos Aires."<sup>2</sup>

The PCB violently objected to the LAR. "Luís Carlos Prestes," *A Classe Operaria* wrote, "declares that the Liga should be a 'united front' of all the revolutionaries; but really it will be a *partido confusionista*. . . . He speaks of soviets and presents evasive formulas of revolutionary struggle. . . . We are also against the Liga de Ação Revolucionária of the small bourgeoisie because it represents an attempt against the true revolutionary united front of the masses."<sup>3</sup>

Prestes's position was described as "oscillating, nebulous, and erroneous." The revolutionary general, the Communists said, was either submitting to the direction of the proletariat, in which case there was no need to create a new party, or else he was seeking to tie the action of the Communists to the LAR and therefore subject the revolution to treasons such as occurred in the Mexico of Calles and the China of Chiang Kai-shek.

Luís Carlos Prestes was seen by the Communists as trying to place himself above all classes, above all parties. "He seeks to give advice simultaneously to the counterrevolutionary column and the vanguard of the proletariat." But, *A Classe Operaria* said, Prestes was overlooking

a fundamental question. He represents the interests of the pauperized small bourgeoisie, which only has two paths to follow: the path of the proletariat or

<sup>2</sup> *O Jornal*, August 2, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, August 20, 1930, quoted in [Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro* 3, no. 36 (January 1939): 139.

the path of the foreign capitalists and their feudalist-capitalist Brazilian agents. A third path is impossible; it does not exist.

Luís Carlos Prestes is the most dangerous adversary of the Communist Party because he is a man who still enjoys popularity, because he still has a large influence in the nation over masses who are inexperienced in the revolutionary struggle. Were Prestes to understand what he affirmed, namely that "only the proletariat will be able to resolve in a consistent and firm manner . . . the imperialist and agrarian problems," he would conclude that the Communist Party should combat not only Prestes's ideas, but also, with redoubled energy, all the *prestistas*.

In a statement that followed his July 1930 manifesto, Prestes had said that the idea of having "the hegemony of the revolution" controlled by the Communist Party would scare away a lot of people. *A Classe Operaria* retorted that it would scare only the enemies of the labor and peasant revolution.<sup>4</sup>

*O Jornal's* young journalist, João Batista Barreto Leite Filho, joined the LAR. A few people, among them three former cadets, came to join the group in Buenos Aires since local LAR committees did not spring up in Brazil. The number of adherents was so small that Prestes sent Emídio Miranda to Porto Alegre to try to interest Herculino Cascardo, Newton Estilac Leal, Stênio Caio de Albuquerque Lima, and other Aliança conspirators.<sup>5</sup> However, this trip was no more successful than Emídio's earlier one to São Paulo and Rio.

After Emídio heard that the police of the Vargas state government planned "to get rid of" him lest he hinder the plans for an Aliança Liberal revolution, he joined the crew of a vessel and in this way returned from Porto Alegre to his Uruguay residence. Miguel Costa, who had been living with Prestes but who was working for Aranha and the Aliança Liberal, had sabotaged Emídio's mission by sending Aranha copies of papers and reports belonging to Prestes and Emídio.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *A Classe Operaria*, August 13, 20, 1930, quoted in [Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista."

<sup>5</sup> Emídio da Costa Miranda, interview, July 19, 1963.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

## 12. Revising the PCB's CC

As a factor for disuniting Communism in Brazil, the appeal of Vargas and the Aliança Liberal was more effective than the appeal of Luís Carlos Prestes and the LAR. The Trotskyites believed that an Aliança revolution would be an important step forward in the social movement.<sup>1</sup> Large numbers of PCB members felt the same way,<sup>2</sup> despite the contrary view held by the Party directorship and the Comintern's South American Secretariat.

Cristiano Cordeiro, whose work for the Party made him a "legend" in the northeast,<sup>3</sup> was enthusiastic about the "improvements" he believed an Aliança Liberal revolution would bring Brazil. He and the PCB of Pernambuco warmly backed the Aliança.<sup>4</sup> So did Danton Jobim, Pedro Mota Lima,<sup>5</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, and Plínio Melo.<sup>6</sup>

Following the April–May 1930 policy meetings in Buenos Aires sponsored by the South American Secretariat, Plínio Melo went to Rio. Finding the Communist movement there at a low ebb, with no cell available for him to lead, he went to the city of São Paulo. So intense was the police campaign against subversives in the state capital that Plínio Melo moved again, this time to Santos. There he issued a report critical of Astrogildo Pereira and was expelled from the Party.<sup>7</sup>

Although Astrogildo was poorly regarded by the South American Secretariat of the Comintern, he was not deposed from the secretary-generalship of the PCB immediately after the April–May meetings in Buenos Aires. Used by the secretariat to carry out its orders for the PCB, Astrogildo could hardly complain, as he had a year earlier, of a lack of attention by the Comintern.

One of the secretariat's orders called for the dismissal of most of the members of the PCB's Central Committee, including Brandão. Some of

<sup>1</sup> Fúlvio Abramo, interview, November 13, 1968. Abramo stated that Aristides Lobo, "a dedicated and honest person," presented to Prestes the Trotskyites' favorable opinion of the Aliança Liberal movement.

<sup>2</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interview, October 27, 1967.

<sup>3</sup> Raquel de Queirós, interview, November 1, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interview, October 27, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Ilvo Meireles, interview, November 1, 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

<sup>7</sup> Plínio Gomes de Melo, interview, November 26, 1968.

the dismissed CC members, like graphic worker Ferreira da Silva and metalworker José Casíni, could qualify as "authentic workers." But they were connected with a directorship that was held responsible for the recent reverses and "errors" of a Party "submerged in bourgeois ideology."<sup>8</sup> Casíni, like Brandão, objected to what he felt was a mistaken ultrasectarian policy of the South American Secretariat. He left the Party as well as the Central Committee.<sup>9</sup>

Brandão stuck with the Party and publicly defended a policy he did not believe in. Privately he told Astrogildo that "the immediate establishment of soviets" was absurd for Brazil. He accused Astrogildo of capitulating before a Communist International, which, however much it might have helped the PCB in the past, was developing "Trotskyite ideas." Arguing against dismemberment of the BOC, Brandão told Astrogildo that abandonment of the popular front movement played directly into the hands of Getúlio Vargas. Astrogildo replied that Brandão was "an opportunist."<sup>10</sup>

With the dismissal of himself and others from the Central Committee, Brandão felt that Astrogildo liquidated in five minutes something it had taken eight years and much study of Brazil to build up.<sup>11</sup>

Asked by some workers to write a Party manifesto soon after his dismissal, Brandão explained that he could no longer do so. Perhaps he should have told them to see Fernando de Lacerda, whose star was on the rise. Fernando, fiercely anti-intellectual, was the great defender of the criticisms of the PCB made by the South American Secretariat. "In 1928," Fernando has written, "we gave the bourgeoisie the task of directing the first 'democratic-bourgeois' stage of the 'Revolution' here, and we did this so trustingly that we would not even permit the occurrence of the smallest strike, the most modest struggle in the streets, 'in order not to disturb the preparation of the third bourgeois revolt which was to be carried out without the people and without the PCB.'" <sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 120.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.; Octavio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968.

<sup>10</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, June 27, 1971.

<sup>11</sup> See Octavio Brandão, "A Política de Quadros," *Imprensa Popular*, October 26, 1956.

<sup>12</sup> Fernando de Lacerda, "O 'Culto à Personalidade' e Nossa Emancipação Nacional," *Imprensa Popular*, March 1, 1957.



### 13. Washington Luís's Victory over Communism

For August 1, 1930, the PCB decided to stage a great display of strength in the Federal District and in the state of Rio by holding rallies in memory of Sacco and Vanzetti. Although the police issued orders prohibiting the rallies, "a group of over fifty persons"<sup>1</sup> assembled in the morning for a rally in front of one of the Rio factories. They were easily dispersed by the Guarda Civil.

That afternoon in Niterói, Communists distributed bulletins in which they threatened to "react with energy" if the police tried to break up their meeting. But when police soldiers arrived and fired a few shots into the air, the people fled. Astrogildo was arrested together with eight Lloyd Brasileiro workers. The only injury occurred when a member of the police cavalry dropped his rifle: as it hit the ground it went off, wounding another policeman.<sup>2</sup>

More fortunate than Astrogildo, Minervino de Oliveira fled when the police broke up a rally he had tried to lead on the same day in Campos, Rio State.

Astrogildo was not held long by the authorities. Of much greater concern to him than his arrest was the pusillanimity of the August 1 rallies. Astrogildo questioned his ability to lead the Party.<sup>3</sup>

Authorities in Rio attributed the weakness of the Communist movement to the "liberal" policies of the Brazilian government. Coriolano de Góis, who was turning over his post to Pedro de Oliveira Sobrinho in order to become a Supreme Court judge, made this point in his final report as police chief. Affirming that Brazil was characterized by a liberal conscience, existing under a political constitution that protected "all the right and just popular aspirations without establishing distinctions based on race, conditions, or nationalities," he pointed out that the police, even when faced with the preaching of "exotic political doctrines," did not impede peaceful manifestations. This situation led him to conclude that Brazil would not be the victim of subversive movements—"possible in

<sup>1</sup> "O Dia Policial: Relembrando a Data da Execução de Sacco e Vanzetti," *Correio da Manhã*, August 2, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> "Outro Comício Comunista Dissolvido," *Correio da Manhã*, August 2, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968.

other nations because of profound class dissensions, the result of the impatience and destitution of multitudes."<sup>4</sup>

*Jornal do Brasil* agreed with the outgoing police chief. "Extremist sects, transplanted to this side of the Atlantic, will feel the climate and lose their vigor."<sup>5</sup> In fact, *Jornal do Brasil's* editorial said, this had already happened. It argued that the sponsors of Red propaganda, "leaving no trick unused," had resorted to books and money after bombs had provoked an unfavorable reaction. "The negative result after so many years of persistent activity is such as to justify the word of confidence given by the chief of police."

*Correio da Manhã* seemed to feel the same way. Writing of the workers at the Rio factory chosen by the Communists to be the site of their easily dispersed rally of August 1, it called them "essentially orderly." "Only a few elements," *Correio da Manhã* reported, had "let themselves be led by subversive ideas."<sup>6</sup>

To show their interest in orderly workers, the president of the Republic and the justice minister sent official representatives to be present, on Saturday evening, September 13, when Luís de Oliveira was installed as president of the Stevedore's Union. The former municipal councilman, who liked to call himself "the first worker to have been elected to a Brazilian legislative post," reassumed his old position in the union amidst floral decorations and flanked on his right and left by military officers representing the president and justice minister.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "O Ultimo Relatorio do Chefe de Policia," *Jornal do Brasil*, September 18, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> "A Propaganda Comunista," *Jornal do Brasil*, September 19, 1930.

<sup>6</sup> "O Dia Policial."

<sup>7</sup> *Jornal do Brasil*, September 17, 1930.

#### 14. Support for the Aliança Liberal

**T**he repression in São Paulo City, which sent Plínio Melo scurrying to Santos in June 1930, followed the uncovering of a plot directed by Henrique Ricardo Hall, Siqueira Campos's successor as head of the Aliança Liberal conspiracy in the area.<sup>1</sup> The São Paulo police arrested three con-

<sup>1</sup> See "Os Boatos de Revolução: Apprehensão de Documentos," *Correio da*

spiring journalists, among them Josias Carneiro Leão, who was actively making bombs, a craft he had learned from Siqueira Campos. The conspirators were locked up in the tough Cambuci prison, where they were joined a week later by André Trifino Correia, Long March veteran and ardent admirer of Siqueira Campos.<sup>2</sup> Police Delegado Laudelino de Abreu, who received most of the credit (and condemnation) for these arrests, had reportedly been recommended for his post, "to guarantee order in São Paulo," by Rio Police Chief Coriolano de Góis.

Weak conspiratorial work in São Paulo was mentioned by Minas Governor Antônio Carlos when he set back the revolutionary plans of the *Aliança Liberal* by favoring "exclusively political action."<sup>3</sup> However, the assassination in Recife on July 25 of João Pessoa, Vargas's running mate, revived the revolutionary wing of the *Aliança*.

A tremendous crowd gathered at the docks to receive João Pessoa's coffin in Rio on August 7. Maurício de Lacerda, his eyes "humid," called the dead man's body "the corpse of the nation." "João Pessoa," he cried out, "God willed you the immortal name of martyr of liberty. You are the red banner of our revolt. Citizens, . . . die for this man who gave his life for you. . . . You, Gaúchos and Mineiros, fulfill your promise. The people are ready to die for liberty." As the casket, draped with the national flag, was moved to the church, crowds tied up Carioca traffic, defying the police.

On the same day in São Paulo after a mammoth antiadministration rally in the Largo de São Francisco, policemen tried to prevent students from parading with red neckerchiefs and a picture of João Pessoa. The students formed barricades. Shots were exchanged, resulting in deaths and injuries.<sup>4</sup> Professors sided with the students in antigovernment disturbances that persisted for several days.<sup>5</sup>

In September Maurício de Lacerda led an effective oratorical and newspaper campaign against the São Paulo police, accusing it of responsibility for the disappearance three months earlier of Trifino Correia and three Rio journalists. With gruesome images of a "Sibéria Paulista,"

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*Manhã*, July 2, 1930. This article tells of papers found at the home of Henrique Ricardo Hall. Hall, of the Army Engineers, had started the antigovernment movement of July 5, 1922, at the Realengo Military School at 11:30 P.M. on July 4, 1922 (Emídio da Costa Miranda, interview, July 19, 1963).

<sup>2</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, interview, June 28, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> Virgílio A. de Mello Franco, *Outubro, 1930*, pp. 251-256.

<sup>4</sup> "Graves Acontecimentos," *Correio da Manhã*, August 8, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, August 12, 1930.

Maurício reminded fellow congressmen of the imprisonments and tortures of 1919 and 1920, "the responsibility of Delegado Ibraim Nobre."<sup>6</sup> Maurício's latest campaign was joined by Congressmen Bergamíni of the Federal District and Lindolfo Collor of Rio Grande do Sul.

The recently publicized prisoners were suddenly released from the prison in São Paulo's Cambuci district and deported to Rio Grande do Sul. Trifino Correia wired his thanks to Maurício, and one of the journalists spoke of the importance of Maurício's role in "the victory." Maurício said that without the aid of the press his words would have been lost and nothing achieved.<sup>7</sup>

Josias Carneiro Leão, whose relations with Maurício had been damaged by Luís Carlos Prestes's letter of November 1929 to Silo Meireles,<sup>8</sup> planned to go from Rio Grande do Sul to Buenos Aires to see the Cavalier of Hope. However, before making the trip, Leão learned from Miguel Costa's men of definite plans to start the Aliança revolution within days. Like Oscar Pedroso d'Horta and Maurício Goulart, Leão prepared to participate in the uprising in Rio Grande do Sul at the side of Miguel Costa.<sup>9</sup>

Had Leão gone to Buenos Aires he might have had difficulty getting in touch with Luís Carlos Prestes. At the urging of the Washington Luís administration, which was contemplating the extradition of Prestes from Argentina to Brazil, the police of Buenos Aires arrested the Cavalier of Hope on October 2, 1930.<sup>10</sup> Prestes had warned Emídio Miranda that with such a step the Argentine authorities might try to freeze the bank deposit of the LAR, and so Miranda withdrew from the bank the money Aranha had sent Prestes. He hid it in a kerosene heater.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., September 17, 1930.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., September 23, 1930.

<sup>8</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, interview, June 28, 1971. See Mauricio de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, p. 325.

<sup>9</sup> Leão, interview, June 28, 1971.

<sup>10</sup> See "A Prisão de Luiz Carlos Prestes," *Correio da Manhã*, October 4, 1930. Although the Brazilian Foreign Office said that it had nothing to do with Prestes's arrest, the police of Buenos Aires announced that Prestes had been arrested at the request of the Brazilian government, and Emídio Miranda stated (interview, July 19, 1963) that "the Brazilian government arranged the arrest of Prestes in Buenos Aires."

<sup>11</sup> Emídio Miranda, interview, July 19, 1963.

## 15. The Aliança Liberal Revolution

On the late afternoon and evening of October 3, 1930, outbreaks of the Aliança Liberal revolutionary movement occurred in Rio Grande do Sul, Minas Gerais, and the northeast. In Porto Alegre Vargas had a manifesto ready to be issued, calling on his home state to "arise for Brazil."

In the federal capital at 5:00 P.M., the hour selected by Vargas for the uprising, Congressman Adolfo Bergamíni addressed a large Aliança Liberal meeting, which had been called at Praça Floriano by university students. At 7:00 P.M. the crowd, shouting praises for João Pessoa, began to march down Rio Branco Avenue. The police shot into the crowd, wounding two.<sup>1</sup>

With the news of the insurrections, the Rio police arrested well-known Communists. Brandão was seized at his Santa Teresa home at 10:00 P.M. on October 3. Astrogildo went into hiding.

The Aliança Liberal revolutionaries dominated Rio Grande do Sul within forty-eight hours. During the confusion, Communists in the Gaúcho town of Itaquí, on the Argentine border, acted on the new PCB call to "establish soviets immediately." The Itaquí soviet was quickly crushed by Vargas's followers, but its memory has lived long among Brazilian Communists: in 1931 *A Classe Operaria* published "The Hymn of Itaquí," composed by a sailor, and it became known as the Brazilian Communist Hymn.<sup>2</sup>

After the first Aliança Liberal successes, Communists saw "every prospect" of a "prolonged civil war in Brazil, similar to the situation in China," because the British "will not allow themselves to be ousted by Yankee imperialism without a series of fierce fights." Moreover, Communists wrote, "the slogan of Soviets, which the Party has already issued as the slogan for the workers' and peasants' revolution, can, in view of

<sup>1</sup> "O Meeting de Hontem," *Correio da Manhã*, October 4, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968; Octavio Brandão, letter, May 25, 1971. Brandão writes that the composer, Togo, was in the Navy. One of the stanzas follows (as translated from Davino Francisco dos Santos, *A Marcha Vermelha*, p. 107):

The criminal swords,  
Baptized by the church,  
Let us wrest them from the generals,  
And deliver them to the revolting masses.

the crisis, the prevailing misery, and the revolutionary mood of the masses, bring rapid results and lead to the success of the 'third power,' i.e., of the working and peasant masses who are fighting under the leadership of the Communist Party."<sup>3</sup>

Unlike the "prolonged civil war" foreseen by the Communists, the Aliança Liberal revolution turned into a great popular victory march on Rio, with delirious crowds giving Vargas unprecedented, "simply fabulous," acclaim. Cristiano Cordeiro says that so many Communists joined the 1930 revolution that a split disorganized the ranks of the Party.

With the success of the Aliança Liberal revolutionaries under Távora in Pernambuco, unrestrained mobs in Recife sought revenge against those thought to have been responsible for João Pessoa's death. In Rio a young man assassinated João Suassuna, a congressman from Paraíba considered by the Pessoa family to have been involved in João's death.<sup>4</sup>

The Rio police then arrested three congressmen: Cândido Pessoa, Maurício de Lacerda, and Adolfo Bergamíni. Maurício, who had stirred up the people at the time of João Pessoa's funeral, had recently been circulating handbills advising reservists that they need not answer the government's call to service, for legally they were only required to report in the case of foreign wars.<sup>5</sup> He told the new police chief, Pedro de Oliveira Sobrinho, that if he were in the habit of having politicians assassinated he would have chosen Washington Luís to be his victim.<sup>6</sup>

The three congressmen were held five days and released just before a court was to act on their habeas corpus petitions. They were therefore able to witness the popular demonstrations that accompanied the overthrow of Washington Luís on October 24. Maurício de Lacerda was very active in the streets, calling on the people not to kill Washington Luís and telling them that the deposed president would be held in Fort Copacabana. Bergamíni became mayor of Rio in the Junta, or government of three military men, which took over from Washington Luís on October 24.

On October 24 *A Esquerda* was full of *vivas!* for Maurício de Lacerda, Getúlio Vargas, and the Revolution. The leftist newspaper hailed the arrest of Senator Irineu Machado, "ignoble exploiter of elective posts." Azevedo Lima, another former leftist who had favored the inauguration

<sup>3</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, October 16, 1930.

<sup>4</sup> *Vanguarda*, October 11, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

of conservative Júlio Prestes, was also arrested. He was captured while serving in an anti-Aliança Liberal military battalion in Minas Gerais.<sup>7</sup>

With the overthrow of Washington Luís, mobs in Rio sacked stores and damaged the plants of newspapers that had supported the old regime. They liberated over one hundred prisoners.<sup>8</sup> But the fiery Brandão, the first to be set free, did not enjoy his freedom long. On October 25 at a rally at Praça Mauá, he shouted that the movement which had overthrown Washington Luís was no revolution. It was, he said, a *golpe*, or coup, in which a gang of São Paulo's large landowners, associated with British imperialism, lost out to another gang, which was associated with United States imperialism. Cavalrymen under the command of General Bertoldo Klinger, the Junta's police chief, wielded their sabers in the course of breaking up this meeting.

Brandão, jailed again, found himself in prison with Washington Luís supporters and with arrested police agents and guards of the fallen regime. Brandão could not forget that in the past some of these guards had tortured Communists, smashing their hands with wooden clubs.

In the Rio streets at the end of October enormous crowds enthusiastically greeted Getúlio Vargas. On November 3 Vargas took over from the Junta, becoming head of a dictatorial Provisional Government that scrapped the Constitution of 1891 and closed all legislatures. *Tenentes* and a few Aliança Liberal politicians became influential.

Imprisoned Washington Luís supporters were released. But freedom did not come to Brandão, who wanted to stir up the people against Vargas and who kept asserting that the Aliança Liberal "coup" had been financed by millions of dollars sent from New York to establish the Banco do Rio Grande do Sul. Minervino de Oliveira, caught orating in this vein, was sent to the Dois Rios Correctional Colony on Ilha Grande.

Communists promoted a popular campaign for the freedom of Brandão. In Uruguay the campaign assumed a strongly anti-Maurício de Lacerda flavor when Maurício was sent as the representative of the Vargas government, with the rank of ambassador,<sup>9</sup> to ceremonies in Montevideo to commemorate the one hundredth year of the Uruguayan Constitution of 1830. When Maurício stepped ashore at the Montevideo

<sup>7</sup> Azevedo Lima, *Da Caserna ao Carcere*, pp. 69-98.

<sup>8</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970. See Mauricio de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, pp. 219-220.

<sup>9</sup> *A Esquerda*, December 11, 1930.

docks "to explain the Brazilian revolution" to the people of Uruguay, he was greeted by cries of "fascist," and "We want the Liberty of Comrade Brandão."<sup>10</sup> Two girls came forward with flowers; as Maurício prepared to accept their offering one girl hit him forcefully, embarrassing the Uruguayan diplomats who were present to receive Vargas's envoy.

<sup>10</sup> Mauricio de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, pp. 256-259.



BOOK XI: *Further Decline of the PCB, 1930–1932*

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## 1. Prestes Chooses Communism and Denounces João Alberto

**D**uring the Aliança Liberal revolution, Luís Carlos Prestes was released by the Buenos Aires police, and he moved with his mother and sisters to Montevideo. After the fall of Washington Luís, Prestes met there with Emídio Miranda, Silo Meireles, and Aristides Lobo in Emídio's hotel room; he argued that conditions were unfavorable for a revolution by the Liga de Ação Revolucionária (LAR), and it was agreed that the LAR should be dissolved.

Prestes, who had been in close touch with the Comintern's South American Secretariat, located in Montevideo since 1930, decided to become a member of the Communist Party. He had been authorized to invite Silo Meireles and Emídio Miranda to join the Party—but not Trotskyite Aristides Lobo.<sup>1</sup>

Emídio Miranda declined the invitation, saying that he knew nothing about Communist doctrine. Nor was he interested. The Vargas govern-

<sup>1</sup> Emídio da Costa Miranda, interviews, July 19, 1963; October 5, 1966; October 8, 1967. Robert J. Alexander, who interviewed Aristides Lobo in 1953, writes that "Lobo claims credit for persuading Prestes to give up his own Liga Revolucionária and throw in his lot openly with the Communist movement, of which, of course, the Trotskyites at that time still claimed to be a part—the 'Left Opposition.' Lobo came to be very close to Prestes for a while and drafted several of the statements which the ex-guerrilla chief issued over his own signature" (Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America*, p. 102).

ment had declared amnesty for the revolutionaries of the 1920's; Emídio, who had been "in the air" (without a profession) since rebelling as a cadet in 1922, looked forward to resuming his Army career.

Silo Meireles told Prestes that he and his family were very Catholic and that he was therefore turning down the invitation to join the Communist Party. But he added that he would refuse the amnesty offered by Brazil and would stay at the side of Prestes.

The discussion also concerned the remaining six hundred contos Prestes had received from Aranha. The final decision followed the suggestion of Emídio Miranda: as the money had come to Prestes, due to his prestige, for a revolution in Brazil, it should be transferred from the defunct LAR to Prestes for that purpose. Emídio Miranda had one reservation: with Prestes about to become a Communist cell member, the money might be used by the Communist International's South American Secretariat or the Communist Party in Uruguay for some purpose not related to Brazil. Only when Prestes promised to set the money aside for use in a future Brazilian revolution did Emídio Miranda hand it over to him. Soon after, still in November 1930, Emídio Miranda took a boat for Santos to return to his career in the Brazilian Army.

While the now dominant "proletarian" wing of the PCB decided whether it wanted Prestes or not, Prestes issued a series of manifestoes to make it clear that he had nothing to do with *prestismo* or his bourgeois former associates.

In one of these manifestoes, issued in November 1930, Prestes wrote of the "insincerity and cynicism" of the men who in 1922 and 1924 had fought against Epiácio Pessoa and Artur Bernardes. Now, he said, they were allying themselves, "in this miserable democratic farce," to these very men in exchange for command posts. "Isidoro, Miguel Costa, Távora, João Alberto, and various others now receive material glorification for their heroism. And just when the comedy appears about to end in this fashion—so great a tribute to the theatrical genius of its authors, and so extravagantly delightful for the besotted spectators—a new act is announced: the resurrection of democratic guarantees in São Paulo."

Prestes said that João Alberto, the recently appointed federal administrator (*interventor*) of São Paulo, had once tried to give his "shameful alliance with Gaúcho politicians a provisional character by promising eventually to turn his guns against" his allies in order to "radicalize" the movement. Now, Prestes wrote mockingly, João Alberto was "decreeing" economic "betterments" and freedom to organize and to issue propaganda "in a full capitalistic system. . . . Tomorrow he will probably decree the

abolition of private property. Plenty of paper and ink exist. Give them to João Alberto and he will reform the world."<sup>2</sup>

João Alberto, the well-meaning, controversial *tenente* from the northeast, had annoyed the Paulista elite when he decreed a 5 percent wage increase and a small participation by workers in company profits. While other state *interventores* and Rio Police Chief João Batista Luzardo battled Communism more intensely than the Washington Luís administration had done, João Alberto was charged with being "soft" on Communism. "In my opinion," João Alberto said, "Communism among us is in accentuated decadence, in clear decline. Its adepts become divided and subdivided, and do not offer the least danger."<sup>3</sup> He added that he opposed the implantation of Communism in Brazil but did not condemn those who devoted their time to making specialized studies about Communism.

These thoughts interested Plínio Melo, who had come from Santos to São Paulo in October 1930 to organize workers on behalf of the Aliança Liberal revolution. Plínio Melo, who considered himself still a Communist in spite of his recent expulsion from the Party, saw an opportunity to legalize the PCB.<sup>4</sup> From João Alberto, whom he had known in Rio Grande do Sul, he procured a decree that authorized "Plínio Melo, Josias Carneiro Leão, and Luís de Barros" (João Alberto's brother) to install PCB "headquarters, promote any work of Party organization, carry out rallies and meetings of doctrinary propaganda, and issue any publications of a political character. The above-mentioned gentlemen are, however, fully responsible for any material subversive attempt promoted by that Party."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Luís Carlos Prestes communication of November 20, 1930, given in Azevedo Lima, *Da Caserna ao Carcere*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>3</sup> Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, pp. 247-248.

<sup>4</sup> Plínio Gomes de Melo, interview, November 26, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 248.

## 2. The PCB without Astrogildo at the Helm

**I**n Rio in November 1930 the CC of the PCB held a two-day meeting at which Astrogildo Pereira lost his post as secretary-general.<sup>1</sup> He was criti-

<sup>1</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 119.

cized for having allowed the Party to reach an abject state<sup>2</sup> and accused of not cooperating with the "proletarianization of the Party"—dear to the Comintern. In the eyes of a French comrade—an "observer" from the Red International of Labor Unions, who felt the "authentic workers" should be given their "chance"—the two-day meeting reflected a "cultural revolution" or "class struggle" going on within the PCB. Astrogildo and Paulo de Lacerda were ordered to write letters "recognizing their errors" and to work for the Party on the São Paulo Regional Committee.<sup>3</sup>

Paulo de Lacerda hoped that by learning typesetting he might become an "authentic worker."<sup>4</sup> Fernando de Lacerda—wearing tattered clothes, enduring poverty, and ranting against the intellectual qualities of Astrogildo and of the imprisoned Brandão—ended up in a strong position in the Party despite not being an "authentic worker." However, he was handicapped by nervousness and illness and was often in hiding.<sup>5</sup>

The PCB's Political Bureau issued a statement condemning João Alberto's plan to allow a "legal PCB" in São Paulo. The statement called Plínio Melo, Josias Carneiro Leão, and Luís de Barros "renegades" and small-bourgeois elements, "some of whom" had already been expelled from the Party. The Political Bureau now announced the expulsion of all of these "traitors of the proletariat." It said: "While the Aliança Liberal violently repressed the labor and peasant movement, threw proletarian militants in jail, and shot workers who refused to shed their blood for it, these renegades of Communism participated actively in the councils of the reactionary generals, lending themselves to miserable maneuvers, such as the creation of the 'legal' Communist Party in São Paulo, by means of which the João Albertos hoped to deceive the masses."<sup>6</sup>

After this rebuff, Plínio Melo tried to organize labor in São Paulo and sought unsuccessfully to form a Socialist party there.<sup>7</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, who had been surprised to find his name on João Alberto's list of

<sup>2</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, interview, November 7, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 120.

<sup>4</sup> Ilvo Meireles, interview, November 1, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.; Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos." Heitor Ferreira Lima said (interview, November 15, 1970) that "after Astrogildo was removed from the secretary-generalship and Brandão was imprisoned, the man in first place in the Party was Fernando de Lacerda."

<sup>6</sup> Statement of the Political Bureau of the PCB, given in *A Classe Operaria* 6, no. 107 (November 25, 1930).

<sup>7</sup> Plínio Gomes de Melo, interview, November 26, 1968.

three "Communists" and who considered João Alberto's step "infantile,"<sup>8</sup> started his long career in the Brazilian Foreign Service.

The PCB's Political Bureau, thinking of the droves of workers who had transferred their allegiance from the Party to the Aliança Liberal, addressed a message to the "personally sincere elements" who had participated in the "coup d'état of the Aliança Liberal, simple-mindedly believing that they were serving the revolutionary cause." It invited them "to break openly with the Aliança and to declare it fascist and imperialist." Even if they happened to be outside the Party ranks, they were urged to demonstrate their devotion to the cause of the worker and peasant revolution.<sup>9</sup>

*A Classe Operaria* ridiculed João Alberto's "bourgeois maneuvers" in São Paulo. "What a beautiful present" was the 5 percent increase he tried to "oblige (?)" the company owners to grant—"after they reduced wages 10, 15, and 20 percent!" His effort to persuade plant owners to guarantee a minimum of forty hours of work per week was described as of little benefit in view of the low wages and high living costs. The PCB, contemptuous of the police, had nothing but scorn for João Alberto's suggestion that no striker be dismissed without a previous police investigation. In summary, the PCB felt that João Alberto was playing "Mussolini's two-faced game" with the workers.<sup>10</sup>

Analyzing the events of October 1930, the PCB explained that the Aliança "reactionary generals" had, in the course of the "fascist coup," made a compromise with the military Junta in Rio—a compromise that preserved some posts for the Washington Luís faction. The PCB repeatedly declared that the Vargas government, the result of the compromise, was falling apart.<sup>11</sup>

Why the decomposition? For one thing, the PCB answered, the group in power was incapable of resolving the economic crisis. For another, the important forces that had directed the "reactionary civil war continue to struggle among themselves for the complete domination of Brazil." Two roads lay ahead: either the continuation of the civil war, with the dismemberment of Brazil and unspeakable sufferings for the working masses, or else the worker and peasant revolution.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Josias Carneiro Leão, interview, June 28, 1971.

<sup>9</sup> *A Classe Operaria* 6, no. 107 (November 25, 1930).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> "A Reacção Alliancista Se Decompõe," in *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

The PCB noted with pleasure that Luís Carlos Prestes, in his Buenos Aires manifesto of November 6, had been "forced" to remain silent about "the famous Liga de Ação Revolucionária." Furthermore, the PCB liked his "vibrant slap in the face of degraded politicians like Maurício de Lacerda and new fascist 'heroes' like Távora and João Alberto." Conscientious proletarians, the PCB said, would not forget that "the deceivers," whom Prestes denounced, were Prestes's "class brothers, his friends of yesterday." This, the PCB added, would make proletarians conclude once again that they should never place their faith in any petit-bourgeois leader but should rely solely on their own force, on their own vanguard, on the Communist Party.

"In the face of the formidable pressure of the revolutionary wave and under the pressure of the vanguard of the proletariat, Luís Carlos Prestes," the PCB found, had taken "a step forward in the direction of the worker and peasant revolution." For the PCB, Prestes's words of November 1930 "proved" that the small bourgeoisie consisted of two types: "while the overwhelming majority of the former chiefs of the small bourgeoisie sell themselves cynically to the imperialists and become an antilabor fascist force, the most proletarianized part of the small bourgeoisie, crushed by the economic crisis, falls into a semiproletarian condition and moves closer to the worker and peasant revolution." A united front policy seemed to be all right to the PCB—provided it be formed with this "most proletarianized" part of the small bourgeoisie. "As long as Luís Carlos Prestes and other small-bourgeois revolutionaries march with this united front of the masses, our united front will truly be achieved."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> "O Último Manifesto de Luiz Carlos Prestes," *A Classe Operaria* 6, no. 107 (November 25, 1930).

### 3. Ferreira Lima and the Hunger March

In December 1930 Heitor Ferreira Lima returned to Rio from the Soviet Union, where he had spent 1927–1930 studying at the Lenin Institute. His course had covered political economics, history, philosophy, and the organization and history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968.



Ferreira Lima's working class background, his training period in Moscow, and his lack of any responsibility for the PCB's collapse, made him, in the eyes of the Communist International, a good choice to be secretary-general of the PCB. Although many Brazilian Communists felt that his long absence from Brazil left him insufficiently acquainted with either national or PCB problems,<sup>2</sup> he was chosen secretary-general by acclamation at a Rio meeting of the PCB directorship sometime in mid-January 1931. Neither Paulo de Lacerda nor Fernando (who had been giving attention to organizational matters in Rio) were present. Santos and Minas Gerais were represented, and Astrogildo Pereira came from São Paulo. Others present were Domingos Brás, Artur Basbaum (head of JC), Silvia (a JC leader who was about to marry Leôncio Basbaum), and Caetano Machado.<sup>3</sup> Caetano Machado's lack of education was gaining him more and more admiration as "proletarianization" developed into *obreirismo*—the despising of intellectuals and the emulation of the ways of the most backward workers.<sup>4</sup>

At the Rio meeting, Astrogildo Pereira—who had been melancholically contemplating his failings—was obliged to listen to attacks made against the leadership he had provided in 1930. The Party directors, also considering the future, decided to call wide attention to the considerable hunger afflicting the nation by means of a *Marcha da Fome* (Hunger March).<sup>5</sup>

In the succeeding days, bulletins were distributed urging the workers to meet at Praça da Bandeira on Saturday, January 17, 1931. But when the orators called on the workers to begin the march, Police Chief Batista Luzardo and Fourth Delegado Joaquim Salgado Filho, both from Rio Grande do Sul, prevented any marching.<sup>6</sup>

The Communists tried again. On Sunday, January 18, new bulletins, signed by the CGTB, were distributed: "No longer will we tolerate this situation of misery and hunger! Let us all show up at our Hunger March and take by force what is rightfully ours! Against the government, against the police, against the bourgeoisie, let us organize our demonstration and assault warehouses to bring bread to our children. Let us assault food stores and end our hunger on the nineteenth. Comrades, to your posts! Everyone to the Hunger March."

<sup>2</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

<sup>6</sup> "Factos Policiaes," *O Jornal*, January 20, 1931.

The subversive nature of this message prompted the authorities to "act vigorously" against the Hunger March, which they described as "part of a criminal plan" of "evil elements," who, "dressed as workers, seek to implant terror in the city." Communist bulletins were described as asking the "comrades" to show up with rifles and other firearms for use against the police in case the march were not permitted. The Communists were said to be asking the soldiers to join the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Following the arrest of everyone found distributing Hunger March bulletins, Salgado Filho declared that an examination of those arrested revealed that the elements interested in the march were "in no way workers" and were "not in hunger."

Police Chief Batista Luzardo went around Rio checking on the armed guards he had placed at banks and arsenals. He announced that foreign Communists would be deported, and that Brazilian Communists, after "their responsibility" had been "proved," would be "irredeemably" banished to Fernando de Noronha Island. The foreign character of the subversive movement was emphasized: the police reported one Hungarian and two Portuguese among the arrested "adepts of the creed of Lenin."

Fernando de Lacerda was taken to the central police building on January 19, 1931, after his correspondence with Santos Communists had been seized. Paulo de Lacerda was arrested in São Paulo. Rio police spotted a "suspicious individual" near Paulo's Rio home. Told not to move, he ran into the home of the "fervent adept of the Soviet regime." Policemen fired a few shots, surrounded the building, and at length led the individual off to the central police building.

The public may have been alarmed by the news of the explosion of a bomb in the home of a "victim of Communist elements." However, it could take comfort in the official pronouncement of the police chief: "Thanks to the preventive steps of the police and the attitude of formal reproof of the people of this capital, frankly on the side of the authorities, the subversive demonstration . . . was a complete failure. . . . Bad elements exerted their best efforts to disturb the peace and terrorize the orderly population of the Federal Capital. The chief of police assures the population that order will be rigorously maintained."<sup>7</sup>

After Maurício de Lacerda, back from his brief mission to Uruguay, told Justice Minister Aranha that his Communist brothers were ill, Paulo was released in São Paulo and Fernando was transferred to the infirmary

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

of Rio's Casa de Detenção. The delay in Fernando's release led Maurício to seek Aranha again. Unable to see him, Maurício was preparing a habeas corpus petition eight days after the Hunger March, when the police released Fernando and everyone else jailed for playing a role in the march.<sup>8</sup>

In reply to the aborted Hunger March, progovernment unions made arrangements for a labor parade in support of the Provisional Government, Getúlio Vargas, and Lindolfo Collor, Brazil's first labor minister. An appeal was signed by twenty-nine unions and associations, including unions of stokers, port workers, maritime workers, Light and Power Company workers, Central do Brasil Railroad workers, and Leopoldina Railway workers. It called on store owners to close their stores at 4:00 P.M. on Saturday, January 24, to allow workers in commerce to participate, "for Carioca commerce cannot remain indifferent to all the movements that are associated with the nation's peace."<sup>9</sup>

Fifteen thousand workers were described as participating in the parade, which took them to Catete Palace. There the workers, bearing banners extolling Vargas and Lindolfo Collor, were received by Vargas, Collor, Transport Minister José Américo de Almeida, and Federal District administrator Adolfo Bergamini. One of the speakers told of the first steps being taken by Lindolfo Collor "in the gigantic work of integrating the Brazilian worker" into the community.<sup>10</sup>

In the newly established Labor Ministry, socialist strike leaders of a past era, Agripino Nazaré of Bahia and Joaquim Pimenta of Pernambuco, helped Lindolfo Collor prepare prolabor decrees. As of January 1931 a start had been made in the "gigantic work": Decree 19,482 of December 12, 1930, required employers to show that at least two-thirds of their workers were Brazilians, and Decree 19,497 of December 17, 1930, extended to light, power, tramway, telephone, and telegraph workers the retirement pension arrangements that had been set up for railroad, port, and maritime workers in 1923 and 1926. The decree of December 17, 1930, contained a feature that would become very important, especially when the pension arrangements were extended to cover more and more urban workers: no employee with more than ten years of service could be dismissed unless an inquiry found him guilty of "a very serious fault."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, pp. 322-327.

<sup>9</sup> "Um Appello ao Commercio Carioca," *O Jornal*, January 24, 1931.

<sup>10</sup> "Demonstração Trabalhista de Solidariedade ao Governo Provisorio," *O Jornal*, January 25, 1931.

<sup>11</sup> Alfredo João Louzada, *Legislação Social-Trabalhista: Coletânea de Decretos Feita por Determinação do Ministro do Trabalho, Indústria e Comércio*.

#### 4. Trotskyites Explain the Events of October 1930

Taking over the leadership of the PCB in January 1931, Heitor Ferreira Lima found the Stalinist Communists, Trotskyite Communists, and anarcho-syndicalists all extremely weak.<sup>1</sup>

After the fall of Washington Luís the anarcho-syndicalists had established the Comitê Operário de Organização Sindical (COOS) for preaching "direct action" and for reorganizing São Paulo labor unions, all of which had been closed by the "old regime." COOS set up the anarcho-syndicalist Federação Operária de São Paulo. But the São Paulo textile workers and civil construction workers, the two groups COOS singled out for special attention,<sup>2</sup> disappointed the anarcho-syndicalists. The textile workers fell under the sway of José Righetti, who had the backing of Miguel Costa, commander of the Força Pública and secretary of public security of the state.<sup>3</sup> Top posts of the Liga Operária da Construção Civil of São Paulo went to new young leaders (described by the anarchists as "unknowns"), who favored statutes that permitted political action.<sup>4</sup>

The Trotskyites, who received more attention than the anarcho-syndicalists in the Brazilian Stalinist press, continued to number only about fifty. However, they had numerous followers among the graphic workers.<sup>5</sup> They gained control of the São Paulo Union of Graphic Workers partly because workers were unhappy with the Communist leadership of

<sup>1</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, letter, October 27, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> See O Secretariado Provisorio do Comitê Operario de Organização Syndical, "Aos Trabalhadores de S. Paulo." The one-page manifesto, dated November 16, 1930, asked worker committees in all plants to draw up lists of "immediate demands" and present them to the COOS.

<sup>3</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 162. Basbaum stated (interview, São Paulo, November 16, 1966) that Righetti worked successfully against Communist influence among São Paulo textile workers. An anarcho-syndicalist complaint that São Paulo textile workers were under the influence of politically minded labor leaders is given in a handbill: O Comitê Federal da Federação Operaria de São Paulo, "Aos Trabalhadores em Fabricas de Tecidos e ao Proletariado em Geral," São Paulo, August 14, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> "Esboço Historico da Liga Operaria da Construção Civil," *O Grito Operario*, São Paulo, April 22, 1933.

<sup>5</sup> Hílcar Leite, interview, December 8, 1967.

the long graphic workers' strike of 1929 and partly because its founder, João da Costa Pimenta, moved from Rio to São Paulo late in 1930.<sup>6</sup>

Other Trotskyites who escaped repression in Rio by moving to João Alberto's São Paulo late in 1930 were art critic Mário Pedrosa and journalist Lívio Xavier.<sup>7</sup> In January 1931 they formally established the "Leninist Opposition of the Communist Party of Brazil" with ties to the International Opposition,<sup>8</sup> which had been formed by squabbling Trotskyites in Paris in April 1930. While this new International's Paris Bureau and Secretariat proved their ineffectiveness, Trotsky himself, confined to Princes' Isles off Constantinople, preached "revolutionary internationalism"—as opposed to the doctrine of "Socialism in a single country," which was the prevailing creed in Stalinist Russia. Trotsky further advocated "proletarian democracy" within the Communist parties in place of "bureaucratic centralism."<sup>9</sup>

Trotskyites stressed the identity of their views with those of Lenin and rejected the term Trotskyite lest it imply some differences. The São Paulo Trotskyites called their organization the Liga Comunista: Oposição Leninista do Partido Comunista do Brasil. Although Trotsky was now criticizing Moscow's extreme reversal from rightism, calling it a "turn by 180 degrees" and a "swing from opportunism to ultraradicalism,"<sup>10</sup> the São Paulo Trotskyites still referred to themselves as the Left Opposition and continued to find fault with the "opportunistic policy" of the PCB directorship.<sup>11</sup>

Brazil's Liga Comunista promised to defend the resolutions adopted at the first four world congresses of the Communist International (1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922). It demanded a regime of internal democracy in the PCB, and it listed some immediate goals for which it felt the PCB should fight: a Brazilian constitutional assembly, the secret vote for all over eighteen regardless of sex or nationality, diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union, a minimum wage, the right to strike, the eight-hour day, liberty to organize unions, and the recognition of factory and plantation committees of workers' representatives.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," pp. 90, 120, 162.

<sup>7</sup> Fúlvio Abramo, interview, November 13, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> Lívio Xavier, interview, November 9, 1967.

<sup>9</sup> Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky, 1929-1940*, pp. 34-39.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> A Comissão Executiva Provisória da Liga Comunista (Oposição), "Aos Trabalhadores do Brasil," *Boletim da Oposição*, January 1931, pp. 8, 9, 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

The Liga Comunista lost no time in publishing the first number of its new organ, the *Boletim da Opção*,<sup>13</sup> which was assigned the task of bringing the Brazilian revolutionary proletariat close to what it called "the International Opposition, Leftist Faction of the Communist International."<sup>14</sup> The *Boletim da Opção* presented Trotsky's views about the Chinese situation and mentioned "especially brutal repression" in the Soviet Union. Like *A Luta de Classe* before it, the new Trotskyite organ printed Lenin's "last testament" words about Stalin.

The *Boletim da Opção* explained that "the intrinsically theoretical work will continue to be directed by *A Luta de Classe*"<sup>15</sup>—which had first appeared in Rio in May 1930 as the organ of what was then called the Grupo Comunista Lenine. The Grupo Comunista Lenine, the *Boletim* said, had been "a local group," which had carried to Party cells, if not a discussion, at least "the knowledge of the views of the International Opposition—views that were systematically adulterated by the Stalinist bureaucracy."<sup>16</sup>

Reviewing the overthrow of Washington Luís, the *Boletim da Opção* found that "once again the Brazilian Communists were surprised by the events. And not only the Brazilian Communists, but the Communists of all the world. . . . While the Communist International continues to hammer away at the theme of British imperialism protecting the federal government, and Yankee imperialism riding on the Aliança Liberal, *L'Humanité*, official organ of the French Communist Party, inverts the explanation, with results just as stupid as the official thesis."<sup>17</sup> As an example of the many diverse explanations given by official Communist parties, the *Boletim da Opção* quoted from the *Daily Worker's* story of events in Rio on October 27, 1930: "The combat by the workers, under the direction of the Communist Party, shows the profound radicalization of the masses and demonstrates that the workers and poor peasants begin to set up their demands against the bourgeoisie itself and against all the imperialist forces."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Number 1 appeared in January 1931, Number 2 in April 1931.

<sup>14</sup> "A Fundação da Liga Comunista," *Boletim da Opção*, January 1931.

<sup>15</sup> It now opted for *Luta*, reformed spelling of *Lucia*.

<sup>16</sup> "A Fundação da Liga Comunista," *Boletim da Opção*, January 1931.

<sup>17</sup> "A Desorientação da I.C. a Respeito dos Acontecimentos no Brasil," *Boletim da Opção*, January 1931.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* On October 21, 1930, an article signed by Harry Gannes in the *Daily Worker* said that the Washington Luís government had at the last minute "made

To explain what had really happened in Brazil in 1930, the Provisional Executive Commission of the Liga Comunista (Oposição) issued a manifesto that made no reference to the struggle between British and United States imperialism in Brazil. It simply stated that the Partido Republicano Paulista had lost control of the federal government because the bourgeoisie of Rio Grande do Sul had felt strong enough to take it over, and because the oligarchy in Minas, headed by Bernardes, wanted to wrest the "political hegemony" from São Paulo. The "new republic" had been established when the bourgeoisie of Rio Grande do Sul, forgetting its past separatist tendencies, had made itself the champion of national unity, answering a call for such unity uttered by high military officers, who had pledged their support to Washington Luís as long as he did not send them to the firing line. The manifesto said that the generals, while overthrowing Washington Luís, shot people who threatened to sack *Jornal do Brasil*, "the patrimony of Count Pereira Carneiro."

Now, the Liga Comunista leaders said, the Gaúcho bourgeoisie, "rooted in policulture, cattle raising, and related industries," had replaced São Paulo's monopolizing bourgeoisie, characterized by capitalistic monoculture. "The new Messiahs poorly hide" their self-interest, their need of internal markets, when they proclaim "economic nationalism." "Punctually they pay" the interest on the foreign debt ("and João Alberto calls himself a 'socialist'").

The Liga Comunista leaders declared that the "liberty" in São Paulo,

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wholesale concessions to Wall Street" to save itself. According to this article, Secretary of State Harry Stimson then announced the "change of policy of American imperialism toward the Brazilian 'revolt.' . . . The latest turn in Wall Street policy towards the insurrection . . . is contained in the Stimson announcement that shipments of arms and ammunition would be permitted to the [Washington] Luís . . . government and an embargo placed on arms shipments to the insurgents. *The New York Times* announces that 'this decision may break the back of the revolt.'" Gannes's article said that "Wall Street's change of alliance does not mean the revolt is ended. The revolt is based on deep-going mass discontent. The workers and peasants are becoming more determined in their own demands. The revolt has set in motion huge masses who are definitely against imperialism. . . . The masses will see the function played by the imperialist powers in Brazil, and under the leadership of the Communist Party of Brazil will be led more and more to a real uprising against all imperialism and its Brazilian bourgeois allies." On October 27, 1930, the *Daily Worker* reported that "there are undoubtedly many mass battles under the leadership of working class revolutionary forces which are not reported in the capitalist newspapers."

"decreed" by João Alberto, had, within a month, turned into press censorship, restrictions on the right to strike, and jailings of labor militants. They concluded that liberty and democracy could only be achieved by the proletariat, for it alone had a vital interest in democracy.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> A Comissão Executiva Provisoria da Liga Comunista (Oposição), "Aos Trabalhadores do Brasil," *Boletim da Oposição*, January 1931.

## 5. The Syndicalization Law (March 1931)

By the use of repression and reforms the authorities waged a two-pronged attack on Communism. To aid the repressive thrust, Police Chief Batista Luzardo announced that he had arranged for two technicians of the New York Police Department to come to Brazil to organize a special service "to combat Communism along the lines that are used in North America."<sup>1</sup> In the north of Brazil, Colonel Landri Sales Gonçalves, military governor of the state of Pará, issued a strong order: "The Military Government will shoot in a public square all, whether foreigners or not, who divulge or spread reports of Communist propaganda, seeking thus to soil the great and noble principles of the Brazilian Revolution."<sup>2</sup>

Labor Minister Lindolfo Collor headed the other prong of the attack. Speaking to the Association of Employees in Commerce, he told of his "conviction, already expressed several times, that the objective of the revolution is not, should not be, and cannot be, the simple and summary substitution of individuals, but, rather, the modification of political directions and government methods that have been shown by experience to be incapable of meeting the general needs."<sup>3</sup>

To strengthen his staff, which included Evaristo de Moraes as well as Joaquim Pimenta and Agripino Nazaré,<sup>4</sup> he added Jorge Street to handle

<sup>1</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 5, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 8, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> Joaquim Pimenta, *Retalhos do Passado: Episódios que Vivi e Fatos que Testemunhei*, pp. 413-414. Evaristo de Moraes held the post of juridical consultant of the Labor Ministry, 1930-1932. For useful information about Evaristo de Moraes, see Evaristo de Moraes Filho, introduction (82 pages), in Evaristo de Moraes, *Apontamentos de Direito Operário*.



industrial matters.<sup>5</sup> Street, once a São Paulo textile plant owner famous for the showerbaths and restaurant he installed in his Maria Zélia plant,<sup>6</sup> was said to have lost his leadership in the Associação Industrial de São Paulo (São Paulo Association of Industrialists) because of his sympathy for the workers during the great strike of 1917.<sup>7</sup>

The ministry's labor experts had to deal with strikes as well as formulate new legislation. Early in March 1931, Joaquim Pimenta represented the minister at discussions about the Rio textile strikes, some of them caused by wage reductions of 15 percent. Workers at the Nova América textile plant invaded an office and wounded two foremen.<sup>8</sup> The incident resulted in some dismissals and brought Acting Police Chief Joaquim Salgado Filho into the picture.<sup>9</sup> The assault could be investigated but little could be done about the wage reductions put into effect by the troubled textile companies. Oliveira Braga, president of the União dos Operários em Fábricas de Tecidos, told the Labor Ministry that his union would assume the responsibility for the order and discipline of its members at the Nova América plant, provided that members found innocent of the assault not be dismissed. The company agreed, opened its doors, and the half-starved workers returned.<sup>10</sup>

During March 1931 the Labor Ministry regulated the decree of December 12, 1930, which required that work forces be at least two-thirds Brazilian. The regulation stipulated that, in the case of this law, all who had at least ten years' residence in Brazil, or who had Brazilian wives or Brazilian children, were to be considered Brazilian.<sup>11</sup>

Studies were made about housing for workers. To draft a new vacation law, a board was set up with representatives of employers, employees, the Labor Ministry, and the Conselho Nacional do Trabalho. The Labor

<sup>5</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 31, 1931.

<sup>6</sup> Eduardo Maffei, interview, November 11, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> [Luís Alberto] Moniz Bandeira, Clovis Melo, and A. T. Andrade, *O Ano Vermelho: A Revolução Russa e Seus Reflexos no Brasil*, p. 63. Warren Dean writes that Jorge Street "was considered an industrialist with an exceptionally well developed social conscience. He provided numerous benefits for his workers, as he told a visiting English delegation, not as charity but in place of higher wages, 'which would be frittered away on useless things.'" Dean adds that in 1919 Street, like most of the São Paulo industrialists, vigorously opposed the eight-hour day (*The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1880-1945*, pp. 156 and 163).

<sup>8</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, March 4, 1931.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, March 6, 1931.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, March 7, 1931.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, March 7, 1931.

Ministry planned a decree for establishing special tribunals for settling differences of opinion between workers and company owners.<sup>12</sup>

Among those interested in labor matters the greatest stir at this time was caused by the promulgation of the decree for establishing *sindicatos*, or unions. This decree, Number 19,770 (*lei de sindicalização*), signed on March 19, 1931, by Vargas, Collor, and Aranha, was "to protect the economic, juridical, and cultural interests, and the health, of all the employer and worker classes, which exercise identical, similar, or connected functions, and who organize themselves into syndicates, independent of each other." Besides establishing the bases for *sindicatos*, the decree covered federations of *sindicatos*, and confederations of federations, but for the moment, the federations and confederations were not of practical importance. The decree did not cover public officials or domestic workers, but said that future regulations would cover their associations.

The new law stated that the constitution of each *sindicato* was to stipulate that the *sindicato* should have at least thirty members (over eighteen years old), of whom at least two-thirds were Brazilians (native or naturalized), and that a majority of the administrative posts (to be held for one year, without pay, and with no reelection) were to be in the hands of native Brazilians or naturalized Brazilians with at least ten years of residence. Furthermore, the constitutions were to prohibit "in the syndicate's organization place, any propaganda of sectarian ideas, of social, political, or religious character, or of candidacies for elective posts not related to the organization." After a *sindicato* had been established in accordance with these rules, it had to have its statutes approved by the Labor Ministry and had to report the names of all associates, as well as their professions, ages, nationalities, residences, and places of work. Labor Ministry delegates were to attend the general assemblies of the *sindicatos* and examine their financial situations on a quarterly basis. *Sindicato* members could not join international unions. *Sindicatos* were required to cooperate in the application of laws that were to be issued "for reducing conflict between employers and employees."

The *sindicatos* recognized by the Labor Ministry could sign agreements and labor contracts "in accordance with legislation in force." They could found and administer beneficent accounts, hospital services, and schools. They could deal with the Labor Ministry about hours of work, conditions of work (especially for dangerous occupations and for women

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., April 2, 1931.

and children), and assistance for their beneficent institutes and schools.<sup>13</sup>

This legislation to establish associations that were to be government-recognized and under much government control brought congratulatory messages to Collor. One came from the Centro dos Operários e Empregados da Light of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>14</sup> The greatest enthusiasm was shown by the União dos Trabalhadores do Livro e do Jornal (UTLJ—Union of Workers in Books and Newspapers), which had been established on January 1, 1931, and which attracted both intellectuals and manual workers, rapidly replacing the Rio UTG (União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos.)<sup>15</sup> The UTLJ was the first to apply for official recognition, and its request was therefore presented amidst much ceremony, with speeches by Mário Horta of the UTLJ and Lindolfo Collor.<sup>16</sup> It was announced that, following a suggestion received from the UTLJ, a series of conferences would be held so that Labor Ministry officials could explain the new *lei de sindicalização* and answer questions. Professor Joaquim Pimenta spoke for the ministry at the first of these conferences.<sup>17</sup>

Anarchists and Communists opposed the new system. "Down with the Mussolini-ist law of syndicalization!" wrote the Trotskyites.<sup>18</sup>

The weakness of the anarchists and Communists, who for years had struggled in the Centro Cosmopolita, was evident when Agripino Nazaré, of the Labor Ministry's National Labor Department, was invited by the Centro to discuss clauses of the *lei de sindicalização*, especially those having to do with a *sindicato's* membership being two-thirds Brazilian, the non-reelection of *sindicato* officers, and their receiving no pay. The press reported that Nazaré's explanations were so satisfactory that the Centro Cosmopolita resolved to undertake a great propaganda campaign to unionize as many Brazilians as possible.<sup>19</sup>

The Communists' and anarchists' opposition to the *lei de sindicalização* left the field open to already existing Yellow unions and to unions that

<sup>13</sup> Decree 19,700 as given in Alfredo João Louzada, *Legislação Social-Trabalhista: Coletânea de Decretos Feita por Determinação do Ministro do Trabalho, Indústria e Comércio*.

<sup>14</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, dateline Rio de Janeiro, March 30, 1931.

<sup>15</sup> Hílcar Leite, interview, December 8, 1967.

<sup>16</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 2, 1931.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, April 1, 1931.

<sup>18</sup> "O 1º de Maio, Dia de Protesto contra a Reacção!" *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (Rio de Janeiro, May 1, 1931).

<sup>19</sup> "Centro Cosmopolita," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, dateline Rio de Janeiro, April 10, 1931.

were later organized by the Labor Ministry. Gradually, Plínio Melo says, "there grew up a labor union bureaucracy associated with the Ministry."<sup>20</sup>

As of June 30, 1933, the Labor Ministry reported that it had recognized 372 worker *sindicatos* and 74 employer *sindicatos*. These were said to have memberships totalling 168,330 employees and 4,349 employers. The Federal District showed 93,458 associates, followed by São Paulo State with 23,204, Rio State with 12,889, Pernambuco with 11,473, and Rio Grande do Sul with 5,857. Among the workers, by far the largest number of *sindicatos* were in the field of transport (118), followed by the food industry (39), civil construction (32), textiles (30), commerce (25), and paper and printing (15).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Plínio Gomes de Melo, interview, November 15, 1970.

<sup>21</sup> Louzada, *Legislação Social-Trabalhista: Colêtnia de Decretos*.

## 6. Prestes Condemns *Prestismo* (March 12, 1931)

In Buenos Aires on March 12, 1931, Luís Carlos Prestes issued a long open letter in which he declared himself under the orders of the directorship of the proletariat through its class party. This letter, revealing contempt for *prestismo*, adhered to the views of the Communist International. It attacked all Brazilians who did not fully support the PCB, and it attacked some who, the author felt, were insincere in giving the Party their support.

Explaining the need for this new pronouncement, Prestes said that large numbers of the hungry laboring masses were turning to him and to the party of the proletariat as the only ones who did not betray them.<sup>1</sup> At the same time it was "the sad destiny" of Prestes to find "petty politicians of the Left" and *tenentes* turning to him or using his name. He wanted to prevent this by "brutally" unmasking those who called themselves his friends or associates. And he wanted to use this opportunity to confess to the workers his "errors and indecisions" of the last ten months.

Prestes attributed the dire economic situation, the widespread misery and unemployment, to the world crisis of capitalism, "which is reaching

<sup>1</sup> "Carta Aberta" of Luís Carlos Prestes, given in Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, pp. 252-266.

the most advanced form of imperialism." In Brazil "the national bourgeoisie and the feudal lords do nothing in economics, or in politics, by their own will. They are always managed, or at least influenced, by the foreign imperialists." It was, Prestes wrote, through the imperialists' "chauvinistic salesclerks"—like Porto Alegre's Mayor Alberto Bins and newspaper publishers Geraldo Rocha and Assis Chateaubriand—that the bourgeois politicians knew who paid them the best.

According to Prestes, one imperialistic ploy was to have Maurício de Lacerda explain publicly that a new, clean, and pure regime had replaced the old one, while another tactic was to have the Labor Ministry engage in deceit and demagoguery. An example of this deceit could be found in the housing plan for railroad workers ("whose enslavement represents a formidable force for the fascist state"); Prestes said that the plan, calling for wage deductions and a promise that the workers would own the houses in ten, twelve, or fifteen years, was "the most revolting discovery of capitalistic Machiavellism." He cited Lindolfo Collor's "police *sindicatos*" as an example of demagoguery.

Prestes wrote that even Maurício de Lacerda and Batista Luzardo, "masters of demagoguery," must have felt small in the face of the demagoguery practiced in São Paulo by Miguel Costa's "brazen-faced assistants," Rafael Correia de Oliveira and Pedro Mota Lima—"the most shameless" demagoguery ever to have been practiced "by any imperialist agent in Brazil."<sup>2</sup> . . . These two low comedians . . . still seek to exploit my name and continue to call themselves Communists, my friends, and coreligionists. . . . Such types need to be branded with a hot iron by the laboring mass, as do most of the small-bourgeois intellectuals who still today call themselves Communists and my friends and my coreligionists. They do nothing more than defend one imperialism against another and seek to fool the laboring masses, dragging them into the interimperialistic struggles. I have nothing to do with such people."

Prestes said that the Yankee imperialists continued firmly in control of Rio Grande do Sul, where Interventor José Antônio Flores da Cunha "already said openly" that he would deliver them "the power plant of the city of Rio Grande, railroad concessions, and the port of Torres." On

<sup>2</sup> Rafael Correia de Oliveira (1896-1958) was the liberal journalist from Pernambuco who, as a reporter for *O Jornal* of Rio de Janeiro, had interviewed Prestes Column leaders in Bolivia in March 1927. He backed the Aliança Liberal revolution of 1930 and, after its success, worked with Miguel Costa in São Paulo, where he was given a high post in the state police force (information given in Octavio Brandão, letter, November 23, 1971).

the other hand, Prestes said, the federal government had been forced, because of coffee's importance, to come to terms with British imperialism.

Discussing the need of the new regime to serve two imperialistic masters, Prestes told of the situation in São Paulo and in the north of Brazil. In São Paulo João Alberto was described as appeasing the pro-British by having state Interior Secretary Orlando Leite Ribeiro, "agent of the Paulista plutocrats," name the mayors of the towns in the interior, while the pro-Yankees were to be satisfied by having Public Security Secretary Miguel Costa and his Legião Revolucionária select the police *delegados* of the same towns.

The British-linked São Paulo bourgeoisie was said to be buying Army leaders like Isidoro Dias Lopes, Pantaleão Teles, and José Fernandes Leite de Castro, and to be making progress in the north of Brazil at the expense of "the savior *tenentes*." Juarez Távora, "managed now by one imperialism, now by another," was described as failing to maintain his "vice-royalty" of the north. Prestes wrote that "only at the cost of the most despicable and sordid business deals" could he continue to show his "sorry figure: that of an imbecile and traitor of the exploited masses who once placed their confidence in him."

Prestes explained that he had directed his Manifesto of May 1930 to military men and civilians who had called themselves revolutionaries. But, he added, these men had "cynically abandoned the revolutionary camp," joined with those they had fought in the past, and become "the worst oppressors of the proletariat."

After issuing his Manifesto of May 1930, "and still without a precise Marxist understanding of the class struggle and with no link to the laboring masses," Prestes had formed the Liga de Ação Revolucionária (LAR). He had done this, he now said, so that members of the small bourgeoisie who called themselves revolutionaries—men like Rafael Correia de Oliveira, Pedro Mota Lima, and Timóteo Ribeiro—might make of the LAR "a technical instrument to help the proletariat and its Party."

Prestes went on to explain that, in spite of his efforts, the LAR became a "political party of the small bourgeoisie" and "a large number" of its adherents betrayed the proletariat and its Party. He pointed out that "the small bourgeoisie, without a fixed ideology," was capable of "the most incredible metamorphoses." Quoting Lenin, he found the small bourgeoisie always being dragged, in the class struggle, by one of the two classes that were fundamental in the capitalist society.

Therefore, Prestes said, "we, the revolutionaries of the small bourgeoisie, the ones who honestly and sincerely want to fight alongside the proletariat against imperialists," have to understand how correct the PCB was when it combated people who were in the Party but who thought along the lines of the petit-bourgeois chieftains and who did not yet understand that "only with an exclusively class party, a genuine party of the proletariat, free of any and all small-bourgeois, *tenentista*, *aliancista*, or Trotskyite influence," would it be possible, without treasons, to give the proletariat what it demands, the expulsion of the imperialists and the organization of a government of soviets of workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors.

Prestes warned against those who called themselves Communists but who, using such labels as Trotskyites, Leninists, or Leftists, really fought against the Communist Party. The Brazilian "Leftists," he said, concealed, under the form of subtle theories, the bourgeois mentality of intellectuals, whose vanity and personalism did not allow them to understand the tactical line of the proletariat. Men like Aristides Lobo, who had been "expelled from the Party," were "insinuating" that "the best of relations" existed between Prestes and the South American Secretariat of the Communist International, "in spite of the attacks with which the Party seeks to liquidate *prestismo* from its midst. Naturally it is even more difficult for such people to understand that I myself am an adversary of the small-bourgeois group and that I accede to the directorship of the proletariat through its class party."

The "opportunistic or reformist word of order" of the Brazilian Trotskyites—a call for a constitutional assembly—was, Prestes said, exactly the same word of order used by Maurício de Lacerda to deceive his "dull-witted followers." Prestes called this aspiration for an *assembléia constituinte* a consequence of a small-bourgeois mentality—the same mentality that caused the Trotskyites to explain the events of October 1930 as a struggle only between one regional bourgeoisie and another. The Trotskyites, Prestes wrote, had thus, "consciously or unconsciously," served "one of the imperialisms." After that, he added, they had rapidly embraced "social-fascism, by means of the *sindicatos* organized by Plínio Melo."

"To all who ask me about the criticisms of *prestismo*, to all sincere and honest revolutionaries, to the working mass that turns to me in this moment of disillusion and despair, I can only indicate one road—the Agrar-

ian and Anti-imperialist Revolution, under the unopposable hegemony of the party of the proletariat, the Partido Comunista do Brasil, Brazilian Section of the Communist International."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Carta Aberta" of Luís Carlos Prestes, given in Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, pp. 252-266.

## 7. Prestes Appeals to Soldiers and Sailors (March 20, 1931)

Soon after issuing his open letter of March 12, 1931, Prestes received a letter from some Brazilian lieutenants who addressed him as "General." The letter informed him that they had suggested to Távora that Prestes and Távora lead a new revolutionary movement since the salvation of Brazil seemed impossible as long as men like Artur Bernardes, Epitácio Pessoa, and Getúlio Vargas exerted "great influence." After Távora had expressed his hostility to Communism in Brazil and said he especially opposed the abolition of private property and the repudiation of foreign debts, Lieutenant Agildo Barata had assured the unhappy young officers that he would get Távora's backing as soon as General Prestes would furnish a program that omitted the two points to which Távora objected.

The letter that brought Prestes this news was made public as part of a new open letter issued by Prestes from Buenos Aires on March 20, 1931.<sup>1</sup> Addressed "to the Brazilian workers and very especially to their brothers in struggles and sufferings, the soldiers and sailors," it said that the letter he had received revealed the low morals of Távora. Both that letter and a so-called Revolutionary Program of the Army, drawn up by some advocates of a new conspiracy, contained, Prestes added, "a pile of imbecilities and insults."

Prestes explained that the two rival imperialistic bands and their supporters were seeking a new hero on account of the rapid collapse in the prestige of the "'glorious'" generals and colonels of October 1930. Prestes pictured two rival groups as looking for *tenente* backing: the Democratic party politicians of São Paulo, and Aranha, Collor, and Miguel Costa, who, with their "cynical servants," Mota Lima, Rafael Cor-

<sup>1</sup> The two letters are found in "Luiz Carlos Prestes e os Seus Antigos Companheiros de Revolução," *Diário da Noite*, São Paulo, March 28, 1931.



reia de Oliveira, and Reis Perdigão, were organizing *legiões revolucionárias* and engaging in "the most shameful demagoguery, pretending to be leftists, calling themselves Communists and 'friends of Russia,' and pretending to attack Bernardes."

Prestes said that all these searchers for a new hero made a mistake in addressing him. "As already I have returned the epaulets of captain, with which they wished to insult me, now I make them run like mad dogs; and I appeal to the soldiers and sailors to use their arms to help their brother workers liquidate this vulgar herd."

The chief reason for his new pronouncement, Prestes said, was to make the soldiers and sailors realize how they were being used and how despicable and cynical were their chieftains. According to Prestes, the fundamental aim of all these chieftains was to consolidate, by means of violence, the domination of the capitalists over the laboring class, depriving the workers of any possibilities of organizing themselves. A trick of the procapitalists, Prestes said, was to frighten the soldiers and sailors by speaking of "the Communist peril." But, he added, those who used this issue revealed that Communism was the one thing that put them in danger and thus inadvertently indicated the true road for the masses.

"Let the soldiers and sailors turn their arms against their own leaders, the lackeys of the bourgeoisie, and, organizing their soviets, fraternize with the workers."

## 8. The PCB "Mistreats" Prestes

The PCB admitted that "Prestes signs manifestoes with a correct revolutionary line."<sup>1</sup> Why then, asked the Trotskyites, was the PCB's "bureaucracy mistreating the man to such an extent?"<sup>2</sup>

The PCB leaders might have replied that they were trying to destroy the "small-bourgeois hero" in order to demolish *prestismo*. *Prestismo*, Fernando de Lacerda explained, "is an ideology that has its roots in the

<sup>1</sup> From "These Política para a Conferencia Regional de S. Paulo do P.C. do Brasil," as given in *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (Rio de Janeiro, May 1, 1931).

<sup>2</sup> "Crítica á 'These Política para a Conferencia Regional de S. Paulo do P.C. do Brasil,'" *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (May 1, 1931).

unstable mentality of the small bourgeoisie. . . . The two characteristics of *prestismo* are a lack of confidence in the proletarian and peasant masses . . . and a lack of faith in the capacity of the proletariat to direct the revolution." He said that this lack of faith led to a belief in "elites," in "heroes," and in "cavaliers of hope." *Prestismo*, he concluded, retarded the revolution and caused the masses to rely for their salvation on *caudilhos*, small-bourgeois "heroes," reformist union leaders, anarchists, and Trotskyites—everyone, in short, who had "small-bourgeois ideologies."<sup>3</sup>

Leônio Basbaum, usually in bitter disagreement with Fernando de Lacerda, was in accord with him on the danger of Prestes. In the early 1930's Basbaum repeatedly warned his companions against Prestes's influence.<sup>4</sup> More recently Basbaum has written that the manifestoes Prestes issued to break with his old companions and to get close to the Party hurt the PCB. According to Basbaum, the desperate masses, "above all the middle classes," had lost faith in the Communists and come to have confidence only in the Cavalier of Hope, who, they expected, "would some day cross the frontier, flaming sword in hand, mounted on a gleaming white horse, to throw out the demagogues and false revolutionaries." Basbaum states that Prestes gained adherents "while the forces of the fragmented PCB decreased."<sup>5</sup>

In February 1931 Ines Guralsky, the attractive Caucasian wife of "Rústico," came to Brazil to guide the PCB.<sup>6</sup> Her stern view on the need to disparage Prestes, rather than the more moderate view advanced by Heitor Ferreira Lima,<sup>7</sup> was reflected in the political thesis prepared in April 1931 for the PCB's São Paulo Regional Conference. According to the thesis, Prestes had been speaking "with the intention of fragmenting the only director of the masses, the Party," and wanted to strengthen *prestismo* and the illusions about the "'savior' within our own ranks." He was accused of "still preferring to maintain those illusions, until he might, with his own people, begin his military coups. . . . He always prefers barrack coups, directed by officers, by his own people. . . . He never turns over the power to the masses." The thesis also accused Prestes

<sup>3</sup> Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, pp. 272–273.

<sup>4</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, *História Sincera da República*, III, 35.

<sup>6</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970; Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," pp. 121–123. Basbaum describes Mrs. Guralsky as pleasant, forty-ish, and a little plump.

<sup>7</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

of having hesitated "to take the masses to the struggle," and said that Prestes, "still hesitant, does not orient the masses, does not mobilize them."<sup>8</sup>

The Trotskyites, specialists in finding contradictions in PCB pronouncements, pointed out that it was not consistent to regret in one line that Prestes had remained silent for a while and to state in another line that the manifestoes of Prestes "increase the dangers for our Party because they strengthen the *prestista* current within the Party."<sup>9</sup> And how, the Trotskyites asked, could the PCB "bureaucracy" use one sentence to insist that the revolution be directed by the proletariat, organized by the Communist Party, and use another sentence to take Prestes to task for not mobilizing the masses?

In calling attention to these inconsistencies, the Liga Comunista (Opposition of the Left) was not seeking to defend Prestes.<sup>10</sup> It concluded that "there is something fishy in all of this" and warned the workers to "be on their guard."<sup>11</sup>

In 1933 the PCB looked back with approval on its own criticism of Prestes in 1931. "Prestes," it wrote, "in various manifestoes . . . put himself at the head of the masses, maintained illusions, and made use of the name of the Partido Comunista in order to nourish his own prestige." The PCB explained that, when Prestes recognized his errors, he did so "still with vacillations"—and only "under the fire of criticism by the Party, which incessantly showed the masses the errors of Prestes and the miserable treasons of the *prestistas*."<sup>12</sup>

The PCB claimed that Prestes's use of the Party name in his open letters encouraged petit-bourgeois *prestistas* and intellectuals, many of them expelled from the Party for their "errors," to continue to use the name of the Party. "Especially in the north" where the laboring masses "suffer atrocious exploitations and oppression, along with the ill-effects of the

<sup>8</sup> From "These Política para a Conferencia Regional de S. Paulo do P.C. do Brasil," as given in *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (May 1, 1931).

<sup>9</sup> "Crítica á 'These Política para a Conferencia Regional de S. Paulo do P.C. do Brasil,'" *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (May 1, 1931).

<sup>10</sup> The *Boletim da Oposição*, 2 (April 1931), said that "if Prestes had assimilated the theory of Marx and Lenin he would know that . . . the centrist faction of Stalin committed such criminal violations of the principles that the existence of a strong oppositionist movement of the Left becomes more than a necessity."

<sup>11</sup> "Crítica á 'These Política para a Conferencia Regional de S. Paulo do P.C. do Brasil,'" *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (May 1, 1931).

<sup>12</sup> "O Prestismo e os Golpes Feudais-burgueses que Se Preparam," *A Classe Operaria*, Rio de Janeiro, May 1, 1933.

drought . . . , especially there *prestismo* has infiltrated and still exists all over the place, spread by the *caudilhos* and small-bourgeois *prestistas*.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

### 9. Trotskyite Views of the PCB's Theses of 1931

In March 1931, before the theses for the PCB's São Paulo Regional Conference were drawn up, Ines Gursky met with about ten comrades who had been placed on the PCB's CC in November 1930, to hear their opinions about what had happened in Brazil in October 1930. Almost without exception the CC members described the Aliança Liberal revolution as “a barrack uprising, typically small-bourgeois, unconnected with the people, at most a military rebellion of the middle class.” Former CC member Leôncio Basbaum, present at the suggestion of Ines, delivered a dissenting opinion. He admitted that he had once shared the “barrack uprising” view and acknowledged that the Aliança revolution might have started out as a military coup. However, he said, it had turned into a popular revolution supported by everybody except the Communists and the members of some of the fallen state Republican parties. He criticized the PCB for having “lost the leadership of the masses”—who were eager for change—and for not participating actively in the “democratic bourgeois revolution” (“of which Lenin spoke”), giving it “a shove to the left.”<sup>1</sup>

The PCB theses of April 1931, reflecting none of Basbaum's thoughts, found the Brazilian masses “in fervent agitation” against the authorities (the “fascist dictatorship”). The theses also made some points that had been disclosed in Prestes's open letter of March 12: British imperialism was exercising a strong influence on the Vargas government, and to call for a constitutional assembly, as the Trotskyites were doing, was a serious error. The PCB said that the masses would not be able to elect their legitimate representatives freely until soviets were in possession of the lands, arms, and newspapers, and had all the power.<sup>2</sup>

The Brazilian Trotskyites replied by quoting Lenin. Speaking for the

<sup>1</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, “Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias,” pp. 123–124.

<sup>2</sup> “These Política para a Conferência Regional de S. Paulo do P.C. do Brasil,” as given in *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (Rio de Janeiro, May 1, 1931).

Bolshevik Party in April 1917, Lenin had declared a bourgeois republic with a constitutional assembly preferable to the same republic without one. Before that, he had remarked that "the dissolution of the Duma is a return to autocracy."<sup>3</sup> The Trotskyites added that Brandão and Minervino, "while not always defending our interests with intelligence" in the Rio Municipal Council, had never betrayed "our class" and had always unmasked the "hypocritical game" of "demagogues" such as Maurício de Lacerda.

Speaking of Brandão, *A Luta de Classe* wrote—as it had a year earlier—that while some of his views had been "anti-Marxist," it was unfair to blame him for all the "erroneous" PCB theories. "The honesty of comrade Brandão had to pay for the sordidness of Astrogildo and Company,"<sup>4</sup> *A Luta de Classe* remarked, as it went on to take slaps at Astrogildo Pereira and Paulo de Lacerda, while criticizing the latest PCB theses.

The Trotskyites remarked that, in the eyes of the theoreticians of the PCB "bureaucracy," the masses were always "boiling" and "in fervent agitation." The logical conclusion was that the masses needed only to be organized, not stirred up. "But the directorship of the PCB neither agitates nor organizes. It limits itself to yelling hysterically and blindly that there already was 'a labor and peasant revolution in Itaquí.'"<sup>5</sup>

Referring to the latest PCB thesis that the British counteroffensive had latched onto the government of Getúlio, *A Luta de Classe* asked what all the fighting had been about in October 1930. Apparently British imperialism, popping up from somewhere behind Catete Palace, had used an easy, peaceful counteroffensive to dislodge the Yankees. If there were anything to all of this, why, *A Luta de Classe* wondered, had not the British foreseen this simple possibility in October 1930, gone along with Getúlio, and spared much bloodshed?<sup>6</sup>

The PCB wrote of "the rights of Indians and Negroes to have full autonomy, even to form separate nations." *A Luta de Classe* therefore pictured the Stalinist leadership as seeking to combat racial prejudice by openly advocating racial separation. "The fair-skinned Astrogildo and the snow-white Paulo de Lacerda would feel ashamed to sit in a streetcar

<sup>3</sup> "Crítica á 'These Política para a Conferencia Regional de S. Paulo do P.C. do Brasil,'" *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (May 1, 1931).

<sup>4</sup> S. M., "A Situação Brasileira e o Trabalho para o Seu Esclarecimento," *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (May 1, 1931).

<sup>5</sup> "Crítica á 'These Política para a Conferencia Regional de S. Paulo do P.C. do Brasil,'" *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (May 1, 1931).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

next to a Negro or Indian worker! Let workers see now who are the 'traitors and renegades.'"<sup>7</sup>

The reader of these unfair words learned that "the Stalinist bureaucracy cannot live without slandering; that is its principal activity." *A Luta de Classe* found what it called two slanders against the Trotskyite Liga Comunista in the new PCB political thesis. One slander, *A Luta de Classe* continued, was "the affirmation that we believe 'that the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution has already been made by the present fascist dictatorship.' So much cynicism is astonishing principally because the whole world knows that the Theses and Resolutions of the Third National Congress of the PCB contain this beauty: 'The revolution initiated in 1922-1924 is a democratic, agrarian, anti-imperialist revolution.' Now, 'the revolution' begun in 1922-1924 is precisely the 'revolution' that was victorious in October 1930 and which instituted the 'fascist dictatorship.'"<sup>8</sup>

*A Luta de Classe* also denied the PCB's charge that the Trotskyites tried to found "another Confederação Geral do Trabalho at the side of the one founded in 1929." Quite the contrary, the Trotskyites described themselves as having combated a "pseudo CGT committee," and as having struggled to get the anarcho-syndicalist Federação Operária de São Paulo to adhere to the CGT. *A Luta de Classe* said that the anarchists rejected not only this proposal but also a suggestion, which the Trotskyites backed, for holding a national congress to fuse rival confederations. The anarchists thus "were completely unmasked as divisionaries and saboteurs of the revolutionary labor movement." The Trotskyites exclaimed, "We shall struggle to the end for the CGT in spite of all the grumblings of the happy pigs of the Stalinist bureaucracy."<sup>9</sup>

In a short history of the PCB, *A Luta de Classe* said that Trotsky, pestered in 1922 by "the idiotic remarks of Antônio Canelas," had used the expression "anarchists of Brazil" to characterize the Astrogildos and Paulo de Lacerdas. According to *A Luta de Classe*, no true Communist Party existed in Brazil in 1922 and 1923—only a "heterogeneous assemblage of old anarchists" suffering from the police reaction of that era.

The article then pointed out that when a Party did appear in 1924, it was, "unfortunately," after Lenin's death and at the beginning of a "long period of reaction against his thinking and work." Not until 1928 had Brazil learned of the Russian opposition to this reaction. Even then the

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Duas Baixas Calumnias," *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (May 1, 1931).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

confused "one-sidedness" of the news and the "almost total absence of revolutionary literature" in Brazil allowed the PCB "bureaucracy" to tell untruths and carry on as it wished.

"Precisely in 1928" the "most enlightened" groups of Brazilian comrades tried to raise a barrier against the bureaucracy's attacks on "the true principles." However, *A Luta de Classe* stated, these "inexperienced" comrades committed tactical errors and failed to elaborate a program—and, after their defeat in 1928, did nothing. "Only in the middle of 1930, with the founding of the Grupo Comunista Lenine," was the door opened for rebuilding "true" revolutionary activity and for seriously analyzing the problems of the revolution in Brazil. In the Liga Comunista, *A Luta de Classe* concluded, the problems were studied "in a regime of internal democracy," such as "the bureaucracy has liquidated" from the Party.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> S. M., "A Situação Brasileira e o Trabalho para o Seu Esclarecimento."

## 10. Suppressing May Day Rallies (1931)

**I**n Rio the Trotskyite Liga Comunista called on the workers to attend the 1931 May Day commemorations being prepared by the Stalinist PCB. According to *A Luta de Classe*, "utopian socialists, among them the anarchists," did not know how to observe May Day: they were turning it into All Souls' Day, or the Day of the Dead. "They limit themselves to delivering obituaries of those who fell victims of capitalist banditry, and transform their protest into sterile mourning." The workers, the Trotskyites said, were to use the day to gather in public squares to demand their rights and to protest with all their energy against the onslaughts of the reaction. They were to shout revolutionary words of order, "which will take the proletariat to the conquest of power."<sup>1</sup>

Expecting that the Rio authorities would interfere with the May Day commemorations, the PCB was building up "self-defense" groups that were to use wooden clubs and lead pipes (wrapped in newspapers) to

<sup>1</sup> "O 1º de Maio, Dia de Protesto contra a Reacção!" *A Luta de Classe* 2, no. 7 (May 1, 1931).

protect the orators.<sup>2</sup> Leôncio Basbaum, in charge of this work, was a victim of the wave of arrests of Communists carried out in April 1931.

On the morning of May 1, newspapers published two announcements from the office of the Rio chief of police. One told of a bomb exploding in the police headquarters (Polícia Central); the other prohibited meetings in public squares or streets on May Day.

According to the first announcement, the bomb had exploded on the first floor during the afternoon of April 30. Material damage had been insignificant, and, although many people had been present, no one had been injured. The police recommended the greatest calmness on the part of the city's inhabitants.

The second announcement revealed that after subversive placards and bulletins had been seized, the *delegados auxiliares* and the inspector-general of the Guarda Civil met with Police Chief Luzardo. Luzardo resolved to prohibit "categorically" any public meeting on May Day, and he gave instructions to have policemen act "severely and energetically against any who might try to disobey this resolution."<sup>3</sup>

On May 2 *Correio da Manhã* carried a large front-page headline to report that, whereas in various nations May Day commemorations had been the cause of conflicts and bloodshed, it had been otherwise in Brazil.<sup>4</sup> However, an inside-page story contradicted this headline and told of a conflict at Praça Mauá when a "misunderstanding" arose between police investigators and some individuals. During the conflict, soldiers of the Military Police came to help the investigators. One sailor received a bullet wound in his arm, and one investigator received a punch in the jaw. "Disturbers of the peace" were arrested and locked up in the Fourth Delegacia Auxiliar.<sup>5</sup>

Conflicts also occurred in Recife. On the morning of May 1, after a police *delegado* received word that the União e Resistência dos Trabalhadores planned to violate Interventor Carlos de Lima Cavalcânti's prohibition against public demonstrations, Police Agent Barros Lins was sent to warn the União e Resistência. Despite the warning, the União held a public demonstration at the Largo do Mercado (Market Square). When Barros Lins and a police inspector argued with the workers, the inspector was shot in the thigh. A cavalry regiment, firing into the air,

<sup>2</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> "Duas Comunicações do Gabinete do Chefe de Polícia," *O Jornal*, May 1, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 2, 1931, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> "O Dia do Trabalho," *Correio da Manhã*, May 2, 1931, p. 6.



then arrived on the scene. When it was stoned by the demonstrators, it shot into the crowd, forcing the workers to flee. The police reported finding a firearm on one of the arrested workers.<sup>6</sup>

In São Paulo on April 28, 1931, a brief outbreak had occurred in the Força Pública, with some of its officers calling for the "liberation" of São Paulo State and a constitution for Brazil. Therefore by May Day a heavy censorship was being imposed, and authorities were on the alert. In Santos and the state capital public meetings were prohibited on May 1. The press reported no disturbances—only the news that the lack of movement in the Santos streets made the holiday seem like a Sunday.<sup>7</sup>

The International Red Aid for Brazil, affiliated with the Communist International, declared that on May 1, 1931, Vargas "had the demonstrating masses of workers shot down in Rio de Janeiro and Recife." It said that Vargas, "a worthy pupil of Mussolini," had robbed the workers and peasants of all their rights. "Over 100 workers' functionaries, belonging to the trade unions, the General Labor Federation, and the Communist Party, have been arrested or banished from the country. The prisoners are beaten by the police like mad dogs."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "O Dia do Trabalho," *Diario Pernambuco*, May 3, 1931.

<sup>7</sup> "Em São Paulo," *Correio da Manhã*, May 2, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, June 25, 1931.

## 11. Maurício de Lacerda Attacks the Government

In May 1931 Rio police investigators invaded the shop where Maurício de Lacerda's new book *Segunda Republica* was being printed.<sup>1</sup> The sleuths walked off with proof sheets of the book, but the Second Delegacia Auxiliar denied any responsibility for the seizure and claimed to have simply ordered an investigation to locate the printing shop where the subversive May Day bulletins had been printed.

No doubt the proof sheets interested the authorities, for Maurício had been writing articles in *Diario de Noticias* criticizing Aranha, condemn-

<sup>1</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 15, 1931.

ing "the deportation of workers," and "demonstrating that the nationalization of the work force without the nationalization of companies is a mockery."<sup>2</sup> At length *Diario de Noticias* had to tell its readers that force majeure (Salgado Filho's advice to the press that it censure itself) would prevent Maurício's continued collaboration with the daily.<sup>3</sup>

Those who read the proof sheets of Maurício's new book learned more than the author's version of his role in the 1930 revolution and his subsequent problems with press censorship. The book asserted that the Vargas government, a "fascist dictatorship," was collapsing because it was not giving attention to the social problem. For a military takeover, Lacerda said, all the nation needed was one more hour of the mental and political anarchy that was being supplied by the Vargas government—a government Maurício described as absolutely incapable of interpreting popular sentiment or even of beginning to solve the economic problems.

Maurício argued that the government was greatly exaggerating the dangers of Communism. He noted that the Communists were left with no press, no books, and no personal liberties, and that "Fontourista bombs" were exploding in the police *delegacias* without doing any damage, as they had during the states of siege in the 1920's.

Maurício felt the repression would pave half the road for the Communists, who would otherwise take years to build it by themselves. He hinted that Luís Carlos Prestes, whom he described as an obstinate chief with a clear program, might take advantage of the general confusion to seize power. But the reader was left with the feeling that an anti-Communist military coup was more likely. This coup would occur, Maurício said, when the "brutally repressed" proletariat, afflicted by hunger and unemployment, clashed with the government. The military plotters, making use of the government warnings against Communism, would, he said, seize power to save Brazil from the foreign intervention that would result if Prestes were allowed to take over and repudiate Brazil's foreign debts.

Maurício issued a call to his fellow revolutionaries to save the day and "reconquer popular support" by forming an organization to struggle for radical social programs. He spoke of "a coalition of the social and political Lefts"—the formation of a party for the "new national construction." He particularly stressed the need of a program, warning that in its absence the revolutionaries would vacillate between fascism and Communism.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Maurício de Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*, p. 339.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 349-385.



Maurício de Lacerda, cartoon by Alvarus. (Frontispiece in Lacerda, *Segunda Republica*)

## 12. Brandão, Basbaum, and Ferreira Lima Leave Rio

Like Maurício de Lacerda, the Communists insisted that the Vargas government was doing nothing to deal with the economic crisis. They spoke of 2,000,000 unemployed Brazilians, "wandering about the highroads and in the city streets, without bread or shelter."<sup>1</sup> In his open letter of March 12, 1931, Luís Carlos Prestes told of "100,000 unemployed" in the Federal District, and derided Joaquim Pimenta for putting the figure as low as 25,000.<sup>2</sup>

The Departamento Nacional do Povoamento, a section of the Labor Ministry, sought to alleviate the situation by arranging to move unemployed city workers into the interior, where they might raise food. In the month of May 1931, 2,365 such persons were moved.<sup>3</sup> "A magnificent solution!" scoffed Prestes. "Let us return to a vegetative life, to a state of savagery, because that is what the imperialist lords have decreed."<sup>4</sup>

Labor Minister Collor, on a visit to São Paulo, went to inspect the Maria Zélia textile plant, once run by Jorge Street; he found it closed down due to economic distress.<sup>5</sup> Soon after returning to Rio, where he was greeted by representatives of labor unions that were cooperating with the *lei de sindicalização*, Collor accepted an invitation to sponsor a great festival in São Paulo—the purpose of which was to raise funds to assist the unemployed.<sup>6</sup>

The repression of Communism, about which Maurício de Lacerda

<sup>1</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, June 25, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 4, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 255.

<sup>5</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 21, 1931. At the Cotonifício Créspi plant Labor Minister Collor was greeted by Count Rodolfo Crespi, a great admirer of Mussolini and fascism (ibid.). José Oiticica, who worked in 1931 at the side of Leuenroth and the anarchist Federação Operária de São Paulo against Collor's "fascism," records that São Paulo workers "resoundingly booed" Collor when he tried to address them (*Ação Direta* 1, no. 4 [May 7, 1946]). In 1929 Oiticica had won a contest sponsored by the Foreign Ministry and thus had been awarded a five-year contract to lecture at the University of Hamburg. However, the 1930 revolution in Brazil cut short the program begun by the "old regime" for "cultural penetration abroad," forcing Oiticica to return to Brazil.

<sup>6</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 3, 1931.

wrote, was more evident in Rio than in São Paulo. One of the many victims in April 1931 was Otávio Brandão, who, like Minervino de Oliveira, had been set at liberty on February 7, 1931. Brandão had since worked at the publication of *A Classe Operaria*. Only he and his two assistants, a railroad worker and João Domingos Silva, an unemployed bricklayer, knew the location of *A Classe Operaria's* press. Police investigators, after receiving false information that the newspaper was being published in Niterói, searched a score of places there.

But the bricklayer was hungry—so hungry that he gave *A Classe Operaria's* address to the police in return for six hundred mil-réis and a job (which never materialized). Brandão, after making his way through alleys, was climbing the stairs to get to *A Classe Operaria* to prepare the May Day issue of 1931. Suddenly five revolvers were aimed at his head from the room he was approaching. He backed off only to run into more policemen. Both he and Romualdo, the railroad worker, were captured.<sup>7</sup>

Leôncio Basbaum, also jailed in April 1931, found a large number of PCB and JC members in the Rio Casa de Detenção. Among them was Augusto Besouchet, his roommate in Rio. For the most part, Basbaum reports, an air of "happy irresponsibility" reigned among the prisoners.<sup>8</sup> In June Basbaum was put aboard a ship going south and warned that if he returned to Rio he could expect "a rougher time" in prison.<sup>9</sup> When the ship reached Rio Grande do Sul, Basbaum was jailed by the authorities of that state.

Brandão, ill in Rio's Casa de Detenção, contributed nothing to the air of "happy irresponsibility." The Vargas government had decided to deport him, together with Laura Brandão, not to Rio Grande do Sul, but to Germany. Brandão made counterproposals, suggesting deportation to Alagoas, or to some other part of Brazil, or even to some place in Latin America.<sup>10</sup> But these ideas were rejected, and on June 18, 1931, Brandão, escorted by eight well-armed agents, was taken from the Casa de Detenção and placed on a vessel, along with Laura and their three daughters, aged nine, eight, and six years.

Brandão hoped to spend part of his exile studying German literature. But a few days after reaching Berlin, the German police told him that if he did not leave Germany at once he would be locked in jail for six

<sup>7</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 128.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>10</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 14, 1968.

months. Brandão, who suspected that Brazil's consulate in Berlin was responsible for this new order against him, took his family to Moscow.<sup>11</sup>

At this time, June 1931, Ines Guralsky dismissed Heitor Ferreira Lima from his post of PCB secretary-general and sent him to work for the Party in the north of Brazil. Ines and Fernando de Lacerda opposed Ferreira Lima's desire to have the PCB form a closer relation with Prestes, and they went beyond Ferreira Lima with their *obreirismo*: they denied intellectuals the right to vote at Central Committee and Political Bureau meetings.<sup>12</sup> Fernando de Lacerda became secretary-general,<sup>13</sup> and Ines ran the Party.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, November 14, 1970. Josias Carneiro Leão, who had become Brazilian consul in Bremen, saw Brandão when he landed in Bremen (Leão, interview, June 28, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

<sup>13</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, typewritten list of PCB secretaries-general.

<sup>14</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

### 13. The PCB Loses Astrogildo; Paulo de Lacerda Loses His Mind

Leônio Basbaum, after being held in three Rio Grande do Sul jails (in Porto Alegre, Santa Maria, and Uruguaiana), was exiled to Uruguay in July 1931. Warmly greeted at the headquarters of the Communist Party of Uruguay by leaders of that Party and members of the South American Secretariat of the Communist International, he learned that Augusto Besouchet, Salvador Cruz, and Homem de Melo, who had been in jail with him in Rio, had preceded him to Montevideo. The South American Secretariat gave him an allowance and a room, which he shared in downtown Montevideo with Augusto Besouchet. For over a month Basbaum remained in Montevideo, speaking about Brazil at meetings of Communist leaders.<sup>1</sup>

Guralsky and Arthur Ernst Ewert, a large man who once sat in the German parliament, were among those who heard Basbaum express his dislike of "extreme *obreirismo*" and *prestismo*. Asked about the PCB's

<sup>1</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," pp. 131-142.

leaders, he replied that the Party's CC had been in constant flux beginning in 1930 due to the policy of proletarianization. He described Fernando de Lacerda as always seeming to be ill ("something to do with the heart") and as preaching "intransigent *obreirismo* for purely demagogic reasons."<sup>2</sup>

Basbaum went on to defend Astrogildo Pereira. Guralsky brought out a handwritten letter Astrogildo had sent him from São Paulo; it told of Astrogildo's decision to leave the PCB "without abandoning it completely. . . . I am leaving the stage to be in the audience. But I shall not be an indifferent spectator. I shall be there to boo, but also to applaud and stimulate the actors when I think it right." Basbaum was told that this letter was just one of a number of proofs that the demotion of Astrogildo had been justified.<sup>3</sup> Although Astrogildo had written Guralsky confessing his "incapacity" to lead the PCB, and had even called himself a coward,<sup>4</sup> Guralsky told Basbaum that Astrogildo lacked "the spirit of Bolshevik self-criticism." Nonetheless, Astrogildo's resignation from the PCB was not much wanted. It was decided that Basbaum should go to São Paulo and speak with Astrogildo—"to save him." Basbaum was to tell Astrogildo that if he would write another letter, asking for the return of the resignation letter, the latter would be returned to him.<sup>5</sup>

Turning to *prestismo*, Basbaum said that Prestes had captured the allegiance of a large part of the Brazilian people, including many Party members, who "await his word of order with more interest and confidence than the word of order of the Party." Basbaum added that Prestes's latest open letters had caused a schism in the PCB.

In reply, the representatives of the Communist International said that Prestes, who had broken with all his old companions, could be won for the Brazilian revolution and had already taken a step in the right direction. They explained that "to save Prestes and at the same time to liquidate *prestismo*" they had invited Prestes to go to Moscow. Arthur Ernst Ewert, Basbaum was told, had come to Montevideo expressly to extend the invitation and work out the details.<sup>6</sup> Basbaum also learned that Prestes, who was in Montevideo following his expulsion from Argentina for attacking

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-143.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 15, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, interview, November 7, 1968; Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 143.

<sup>6</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 144.

the Uriburu regime, had accepted the invitation to go to Russia and was expected to leave soon with his mother and three sisters.<sup>7</sup>

The meeting broke up with the International's representatives showing more love for Prestes than Basbaum thought was justified. Basbaum, preparing to return to Brazil, borrowed an old passport from a friendly member of a prominent Brazilian family. Although the Profintern (Red International of Labor Unions) had asked Basbaum to work for it in Montevideo, the PCB wanted all deported Brazilian Communists who were still in Montevideo to return to Brazil.<sup>8</sup>

In mid-August 1931 Basbaum and Augusto Besouchet settled down to work for the PCB in São Paulo. There the local political leaders had forced the resignation of João Alberto a month earlier. With Isidoro Dias Lopes, these leaders were plotting a rebellion to overthrow the Vargas regime. João Alberto's "softness on Communism in São Paulo" became a thing of the past. Before Basbaum had time to get in touch with the São Paulo Regional Committee of the PCB, the entire committee was arrested. Among the arrested Communists sent from São Paulo to Rio Grande do Sul were Astrogildo Pereira and Paulo de Lacerda.

Astrogildo left Rio Grande do Sul at the first opportunity; settling on the family property in Rio State, he kept apart from the PCB.<sup>9</sup> Some of the other Communists who had been sent from São Paulo to Rio Grande, among them Paulo de Lacerda, lingered in Rio Grande and were rearrested.<sup>10</sup> Paulo is said to have refused to turn against the PCB, even when threatened with shooting, and to have become permanently insane when the authorities of Rio Grande placed him against a wall, pretending for the third time that they were going to shoot him.<sup>11</sup> The root of his mental trouble was syphilis.<sup>12</sup> Out of his mind, he was exiled to Uruguay. For the rest of his life he suffered hallucinations and was unable to express himself.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Jacob Gorender, "Figuras do Movimento Operário: Prestes," *Problemas*, no. 24 (January–February 1950), pp. 118–128. See especially, p. 123. Prestes's mother and three sisters had joined him in Buenos Aires in September 1930, following a separation that had begun in 1923 (Luís Carlos Prestes, interview, September 5, 1963).

<sup>8</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 145.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>10</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, interview, November 7, 1968.

<sup>11</sup> Octavio Brandão, interview, December 5, 1968.

<sup>12</sup> Carlos Lacerda, interview, September 17, 1968; Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 150.

<sup>13</sup> Carlos Lacerda, interviews, September 17, 1968; July 3, 1971.



## 14. A Trotskyite Booklet<sup>1</sup>

Plínio Melo, who had turned to the Trotskyites, was defended by them. In a small booklet published in 1931 the Trotskyite Liga Comunista (Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition) said that when Plínio Melo, Josias Carneiro Leão, and Luís de Barros tried to legalize the PCB in São Paulo, Plínio Melo was the only one of the three who was not a Party member and had no responsibility to the Party. Representatives of the Party directorship, the Trotskyites wrote, had considered making a "united front" with Josias Leão and Luís de Barros, calling them "sincere comrades."

While the Trotskyites criticized what all three had done and explained that the legality of a proletarian party is achieved only by the pressure of the proletariat, they went on to say that Plínio Melo "is the first to recognize his error." Furthermore he was described as a "new militant" whose past deviations had been caused by the deviations of the Party leadership.

The Trotskyites said that their Liga Comunista, "the most revolutionary faction of the party of the proletariat," was led internationally by Trotsky and Christian Rakovsky. Despite this connection with Trotsky, the Liga condemned the term Trotskyite, explaining that it was used by "imbeciles" and had been invented by such Stalinists as Gregory Zinoviev and Leo Kamenev in 1925-1926 when they sought to show that Trotsky was not a follower of Lenin's ideas. Further, the Trotskyites branded as "absolutely false" the accusation that Trotsky's "International Left Opposition" was considering setting up a Fourth International. They insisted that the "centrist" tendencies of the Stalinists would not continue influential in the Third International, and that there was therefore no need for a Fourth International.

"Malevolently," the Brazilian Trotskyites wrote, the PCB "bureaucracy" tried to associate the "present leftist oppositionist faction of the Party" with the opposition of 1928, defeated in Rio. The "bureaucracy's" reason for doing this was said to be to identify the Left Opposition with the tactical errors of the 1928 opposition: the lack of a program, and the resignation from the Party by fifty individuals who objected to the centralized bureaucracy. "The bureaucracy forgets," the Trotskyites wrote in

<sup>1</sup> Liga Comunista (Oposição), *A Oposição Comunista e as Calumnias da Burocracia* (31 pages).

1931, "that all the criticisms made by the opposition at that time were entirely just. . . . The fact that some comrades of the 1928 opposition have adhered, individually, to the Liga Comunista, only shows the consistency of their point of view."

It was the Trotskyites' belief that the "political deviations" being committed by the PCB leaders were far more serious than the tactical errors of the opposition in 1928. "A thousand times more serious than the simple resignation request of fifty adherents" were "the idea of founding a Brazilian *Kuomintang*, the association with Leônidas de Resende in the confusionist work of *A Nação*, the incredible characterization of the military movement of 1922-1924 as a 'democratic, agrarian, anti-imperialist revolution' (Third Congress theses), the 'political and ideological alliance with the small bourgeoisie' of the barracks, the incitement of an insurrection headed by the formidable General Luís Carlos Prestes, the electoral exclusiveness of the BOC, the destruction of labor unions and the present divisionary work in that area, and the latest novelty of the century: 'agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution' (Third Congress theses) as a substitute for the Proletarian Revolution."

The Trotskyites quoted Lenin to show that the PCB should, like its Trotskyite faction, play a role in the São Paulo labor unions—and not seek to found new ones on the ground that the existing ones were "fascist." The PCB's Comitê da Confederação Geral do Trabalho was described as having called a syndical conference with the purpose of opposing a syndical conference called by the anarchist Federação Operária.

And why, asked the Trotskyites, "do the anarchists direct the Paulista labor union movement?" Again Lenin was quoted: "Anarchism has often been a sort of punishment imposed on the labor movement due to its own opportunist sins." The Trotskyites concluded that "the defeats suffered by São Paulo strikers, the failure of the Light and Power Company strike and the drivers' strikes, the capitulation of the directors of the Federação Operária—in one word the anarchist leadership of the union movement—" was a punishment imposed on the labor movement due "exclusively to the opportunist sins of the PCB leadership."

## 15. Uprising in Recife (October 1931)

In the barracks and in the War Ministry in Rio discontented *tenentes* talked about setting up a military dictatorship. Plotters in Recife, believing that they had support in Rio,<sup>1</sup> had little difficulty in attracting local followers. The worsening of the economic situation in the drought-afflicted, impoverished northeast, coupled with austere financial measures that seemed to intensify the misery, left little enthusiasm for the Pernambuco regime of Interventor Carlos de Lima Cavalcânti. Some plotters had ties with the pre-1930 state government. Others were devoted to the Cavalier of Hope and influenced by phrases in his manifestoes. Sergeants and corporals wrote to Prestes, inviting him to come to Pernambuco to lead the uprising, but Prestes opposed the movement, feeling that it would fail.<sup>2</sup>

On October 29, 1931, the Army battalion near Recife revolted, making prisoners of loyal officers and securing control of much of Recife as well as the neighboring city of Olinda. The rebels set up their headquarters in the Secretaria de Segurança (state Department of Public Security). Lima Cavalcânti, who fled from the Governor's Palace to a friend's house, appealed to nearby states to assist the loyal Pernambuco Brigada Militar, which was directed by Public Security Secretary Nelson de Melo, Brigada Militar Commander Jurandir Mamede, and Assistant Commander Afonso de Albuquerque Lima.<sup>3</sup>

On October 30, after hundreds of troops arrived from the states of Paraíba and Alagoas, the rebellion was crushed. In the heavy shooting between fifty and one hundred were killed and many more were wounded.

Recife's *Diario da Manhã*, owned by the Lima Cavalcânti family, reported that, "in the face of the Red peril," the "conservative and popular classes" had joined the "regenerating program" of the 1930 revolution. It praised "the good sense and dignified behavior" of the workers, pointing out that they had not let themselves be convinced by "immoral agitators" who preached destruction of the family and of the constituted

<sup>1</sup> Afonso de Albuquerque Lima, interview, September 12, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Luís Carlos Prestes, interview, September 5, 1963.

<sup>3</sup> Carlos de Lima Cavalcânti, quoted in *Diario da Manhã*, Recife, November 3, 1931.

order. "There is no doubt that the Brazilian labor force . . . can have no other interest than to back the work of the Revolution of October 1930."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Diario da Manhã*, November 3, 1931.

## 16. Trotskyites Mock the Departing Prestes

The PCB blamed "the *caudilhos* and small-bourgeois *prestistas*" for leading "the workers and soldiers of Recife to the uprising of October 1931."<sup>1</sup>

Prestes, late in 1931, issued a new manifesto announcing that he had just adhered to the Communist Party<sup>2</sup> and that, to prove his loyalty to Communism, he was going to Russia to help with construction work there.<sup>3</sup>

In January 1932 the Brazilian Trotskyites said that there might be some truth to the press reports affirming that Prestes had been greeted in the Soviet Union as the leader of Communism not only in Brazil but also in all of South America, and had been received by Stalin in person. "And what," they asked, "has this comrade done to win so quickly the gold stripes of general of the Communist International?" Prestes's "ascension to high posts" in the Communist Party was declared to be "a magnificent illustration of the bureaucratic processes that reign today in the Communist International." The Trotskyites said that in a true Leninist Party, under a real regime of democratic centralism, leaders were not named by decrees from the top; the true leader was said to emerge from below, little by little "as he acquires the confidence of the anonymous mass of militants by means of daily proofs," working "shoulder to

<sup>1</sup> "O Prestismo e os Golpes Feudais-burgueses Que Se Preparam," *A Classe Operaria*, Rio de Janeiro, May 1, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> Prestes was not officially accepted into membership of the PCB until August 1, 1934. A news item in *Jornal do Brasil*, January 7, 1965, states that in October 1964 the seventy-four-year-old Astrogildo Pereira was imprisoned "because in 1927 he managed to transform Sr. Luís Carlos Prestes from a disciplined military figure into the most famous member of the Party."

<sup>3</sup> A Comissão Executiva da Liga Comunista (Oposição), "À Margem do Manifesto Stalino-Prestista," *Diario de São Paulo*, January 22, 1932.

shoulder with the modest laboring class." The masses were told to "beware of neo-*prestismo* bearing the stamp of Moscow."<sup>4</sup>

The Trotskyites defended themselves against the charge, made by Prestes and the PCB, that they were "counterrevolutionaries" because they favored a constitutional assembly. They said that if the PCB ("our Communist Party") had initiated a strong campaign for a constitutional assembly immediately after the Aliança Liberal movement everything would have been much better: the new government, not yet consolidated, would never have dared so quickly to muzzle the press, break up meetings, banish labor militants to island camps, deport Brazilians, and decree the "fascist *lei de sindicalização*." "And our Party would today be indissolubly tied to the masses."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

### 17. The Basbaum-Fernando de Lacerda Struggle (January-May 1932)

After the arrest of the São Paulo Regional Committee of the PCB in mid-August 1931, Leôncio Basbaum and Augusto Besouchet set out to rebuild the Party in the state capital. They went from home to home, looking up old comrades, few of whom knew Basbaum or Besouchet. This work, which they hoped would result in a regional conference and the selection of a new regional committee, kept them in Brás and Moóca most of the time. The work went well.<sup>1</sup>

In October 1931, after Augusto Besouchet moved to Rio to join his family and seek his old job at the Bank of Brazil, Basbaum wrote to the Comintern Secretariat in Montevideo and to the PCB in Rio suggesting that the Central Committee of the PCB be transferred from Rio to São Paulo. The repression in Rio, he pointed out, was so bad that he could not return there and Fernando de Lacerda could do nothing more than hide. Montevideo and Rio accepted Basbaum's suggestion.<sup>2</sup>

In November 1931 the São Paulo Communists held a Labor Union

<sup>1</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

Conference as well as their Regional Party Conference. At the latter Basbaum was named secretary-general of the Regional Committee. Theoretically this position assured him of a salary from the Party sufficient to cover his living costs (which had increased with his recent marriage to Sílvia). However, the expenses of the Party in São Paulo, which included the publication of manifestoes, handbills, and *A Classe Operaria*, used up most of the income, derived from small monthly dues from members and occasional contributions from sympathizers, and so Basbaum continued to receive—as he had before his election—only about 2\$000 daily from the Party. In January 1932 he secured a teaching position that brought him 150\$000 per month and helped pay the rent on a large house in Brás, which the Basbaums shared with some of the Communists who had come from Rio: Fernando and Ericina de Lacerda and their four children, and two or three bachelors.<sup>3</sup>

Starting late in January 1932, meetings were held to determine the make-up of the CC and the Politburo of the PCB. Among those attending the meetings were tubercular Salvador Cruz, who had brought his family from Rio, and Francisco Natividade Lira, known as Cabeção, who had come from Uruguay, where he had completed a rapid course in labor organization.<sup>4</sup>

When Ericina de Lacerda, known as Cina, was nominated for the CC, Basbaum objected on the ground that she had belonged to the PCB for only one year and was not qualified. As a compromise she was put in charge of the Party bureaucracy: correspondence, files, and relations with the regional committees.

Basbaum nominated Fernando de Lacerda for secretary-general. Fernando declined, saying that he had heart trouble and was not an “authentic laborer.” Instead, he nominated José Vilar, known as Miguel. Against the vote and arguments of Basbaum, Miguel was elected. Miguel, who carried out the wishes of Fernando, was the epitome of the “authentic laborer” and therefore had been elected to the CC in 1930. Dirty and poorly clothed, he made a point of exhibiting his ignorance and committing grammatical errors.<sup>5</sup>

The new CC met once or twice a week. At one meeting Fernando de Lacerda proposed that the intellectuals (Basbaum and himself) be barred from voting. Basbaum’s argument that Marx, Engels, and Lenin had been

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 95, 151.

intellectuals was less effective than the words of Fernando and Cina, who condemned intellectuals such as Astrogildo Pereira, "betrayed of the proletariat." After Fernando's proposal carried, Cina, who came from a well-to-do family, demanded the right to vote on the ground that she was a worker: she sewed her husband's shirts and had a grandfather who was a peasant. Cina was victorious again.<sup>6</sup>

Basbaum won an important victory over Fernando and Cina when he persuaded the CC to vote that the PCB, instead of creating new Communist labor unions, work within the existing unions, all dominated by the Labor Ministry. The CC also rebuffed an attempt by Fernando and Cina to force Basbaum out of the São Paulo Regional Committee, which fully supported him.

To bolster her position, Cina began bringing laborers from the streets to CC meetings. She insisted that they had the right to vote "because we are a democratic labor party and all laborers have the right to vote." Her success led Basbaum to follow her example, building up his own "fan club" from the streets. The CC and Politburo meetings became so crowded that a motion was passed prohibiting members from bringing guests from the streets. The setback brought tears to Cina's eyes. Basbaum, irritated, exclaimed: "This, comrades, is not Communism, it is feminism!" Cina retorted that Basbaum was "against women" and had "a bourgeois concept of women."<sup>7</sup>

Fernando, who had missed recent meetings, appeared at the next one with a motion calling on Basbaum to write a letter to the CC "confessing and recognizing his errors." A few days later Basbaum wrote a letter in which he "recognized that his activities, although prompted by good intentions, revealed that he was still imbued with small-bourgeois bias." Cina made sure that plenty of mimeographed copies were distributed throughout the Party. She offered Arlindo Pinho, of the JC, a scholarship at the Lenin Institute in Moscow if he would take a copy to the Secretariat in Montevideo, together with a letter in which Fernando argued that Basbaum should be expelled from the CC and the Party for being a Trotskyite. Arlindo, partisan of Basbaum, also took with him a letter in which Basbaum presented his side of the case.<sup>8</sup> Leôncio and Sílvia moved out of the house where the Fernando de Lacerdas were living.

In April 1932 José Caetano Machado, combative "authentic worker"

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

from the northeast who was dedicated to the cause of the workers, arrived in São Paulo. Invited to join the CC, he proposed that it concentrate on developing guerrilla warfare in the backlands.<sup>9</sup> Another to reach São Paulo in April was Gonzales Alberdi, Argentine member of the Montevideo Secretariat. As an "observer" of the Basbaum-Fernando de Lacerda conflict, which had prevented Party leaders from attending to important matters, he spoke with the two principals and then sat in at a CC meeting.

At the meeting Basbaum and Fernando de Lacerda exchanged opinions about the May Day preparations. Basbaum classified Fernando as a believer in a "spontaneous" uprising by the masses without the need of much PCB propaganda. Fernando was warmly supported by Russildo Magalhães, JC recipient of a scholarship in Moscow, but the Argentine observer said that Fernando's ideas were "pure anarchism."<sup>10</sup>

For the São Paulo police, May Day was a splendid opportunity to round up Communists. Early in the morning they seized "agents of Communism" who were preparing for a commemoration in Concórdia Square in Brás by putting up posters and red decorations. The authorities announced that almost all of these "extremists" were "Russians and Jews." The names of two were given to the press: Boris Slivinskis and Francisco Jarkis. "It is believed they do not have permanent residence here."<sup>11</sup>

Within the PCB, Fernando de Lacerda's foes blamed the failure of the May Day commemoration on his "spontaneity" theory. The subject was considered at an all-night meeting of over twenty Communists: CC members, top leaders of the São Paulo Regional Committee, and Mário Grazíni, who had been working in Montevideo for the Confederación Sindical Latino Americana. During the debate the Argentine observer attacked Fernando's ideas. When decisions were made by vote for reorganizing the PCB, Cina was dropped from the CC and returned to her "bureaucratic" tasks, Fernando was dropped from the Politburo (which was to be usually limited to five CC members), and Caetano Machado was named secretary-general of the PCB. Basbaum, transferred from the Regional Committee, was elected to the Politburo and made director of Agitprop (Agitation and Propaganda), responsible for publications, including *A Classe Operaria*.<sup>12</sup>

The Argentine observer returned at once to the South American Secre-

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>11</sup> "Prisão de Elementos Extremistas em São Paulo," *Correio da Manhã*, May 3, 1932.

<sup>12</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," pp. 161-162.



tariat in Montevideo. At the same time Roberto Morena came to São Paulo from the Soviet Union, where he had been attending a congress of the Red International of Labor Unions.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

## 18. Police Break up the PCB National Leadership (May 1932)

On May 2, 1932, São Paulo shoemakers and workers of the São Paulo Railway Company struck for better wages, the eight-hour day, and the prohibition of work by children under fourteen.<sup>1</sup> The São Paulo police chief, Major Osvaldo Cordeiro de Farias, made the usual announcement assuring protection for all who wanted to continue working and offering "full guarantees" for the strikers as long as they were orderly.<sup>2</sup>

On May 3 the strike was joined by glassmakers in the state capital, and by São Paulo Railway Company workers in Santos and Alto da Serra, paralyzing rail service between São Paulo City and Santos. The shoemakers resolved that, although many industrialists offered to meet their demands, no one would return to work until all the shoemakers in São Paulo City were satisfied.<sup>3</sup>

The PCB assigned Roberto Morena and Mário Grazini the task of turning the São Paulo labor unrest into a general strike of all workers in the city of São Paulo and extending it throughout the state. Although the personal relations between Morena and Grazini continued poor, they organized the general strike well, aided by the "Red factions" already established by the PCB in the unions of railroad workers, shoemakers, metalworkers, vehicle conductors, and hotel employees.<sup>4</sup>

The São Paulo graphic workers, under the influence of Trotskyite leaders, joined the strike when João da Costa Pimenta decided to cooperate with fellow graphic worker leader Grazini. The most important contribution to the general strike was made by José Righetti, Miguel Costa's friend. Along with Morena and Grazini, Righetti became a member of

<sup>1</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 3, 4, 5, 7, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, May 3, 1932.

<sup>3</sup> *Diário Popular*, São Paulo, May 4, 1932.

<sup>4</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 162.

the Strike Committee,<sup>5</sup> and he brought the textile workers into the strike on May 10, just when the railroad strike was entering a decline.<sup>6</sup> Police cavalry prevented striking textile workers from forcibly closing the Sant' Anna plant, where about one thousand textile workers remained on the job.<sup>7</sup>

At this time São Paulo was becoming the scene of emotional mass demonstrations of hostility to Vargas, Aranha, and the *tenentes*. Of all the anti-Vargas São Paulo orators who shouted "São Paulo for the Paulistas," the most eloquent, the most cherished, was Ibraim Nobre, who had distinguished himself by jailing anarchists over ten years earlier. After Nobre's dramatic speech of May 22, 1932, demanding an immediate end to São Paulo's enslavement by outsiders, the Paulista politicians defiantly set up an anti-Vargas state cabinet and retired Miguel Costa from the Força Pública. When one or two thousand foes of *tenentismo*, mostly excited youths, attacked Miguel Costa's political headquarters on the evening of May 23, six defenders shot into the crowd, killing twelve or thirteen people.<sup>8</sup>

The new state authorities—who associated Communism with the João Albertos and Miguel Costas, the hated "agents" of the *tenentes* and Vargas—acted with vigor when the Communist-inspired Strike Committee defied the police by calling "a public meeting" at the Union of Graphic Workers' headquarters. The workers who filled the union hall to overflowing were starving and tired of the strike, and Basbaum, as PCB Agitprop director, was scheduled to rekindle their enthusiasm.<sup>9</sup> However, he had barely mentioned that he was speaking "in the name of the Communist Party of Brazil" when the police arrived and dispersed the crowd and arrested the strike leaders, among them Caetano Machado, Righetti, Morena, Graziñi, and Basbaum. The São Paulo strike, Basbaum writes, was "crushed by iron and fire."<sup>10</sup> The CC of the PCB was de-

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> *Diario Popular*, May 11, 1932; *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 12, 13, 1932.

<sup>7</sup> *Diario Popular*, May 11, 1932.

<sup>8</sup> Maurício Goulart has explained that he led the five defenders of the headquarters of the Legião Revolucionária of Miguel Costa. When the mob of attackers disregarded the defenders' warning not to pass a certain point, the defenders fired. According to Maurício Goulart, who went to the morgue the next day and saw that about twelve or thirteen had been killed, history books that tell of four or five deaths refer only to the victims belonging to prominent families (interview, November 17, 1968).

<sup>9</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 163.

<sup>10</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, *História Sincera da República*, III, 55.

stroyed; what little was left of the Party directorship decided to try Rio again.<sup>11</sup>

Grazíni, in a jail cell with Morena and Basbaum, made a sarcastic remark about the prison and the jailers. For this he spent a day in the nude in a "punishment cell," fifty centimeters by fifty centimeters and less than two meters high—an especially unpleasant experience during the cold of winter and for as large a man as Grazíni.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, typewritten list of PCB secretaries-general.

<sup>12</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," pp. 165-166.

## 19. The Anarchists, "Few" in Number

*A Plebe*, which had been forced to close down in August 1927, did not reappear until late in 1932. In the meantime the São Paulo anarchists made use of handbills. In this way the workers were urged to join labor unions associated with the anarchist Federação Operária de São Paulo in order to end being "treated like beasts" by the factory owners. Anarchist handbills spoke of the exploitation of women, and described children as working for long hours "in front of furnaces, bathed in sweat, suffering from the horrors of the heat."<sup>1</sup> Metalworkers were reminded that in times past they had shown the virility necessary to defend their interests.<sup>2</sup>

In a manifesto, issued as a handbill in March 1932, the São Paulo anarchists acknowledged that they were "few" in number. But this, they added, should be no reason for trepidation. "The social war is not mathematics."

In this long manifesto, an appeal "for the moral rehabilitation of the revolution," the anarchists said that they were not referring to "the political revolution or sporadic pronouncements that cost energy and made victims and had little or nothing to recommend them." They were re-

<sup>1</sup> A Comissão Executiva do Sindicato dos Vidreiros, "A Situação do Trabalhador Vidreiro," August 20, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> A Comissão Executiva da União dos Operários Metallúrgicos, "Aos Trabalhadores da Indústria Metallúrgica e Similares."

ferring to "the revolutionary concept" and "revolutionary social forces," which, they said, had been debased by the military, by bourgeois political parties, and by the so-called party of the "proletariat," all of which arbitrarily usurped the title of "revolutionaries."

The manifesto painted the familiar picture of Brazilian authorities, landowners, and rich businessmen following the orders of their foreign masters and imposing misery on the proletariat. But while calling attention to London and New York, the anarchists especially stressed a third imperialism, that of "Vatican Rome." In Brazil, they said, even the "revolutions," including those of 1924 and 1930, were carried out with crosses on chests and with bended knees, under the surveillance of the vicars of Christ. The anarchists asserted that the disciples of Saint Francis, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Torquemada, and Loyola were the directors and spiritual governors of those who held political power in Brazil. "In Catete Palace resides the executive power; in Glória Palace is the Roman consulate from which the first-named received the laws. . . . Priests have infiltrated en masse, and will quickly dominate the population, provoking a frightful hypertrophy of religious fanaticism."

To prevent a return to "the somberly tragic days of 1924," the authors of the new anarchist manifesto recommended forceful popular action unconnected with any political party—especially unconnected with the Communist Party, which "stabbed the proletariat in the back" and represented "the antithesis of communism."

No political or religious force, the manifesto said, espoused the cause of the people or upheld the principles of justice and social equality. Only anarchism did that. Only the anarchists were not seeking "power, wealth, or glory. . . . In this instant of history . . . anarchism and the anarchists are called to enter the lists, bringing light to misguided spirits and rousing the multitudes who have been beset by deceptions."<sup>3</sup>

At the time this manifesto was being distributed, the Vargas government issued a decree that became a pet hate of the anarchists; the decree required that all workers have *carteiras profissionais* (identification booklets, with employment histories) and specified that "*sindicatos* cannot refuse to admit bearers of *carteiras*."<sup>4</sup> In May 1932, during the strikes in São Paulo, the anarchist Federação Operária de São Paulo protested

<sup>3</sup> Grupo Acção Libertaria, "Pela Reabilitação Moral da Revolução: Apelo aos Anarchistas," São Paulo, March 1932.

<sup>4</sup> Alfredo João Louzada, *Legislação Social-Trabalhista: Coletânea de Decretos Feita por Determinação do Ministro do Trabalho, Indústria e Comércio, organizada pelo Bel. Alfredo João Louzada do Departamento Nacional do Trabalho*.

against the *carteiras* in a message to the Labor Ministry; the Federação told the Syndicate of Employees in Hotels and Bars that it had rejected the use of *carteiras* and it would, if necessary, carry out a general strike to repel the Vargas decree.<sup>5</sup> José Oiticica, who was at the side of Leuenroth and other São Paulo anarchists at this time, has unrealistically stated that the call for an anti-*carteira* "general strike" by the Federação Operária de São Paulo would "certainly" have defeated the government's project if the Communists had cooperated. He has added that at the last minute the Communists "traitorously" turned against the anarchists' plans.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Diário Popular*, São Paulo, May 11, 1932.

<sup>6</sup> José Oiticica, *Ação Direta*, pp. 111, 153, 160.

## 20. The Eight-Hour Day and Other Legislation

In March 1932 José Antônio Flores da Cunha, the federal administrator (*interventor*) of Rio Grande do Sul, said that a new "revolution" seemed inevitable. This statement was made just after the justice minister, labor minister, and Rio police chief had resigned. All three belonged to the Gaúcho political wing that opposed the *tenentes* and backed the Paulista politicians who demanded an early constitution.

João Alberto succeeded João Batista Luzardo as Rio police chief. The appointment, a victory for the *tenentes*, was pleasant news for Plínio Melo, who had been sent to the Rio Casa de Detenção after being arrested in São Paulo for trying to engineer a strike by the São Paulo Light and Power Company workers. His friend João Alberto released him from the Casa de Detenção. Plínio Melo, who had been spending his time in jail telling his cellmate, Augusto Besouchet, that the PCB's policy was full of errors, decided to remain in Rio and work for the Trotskyites.<sup>1</sup>

Lindolfo Collor's former post of labor minister was handled briefly by Foreign Minister Afrânio de Melo Franco and then put in the hands of Joaquim Salgado Filho, who had been the fourth *delegado auxiliar*.

Labor Ministry decrees continued to pour out. Decree 21,186 dated March 22, 1932, established the eight-hour day (and 48-hour week) in

<sup>1</sup> Plínio Melo, interview, November 26, 1968.

commerce and offices, but provided that the workday could be nine hours (54 hours per week) if workers and employers were in agreement about the additional remuneration. One day a week, normally Sunday, was to be set aside for rest. Salgado Filho devised forms for companies to fill out which were to help assure that the new decree would not be violated.<sup>2</sup> He also carried on discussions for making the long-discussed eight-hour day applicable to industrial workers.

A new Federação do Trabalho, made up of Rio labor organizations that cooperated with the Labor Ministry, prepared to observe May Day 1932 by opening what it called the First Regional Labor Conference in Tiradentes Palace, the idle Chamber of Deputies building. To help with this work, on March 27 the Federação do Trabalho elected an executive commission made up of representatives of the UTLJ (Union of Workers in Books and Newspapers) and *sindicatos* of shoemakers, schoolteachers, carpenters, and textile workers.<sup>3</sup>

During May Day the Rio police were on hand to keep order while several non-Communist observances occurred in the streets. One was sponsored by the National Confederation of Catholic Workers and another by a group that called itself the Partido Trabalhista do Brasil (Labor party of Brazil).<sup>4</sup>

The grand climax of the Rio Labor Day observances was the opening of the First Regional Labor Conference in Tiradentes Palace in the evening. The opening speech of footwear labor leader Leonel Batista was an appeal to Labor Minister Salgado Filho to preside over the sessions. Salgado Filho accepted and suggested an agenda.<sup>5</sup>

On May 4, Vargas and Salgado Filho signed Decree 21,364 extending to industrial workers the working-hour provisions that had been established for workers in commerce and in offices on March 22.<sup>6</sup>

Decree 21,396 of May 12, 1932, signed by Vargas, Salgado, and Aranha, set up mixed conciliation commissions to rule on labor conflicts. The membership of each commission was to be split between workers' representatives and employers' representatives. If a commission, working under a presiding officer chosen by the Labor Ministry, could not settle a dispute, the presiding officer was to suggest that the dispute become sub-

<sup>2</sup> Alfredo João Louzada, *Legislação Social-Trabalhista: Coletânea de Decretos Feita por Determinação do Ministro do Trabalho, Indústria e Comércio*.

<sup>3</sup> "As Comemorações do Dia do Trabalho," *Correio da Manhã*, May 3, 1932.

<sup>4</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 3, 1932.

<sup>5</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 3, 1932.

<sup>6</sup> Louzada, *Legislação Social-Trabalhista*.

ject to an arbitrary decision by a group of judges, evenly drawn from two lists—one submitted by the employer and the other submitted by the employees.<sup>7</sup> If one or both of the parties refused to submit the dispute for arbitration in this manner, then the labor minister was free to name a special commission to hand down a decision. Employers refusing to cooperate with this decree were to be fined.<sup>8</sup>

The protection of working women was the purpose of Decree 21,417A, issued on May 17, 1932. It called for equal pay for equal work, regardless of sex. Except for special cases women were not to work at night. Nor were they to work underground or in other listed "unhealthy places." Pregnant women were not to work for the four weeks preceding and following childbirth. During this time they were to receive half-pay, and they were to have the right to return to their jobs.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The judges were to be persons foreign to the interests of the conflicting parties and were to be preferably members of the Order of Lawyers of Brazil, judges, or federal, state, or municipal officials.

<sup>8</sup> Louzada, *Legislação Social-Trabalhista*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

## 21. Arrested PCB Leaders on Ilha Grande (1932)

Heitor Ferreira Lima, using the name Barreto, sought to carry out instructions of the Comintern's South American Secretariat as its *visitante* in northern Brazil. But in June 1932 in Ceará, authorities found Prestes's manifestoes of 1931 in his baggage and arrested him. He remained a prisoner in the north until October 1932, when he was transferred to Rio's Casa de Detenção.<sup>1</sup> His imprisonment in the north corresponded closely with the three months (July-September 1932) during which the state of São Paulo waged an unsuccessful civil war against the Vargas regime.

The Communist leaders arrested by the São Paulo police in May 1932 were transferred to Rio in June 1932 in a cattle car and spent most of the Paulista civil war in the Rio Casa de Detenção. Late in September 1932, after months of confinement and inactivity during which they squabbled with each other, they were put on a vessel and shipped with vagrants to

<sup>1</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interviews, November 8, 1967; November 6, 1968.

the Dois Rios Correctional Colony on Ilha Grande.<sup>2</sup> During October and early November more Communists, among them Heitor Ferreira Lima, were sent to the island, bringing the number of Communist prisoners in the colony up to about thirty. The Dois Rios Correctional Colony was chiefly for "vagrants of the lowest type,"<sup>3</sup> and there were hundreds of them on the island, often using knives when brawling with each other.<sup>4</sup>

The Communists usually started life in the colony by doing heavy work, such as hauling bricks from the brick factory about one kilometer from the prison camp, or bringing logs that had been cut by common criminals on the wooded hill, about three hundred meters high. Later the director of the colony, Lieutenant Canepa, assigned tasks appropriate to the prisoners' training. Ferreira Lima found himself making the striped prisoners' uniforms,<sup>5</sup> Roberto Morena did carpentry work, and Basbaum was assigned to the six-bed hospital, two hundred meters outside the prison camp.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps because the Correctional Colony had no bakery, José Caetano Machado was put to work in the brick plant. He developed such good relations with a guard that he was able to make an escape. Replacing his prison uniform with civilian clothing provided by the guard, he made his way through the woods and over the hill to the side of the island where fishermen kept their boats. He seized a boat and crossed to the mainland.<sup>7</sup>

The brick plant was a particularly well suited point from which to reach the fishermen's boats. Two or three Communists who worked at the plant, and Basbaum, who could easily make his way from the hospital to the plant, planned to follow Caetano Machado's example and cross the water to Angra dos Reis or Mangaratiba on the mainland.<sup>8</sup> Although they could count on no assistance from the civilian police who guarded the prisoners during the day, it was otherwise with the military police who kept night watch. Three or four members of the military police had been converted to Communism and formed a cell that was in close touch with the Communist prisoners.<sup>9</sup>

Basbaum, waiting for a date to be set for the escape, had time on his

<sup>2</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," pp. 170-175.

<sup>3</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interviews, November 8, 1967; November 6, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> Ferreira Lima, interview, November 8, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 182.

<sup>7</sup> Ferreira Lima, interviews, November 8, 1967; November 6, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," pp. 185-187.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183-184; Ferreira Lima, interview, November 8, 1967.



hands, for neither giving injections nor attending the hospital's solitary patient (a victim of tuberculosis) kept him very busy. He took sun baths, helped Morena make a chess set in the carpenter shop, and directed a course in Marxism for the Communist prisoners.<sup>10</sup>

Basbaum was suspicious when a boat brought Antônio Maciel Bonfim, under arrest for being a Communist. Early in 1932 in São Paulo the CC had received a PCB membership application sent from Paraná by Antônio Maciel Bonfim. The applicant had written that he had been arrested in Bahia but had escaped from his guards in Paraná while being deported to Uruguay. As Maciel Bonfim had declared himself a member of Luís Carlos Prestes's LAR (well extinct by early 1932), Basbaum, arguing that the letter was strange, had successfully opposed his entry into the Party. Now Basbaum and some others wondered whether he was a police spy sent to the island, and they refused to speak with him.<sup>11</sup>

Maciel Bonfim, a large man of about thirty-four years, with receding, graying hair, turned out to be a great talker with a knack of gaining the confidence of those around him.<sup>12</sup> Within a few days he was accepted by most of his Communist fellow prisoners. They learned that in Bahia he had been a primary school teacher as well as an Army sergeant.

Maciel Bonfim, who was to become known also as Miranda and Adalberto Andrade Fernandes, was assigned to work at the brick factory. In Basbaum's opinion this action confused the escape planned by himself and the Communists at the brick plant. But for Maciel Bonfim the matter was simple enough. In the last part of November 1932 Basbaum learned that Maciel Bonfim and the Communists at the plant had made an escape without telling or waiting for Basbaum.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 183.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186; Leoncio Basbaum, interview, November 5, 1967.

<sup>13</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 187.

## 22. *Obreirismo*

Following the destruction of the CC in São Paulo late in May 1932, a national PCB conference, held in Rio, chose graphic worker Duvitiliano Ramos to be the Party's secretary-general and Domingos Brás to be its

Agitprop director.<sup>1</sup> Ramos (known as Freitas) and Brás (once called Jarbas and later known as Mauro) had been the BOC congressional candidates in the state of Rio in 1930. Later in 1932 Brás took over as secretary-general.<sup>2</sup> In December 1932 he appointed Antônio Maciel Bonfim adviser to the CC.<sup>3</sup>

Fernando de Lacerda avoided arrest in São Paulo and returned to Rio. He was a tragic figure, ill-nourished and sick. His young son, Vladimir Lenin Lacerda, died.<sup>4</sup> Cina deserted her husband and the three remaining children and went to the United States with an American Communist who had come, at the suggestion of the South American Secretariat, to give advice to the Brazilian Communist Youth movement (JC).<sup>5</sup> Fernando, worried lest he lose his mind like Paulo, made a visit to Uruguay and sought funds to take him and his children to Russia, where he hoped to receive medical treatment.<sup>6</sup>

*Obreirismo*, which Fernando so ardently espoused, reached its zenith in the PCB during the second half of 1932.<sup>7</sup> According to Raquel de Queirós, if an intellectual in the Rio area wanted to join the Party, he had to prove himself a member of the proletariat "in a thousand tests."<sup>8</sup>

Intellectuals in the Party bowed obsequiously to José Caetano Machado,<sup>9</sup> the mulatto baker who, with clenched fist, had declared in a stentorian voice: "I hate intellectuals."<sup>10</sup> Astrogildo Pereira has written that of all the people he knew, "without doubt" Caetano Machado was the supreme representative of "radical, intractable *obreirismo*." This was a great distinction because, as Astrogildo well knew, the field was very competitive.

Astrogildo was one of the victims of *obreirismo*. Having just married Inês Dias, Everardo's oldest daughter, he was in Rio State, carrying on a wholesale banana business inherited from his father, when he learned that Domingos Brás, a great hater of intellectuals, had cleared up the question of Astrogildo's relationship with the PCB by expelling him

<sup>1</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, typewritten list of PCB secretaries-general.

<sup>3</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> Ilvo Meireles, interviews, November 1, 1968; July 5, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 189.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; Ilvo Meireles, interviews, November 1, 1968; July 5, 1971.

<sup>7</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 8, 1967.

<sup>8</sup> Raquel de Queirós, interview, November 1, 1968.

<sup>9</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interview, October 17, 1968.

<sup>10</sup> Astrogildo Pereira, "Ainda o Trabalho Intelectual," *Imprensa Popular*, December 25, 1956.

from the Party.<sup>11</sup> Astrogildo's "disgrace" in the eyes of the leadership is reflected in the PCB report to the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, which tells of the Party's "energetic struggle against the rotten Menshevik line of its former secretary, the renegade Astrogildo Pereira."<sup>12</sup>

Astrogildo's unemployed father-in-law, Everardo Dias, was in the Rio area, living in a slum tenement, raising chickens, and searching for work. In a bitter mood Everardo wrote his daughter Eponina in São Paulo, describing the "sordid, nauseating" living conditions of the poor and the sufferings caused by the "bourgeois organization." The rich, he added, "consider this situation very natural, and say that . . . 'there will always be rich and poor,' that 'God wills it,' and other nonsense. But the storm is approaching."<sup>13</sup>

Like Astrogildo Pereira, Raquel de Queirós, the youthful novelist from Ceará, was expelled from the PCB. She had joined the Party in Ceará in 1930, for no JC existed there. Occasionally she met "Barreto" (Heitor Ferreira Lima), doing Party work in the north in 1931. But in 1931 and 1932 she spent most of her time in Rio. There she saw the Brandãos off to Germany and completed her second novel, *João Miguel*, to follow up her recent best-seller.

The manuscript of this new novel, telling of the life of peasants, had already gone to the publisher in 1932, when Raquel de Queirós was ordered by the Party to meet with "Comrade Silva." The comrade, a Negro in his undershirt, sat back, feet propped on the table, and demanded a copy of the manuscript. A month later "Comrade Silva," again in his undershirt, told her that her novel had been found by the Party to be "a small-bourgeois and reactionary work." After Raquel de Queirós refused to agree to Party demands that she make changes in the story and in the characters of thirty individuals described in it, she was expelled from the Party. *A Classe Operaria*, she says, called her a fascist, a police agent, and a fractionalist.<sup>14</sup>

The Trotskyites' Liga Comunista was a haven for the Communist intellectuals, and Raquel de Queirós joined this group in 1933. She moved

<sup>11</sup> Octavio Brandão, interviews, December 14, 1968; November 14, 1970. In October 1934 Astrogildo Pereira wrote: "For a little over two years I have found myself separated from the ranks of the Communist Party" (Preface of Astrogildo Pereira, *U.R.S.S.-Italia-Brasil*).

<sup>12</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, August 28, 1935.

<sup>13</sup> Everardo Dias, letter to Eponina Dias, January 13, 1933.

<sup>14</sup> Raquel de Queirós, interview, November 1, 1968.

to São Paulo and became associated with Lívio Xavier, Aristides Lobo, Mário Pedrosa and his wife, Mary Houston. Raquel de Queirós found them translating Trotsky and admiring his intellectual abilities as well as his revolutionary views.<sup>15</sup>

Leôncio Basbaum was another target of the advocates of *obreirismo* in the PCB. Freed from the Dois Rios Correctional Colony in December 1932, he spent February 1933 organizing antiwar committees, cooperating with the Comintern's instructions to intensify the "antiwar campaign" throughout the world.<sup>16</sup> The blow against Basbaum was delivered around March 1, 1933, at a CC meeting that had unexpectedly placed the appraisal of his month-old assignment at the top of its agenda. The meeting was attended by Domingos Brás, Duvitiliano Ramos, Antônio Maciel Bonfim, Menezes (secretary for labor union affairs), Mário Grazini (freed from the Correctional Colony in January), Basbaum, and a representative of the South American Secretariat.<sup>17</sup>

Opening with the words "Let's not be overly polite," Domingos Brás launched into a harsh denunciation of Basbaum. The crimes and deviations for which Basbaum was said to have been responsible included "resisting the Party line," "sabotaging instructions," and exercising a "pernicious small-bourgeois influence on the Party." After Domingos Brás had been supported by Duvitiliano Ramos and Maciel Bonfim, Menezes made some remarks criticizing the influence of intellectuals. Grazini disappointed Basbaum by explaining that he knew nothing about the problems and therefore had nothing to say. The representative of the South American Secretariat remained silent.

Basbaum had expected that Domingos Brás, Duvitiliano Ramos, and Maciel Bonfim would turn against him, but he had not expected them to do it so soon. Taken by surprise, he refused to say anything and was given a week in which to write a letter to the CC "acknowledging his errors." Stunned, Basbaum went home and wept.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Mário Pedrosa introduced Raquel de Queirós to a huge individual, a non-intellectual Trotskyite, and explained that "the great popular mass of the Trotskyite movement" consisted of this one individual. Trotskyite leaders did, however, continue influential among the graphic workers. As the Brazilian Trotskyite movement had no printing press, these workers printed its organs at their places of work. In Rio, the young Trotskyite Hílcar Leite devoted himself entirely to the labor movement and became an officer of the UTLJ (Union of Workers in Books and Newspapers).

<sup>16</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," p. 194.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 195-196.

Instead of "acknowledging his errors," he stopped working for the Communist movement and joined his brothers in a merchandizing venture. Two years later he read in a Communist publication that he had been expelled from the PCB together with Heitor Ferreira Lima and Mário Graziñi. The Communists described Basbaum as a Trotskyite and an agent of imperialism.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

### 23. Elections for the Constitutional Assembly (1933)

In the Soviet Union, Luís Carlos Prestes interrupted his supervision of the construction of workers' housing projects to issue an analysis of the unsuccessful Paulista revolt—or "constitutionalist revolution"—of July-September 1932. It was, he said, a continuation of the struggle between the agents of British imperialism and the agents of United States imperialism.

Prestes and other Brazilian Communists asserted that the revolt was favored and assisted by the "Britannic interests" in São Paulo.<sup>1</sup> However, the Comintern's widely read *International Press Correspondence* gave the opposite explanation. It said that the revolt, "allegedly" to overthrow Vargas, was supported by the Yankees, who would "use any tool" to secure "a breach in Britain's monopolistic position."<sup>2</sup>

In a gross exaggeration Prestes wrote that the Brazilian civil war of 1932 had cost the lives of "tens of thousands of workers."<sup>3</sup> Warning that the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie were preparing new civil wars, he said that it was his duty to unmask the "socialists" and "*prestistas*" who had led the masses to the 1932 conflict by "simple 'constitutional illusions.' "

Months before the 1932 "constitutionalist revolution" had broken out, Vargas, against the wishes of the *tenentes*, had solemnly decreed that an election for a constitutional assembly was to take place on May 3, 1933.

<sup>1</sup> Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, September 1, 1932.

<sup>3</sup> Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 273.

Late in 1932, with the rebellion crushed, political parties were organized to participate in the election. Ação Integralista Brasileira, a national political party, was founded in São Paulo to promote nationalism. Its organizer, Plínio Salgado, much influenced by fascism<sup>4</sup> and strongly opposed to Communism,<sup>5</sup> led his green-shirted Integralista followers in parades on behalf of "God, Country, and Family."

The Electoral Tribunal rejected the registration application of the Communist Party of Brazil, Brazilian Section of the Communist International, on the grounds that it was an international party. The PCB therefore decided to run its candidates on the ticket of the already registered União Operária e Camponesa.<sup>6</sup>

Miguel Costa, released from jail after being locked up by the Paulistas during their revolt, founded the Partido Socialista de São Paulo,<sup>7</sup> and other members of the *tenentista* group founded Socialist parties in other states. Then on November 15, 1932, *tenentes* and Socialists gathered in Rio to found a national Partido Socialista Brasileiro at what they called the Primeiro Congresso Revolucionário Brasileiro (First Brazilian Revolutionary Congress). As they extolled the social legislation enacted by the Vargas government, José Oiticica arose to attack the "monstrous legislation of compulsory syndicalization."<sup>8</sup>

In *A Plebe*, which resumed publication a few days later under the directorship of Rodolfo Felipe, Oiticica published an open letter to the founders of the Partido Socialista Brasileiro. "I came to know you," Oiticica wrote, "in the muddled sessions of the First Brazilian Revolutionary Congress. . . . On one point you were unanimous, warmly unanimous: in your 'love' for the proletariat. This socialist love for the proletariat is ancient the world over but it is infant in Brazil. It is becoming the 'mode,' and so we now have Socialists in Brazil like Agripino Nazaré, who, as he told us at the Congress, was once an 'anarchist' only because formerly that was the 'mode.' You reveal yourselves, in all your acts, as kind friends of the proletariat, but your friendship is dependent on one

<sup>4</sup> Robert M. Levine, *The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-1938*, p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> See Plínio Salgado, *O Integralismo perante a Nação*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> [Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro* 3, no. 36 (January 1939): 140.

<sup>7</sup> Miguel Costa, who opposed the São Paulo uprising, was condemned in Prestes's new manifesto for having used "Communist demagoguery" to drag the working masses to the fight (see Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 274).

<sup>8</sup> José Oiticica, "Carta Aberta aos Fundadores do Partido Socialista Brasileiro," *A Plebe*, new phase, no. 5 (December 24, 1932).

small condition: that you direct them, that they submit to the 'proletarian laws' formulated by yourselves."

Oiticica said that the "compulsory syndicalization" was carried on by the government for "electoral purposes." He asked the founders of the Partido Socialista to dissolve their party and to reject the idea of a "class representation" of workers, employers, and the professions in the Constitutional Assembly—a body of forty appointed representatives that Vargas wished to add to the elected Constitutional Assembly.

"Make yourselves anti-Socialist, antibourgeois, antiparlamentarian, anticlerical, antistate, all the antis that are the only credentials of genuine revolutionaries. Should you lack revolutionary courage, at least be frank enough to admit your true nature—Socialist either for fashion's sake or for the sake of shrewd dealings."<sup>9</sup>

In spite of warnings by Oiticica and *A Plebe*, within labor unions much interest was shown in the elections of May 3, 1933. In Rio, where a score of parties put up two hundred candidates for ten seats in the Constitutional Assembly,<sup>10</sup> a Partido Político Operário was organized to back ten candidates who were members of the União dos Trabalhadores do Livro e do Jornal (UTLJ), the Centro dos Operários e Empregados da Light, the Sindicato Unitivo da Central do Brasil (railroad), the Sindicato dos Barbeiros (barbers), the Sociedade de Resistência dos Trabalhadores em Trapiche e Café (waterfront warehouses and coffee), the Sindicato dos Operários em Águas e Esgotos (sewers), and the Sindicato dos Pilotos de Marinha Mercante (merchant marine pilots). These ten proletarian candidates had been nominated by the Convenção Proletária Carioca, the Partido Socialista Brasileiro, and the União Política Proletária.<sup>11</sup>

With electioneering at its peak on May 1, 1933, little attention was given to the *lei de sindicalização*'s clause prohibiting labor organizations from becoming the scenes of propaganda on behalf of candidacies for posts unrelated to the organizations. The May Day inauguration of the Congress of Brazilian Stevedores, held in the Rio headquarters of the Stevedores' Union, was devoted to propaganda of the Partido Nacional do Trabalho (PNT). Sousa Pitanga, president of the PNT, addressed the stevedores after the multitude had shouted *vivas* for their union, for the PNT, and for the speaker.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of State, Ambassador Edwin V. Morgan (Rio), letter to the secretary of state, May 23, 1933, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>11</sup> "União Política Proletária," *Jornal do Brasil*, May 2, 1933.

Sousa Pitanga praised the Stevedores' Union president, José Ferreira, "bulwark" of the PNT, and warned the proletariat against voting for professional politicians who had "ruined Brazil for forty years." The loudly applauded speaker assured his audience that "the revolution will continue." Amidst "a thunderous acclaim,"<sup>12</sup> he declared that "we must construct our Brazil under two mottos: first, The Equality of Capital and Labor, and second, Country, Discipline, and Justice." Then he spoke of the heroes of Fort Copacabana in 1922 and the "brave revolutionaries" of 1924. He repeated that the "revolution" was continuing.

While workers in Rio observed May Day in unions or at a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Leme, in São Paulo the anarchist Federação Operária tried to hold an outdoor rally in the Praça da Sé. *A Plebe* reported that after policemen broke up the rally, "hundreds of workers" went to the Federação headquarters and sang "The International."<sup>13</sup> The police invaded the headquarters. Not molesting women and children, they seized the men and jailed them in Paraíso (Paradise)—as the prison on Paraíso Street was known. Later that night the men were released.

This year it was *Jornal do Brasil's* turn to say that "if in some countries, proletarian groups still use May Day for manifestations of hostility and disturbance, it is proper to emphasize that the Brazilian proletariat carried out the commemoration with a peaceful spirit, with increasing enthusiasm, under laws that allow labor to flourish and reach material prosperity and social prestige. Nationals and foreigners, all find in our land an honorable place in the workshops and factories. Not a few workers, by their own effort, working with probity and perseverance, have reached social positions of distinction."<sup>14</sup> *Jornal do Brasil* "effusively saluted Labor Day and the Brazilian worker, who, day and night, increases his prestige by his good understanding of his duties and by his valuable collaboration in the aggrandizement of the nation."

The election that followed, much more honest than its predecessors, was generally favorable to the candidates who were handpicked by the state *interventores* (administrators) and approved by the federal government.<sup>15</sup> A few of these successful pro-Vargas, pro-*tenente* candidates were elected on the tickets of state Socialist parties.

<sup>12</sup> "Congresso dos Estivadores do Brasil," *Jornal do Brasil*, May 2, 1933.

<sup>13</sup> "1º de Maio: A Festa da Federação Operária," *A Plebe*, new phase, no. 28 (May 6, 1933).

<sup>14</sup> "O Dia do Trabalho," *Jornal do Brasil*, May 2, 1933.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of State, report from American Embassy (Rio), May 4, 1933. The exception occurred in São Paulo, where Interventor Valdomiro Lima was unpopular.



In the Federal District six of the ten seats went to the *tenentista* Partido Autonomista, founded by such government figures as Police Chief João Alberto and Army Chief of Staff Pedro Aurélio de Góis Monteiro.<sup>16</sup> Henrique Dodsworth of the Partido Economista won the most votes of the candidates in the Federal District, and Raul Leitão da Cunha, of the Partido Democrático, also did well there.<sup>17</sup> The proletarian parties associated with labor unions got nowhere.

In Pernambuco, where João Alberto was elected to the Constitutional Assembly without difficulty, Cristiano Cordeiro was candidate of a party called Worker Occupy Your Post (Trabalhador Ocupa o Teu Posto) and narrowly missed winning a seat.<sup>18</sup> Throughout Brazil the Communists failed with their União Operária e Camponesa. Of the 214 candidates elected to the Constitutional Assembly, not one was a Communist.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of State, reports from the American Embassy (Rio), April 11, July 12, July 26, 1933.

<sup>17</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, May 31, 1933.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, May 29, 1933.

<sup>19</sup> [Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," p. 140.



BOOK XII: *Epilogue, 1932-1935*

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## 1. The PCB Recovers with Miranda

The year 1932 marked a low point for the independent proletarian movement, which had gathered strength during the first two decades of the century.

During the second decade, the movement's enthusiasts felt that it could only continue to grow, allowing a self-reliant proletariat to break "the chains of bondage imposed by the capitalist system." But, toward the end of that decade, a few leaders brought upon the movement a severe government repression by planning to make use of labor strikes to overthrow the regime. Later, in 1924-1926, the movement was subject to a new repressive wave when its leaders supported the *tenentista* military uprising.

The association of anarchist and Communist leaders with the *tenentista* movement of 1924-1926 was not forgotten by the Washington Luís administration in its last years, when it tried to save itself by cracking down on subversives. However, shortly before the *tenentes* marched to power with the Aliança Liberal against Washington Luís, leaders of the independent proletarian movement declared war on the *tenentes* and their new allies. This severance contributed to the continuation of the intense repression beyond the fall of Washington Luís.

The years of government repression must be given a leading role in accounting for the weakness of the independent proletarian movement in 1932, but other factors played a part. The economic depression, while

helping to build up a case against the capitalist system, placed labor in a weak position. In addition, much of the labor force had been attracted to the Aliança Liberal and, at least for a while, was disposed to follow leaders who cooperated with a government that seemed to be taking a sympathetic interest in labor; this cooperation with the new regime made competition with government-recognized *sindicatos* virtually impossible. Moreover, the independent proletarian movement was damaged by the splits among its leaders.

From this low point the anarchists would not recover. In Rio, they had been especially hounded during the 1924–1926 state of siege and came out of it with less influence than the active, politically minded Communists, who had spent five years emphasizing the need of a change from unsuccessful ways. In São Paulo, where the PCB had been extremely weak, the anarchists were at least as important as the PCB until 1930 or 1931, and they remained until 1932 a factor to be reckoned with.<sup>1</sup> After 1932 the few who remained faithful to libertarianism continued to distinguish themselves for their frontal attack on the Labor Ministry's *sindicalização* program.<sup>2</sup>

The Brazilian Trotskyites would remain a small band emphasizing doctrine. It is true that they, unlike the anarchists, decided to work within the government-recognized unions after they saw the workers joining them and leaving the so-called free unions empty.<sup>3</sup> However, Mário Pedrosa, founder of the Brazilian Trotskyite movement, states that the movement seldom had more than fifty members and never more than one hundred.

Neither the anarchists nor the Trotskyites were associated with Internationals that were in any position to help them. The Brazilian Stalinists, on the other hand, were part of a well-known International in which a world power, the Soviet Union, was much interested. The active South American Secretariat of the Communist International made use of considerable sums of money from Moscow.<sup>4</sup>

Carlos Lacerda writes: "The process of regrouping, violently accelerated by the Paulista civil war [of 1932], was little by little becoming

<sup>1</sup> Lívio Xavier, interview, November 9, 1967.

<sup>2</sup> Plínio Melo, interview, November 15, 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Mário Pedrosa, interview, December 4, 1967.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Clissold, ed., *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1918–1968: A Documentary Survey*, p. 62, based on Jan Valtin (Richard Krebs), *Sans patrie ni frontières*. See also Eudocio Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, p. 82.

crystallized in more or less well-defined positions. We had the emergence of Integralismo, the extreme opposite of Communism. The Communist Party, for its part, entered into a new period of activities. . . . The development of the political crisis, and the strength which Integralismo was gaining, aroused among the Communists the fear that [Integralismo], of the extreme Right, would take a firm hold of the middle classes."<sup>5</sup>

In 1933, while Plínio Salgado's Integralistas marched in green shirts in Brazil, Hitler and his brownshirts attained power in Germany. These developments prompted Communist leaders to turn from sectarianism and to make an appeal, not ineffective, to those who loathed fascism.

In Rio in 1933-1934, while the Constitutional Assembly hammered out the Brazilian Constitution of 1934, the PCB directorship engaged in an effective self-criticism.<sup>6</sup> It was decided that a new impulse would be given to the policy, adopted in São Paulo in 1932, of cooperating with Labor Ministry-recognized *sindicatos* in an effort to take over their directorships.<sup>7</sup> This unsectarian approach was to be combined with a Party membership drive that would make the most of the growing feeling that Vargas was doing nothing about the continuing economic crisis.<sup>8</sup>

The drive in a short time tripled the Party membership.<sup>9</sup> The labor union strategy helped bring about an increase in the number of workers who were associated with the government-recognized *sindicatos*. The PCB did particularly well in the *sindicatos* of maritime workers and drivers (*motoristas*) and in the fields of banking, furniture, clothing, and textiles.<sup>10</sup>

At the Party conference held in July 1934 the post of secretary-general went to Antônio Maciel Bonfim, now known as Miranda, the talkative extrovert who was temperamentally anything but sectarian. His rapid rise to the top position in 1934 reflected his enthusiasm, persuasiveness, and effective work. It also reflected the feeling that his military connections, gained as an Army sergeant, might prove useful.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro* 3, no. 36 (January 1939): 138.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>7</sup> Ari Campista, interview, October 9, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968.

<sup>9</sup> [Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," p. 140.

<sup>10</sup> Campista, interview.

<sup>11</sup> Ronald H. Chilcote and Amaury de Souza, "Communism in Brazil," write that Antônio Maciel Bonfim "had been active in the LAR" and that his becoming secretary-general assured "the dominance" of those who favored Prestes over the "old leadership."

## 2. Moscow, 1934

In Moscow in 1934 the possibility of an international "popular front" policy was debated. Its proponents saw it as necessary in view of the growing Nazi strength. Communists would be told to join with Social Democrats (whom they had been denouncing in scathing language) in the formation of popular fronts that were to attract bourgeois liberals and even conservatives who shared their antifascist views.

The popular front policy would be a complete reversal of the sectarian views that had been preached by Dmitri Manuilsky, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Luís Carlos Prestes, who was working for the Comintern's Executive Committee and who, in absentia, was formally accepted into the PCB in August 1934, shared the reservations of his friend Manuilsky about the proposed new policy. But that policy was strongly espoused by Georgi Dimitrov, a Comintern Executive Committee member close to Stalin who was scheduled to take over Manuilsky's post.

In Moscow in the latter part of 1934, before many of the Latin American Communist Party delegations had arrived for the scheduled Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, Dimitrov spoke with the Peruvian Communist leader, Eudocio Ravines, and found him heartily in favor of popular fronts. Dimitrov explained that disagreements were so deep that the Seventh World Congress would have to be postponed, but he added that a Latin American congress would nonetheless be held in Moscow. "The Latin American question is of greatest importance because the policies adopted there will serve as a precedent for other similar regions."<sup>1</sup>

Miranda (Antônio Maciel Bonfim), Fernando de Lacerda, and José Caetano Machado, in Moscow to represent the PCB, brought glowing accounts of the PCB's rapid growth in labor and in the military. The membership increase to several thousand was felt to have been accompanied by an increase in popular influence. In local elections, which followed the promulgation of the Constitution of July 1934, several Communists were victorious.<sup>2</sup> Above all, the Brazilian Communists in Moscow emphasized

<sup>1</sup> Georgi Dimitrov quoted in Eudocio Ravines, *The Yenan Way*, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interview, Recife, October 27, 1967.



the increasing dissatisfaction with Vargas and the economic situation. Miranda, especially, seemed convinced that conditions in Brazil favored an armed uprising.<sup>3</sup>

At the Latin American conferences in Moscow Prestes and the Brazilians, as well as the Argentines, helped Manuilsky gain at least a partial victory over Dimitrov, who wanted the emphasis on popular fronts everywhere.<sup>4</sup> Manuilsky argued for insurrections in some places. It was decided that Ravines, the Peruvian, would be sent to Chile, where special attention was to be given to advancing a popular front; at the same time work would go forward for an insurrection in Brazil, to be led by Prestes. Arthur Ernst Ewert, the German who had fetched Prestes from Montevideo, Rodolfo Ghioldi, the Argentine, and some other non-Brazilians associated with the Comintern would go to Brazil to help Miranda and Prestes prepare for the insurrection.

With these decisions made, Miranda and Caetano Machado returned to Brazil. Fernando de Lacerda, who had brought his son and two daughters with him, remained in Moscow to receive medical treatment and to work with the Executive Committee of the Comintern. On Russian soil he carried on his feud with Otávio Brandão.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 8, 1967.

<sup>4</sup> Ravines, *Yenan Way*, pp. 145-146.

<sup>5</sup> Brandão was not much appreciated by the Russian Communist leaders during his first four years in Russia, 1931-1935. He has written that he "suffered great poverty" and that he "had to endure four years of terrible purges in an atmosphere of great terror, a mere description of which would move even the coldest comrade" (see Octavio Brandão, "A Política de Quadros," *Imprensa Popular*, October 26, 1956).

### 3. The Aliança Nacional Libertadora<sup>1</sup>

**T**he PCB—which calculated its membership at five thousand at the end of 1934<sup>2</sup>—encouraged and assisted the formation of the Aliança

<sup>1</sup> For a more comprehensive account see Robert M. Levine, *The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-1938*, pp. 58-80.

<sup>2</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, August 28, 1935. See also [Carlos Lacerda], "A Exposição Anti-Comunista," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro* 3, no. 36 (January 1939): 140.

Nacional Libertadora (ANL—National Liberation Alliance), the Brazilian antifascist, anti-imperialist, popular front. Prestes, still abroad, was named honorary chairman of the ANL after being so nominated by Maurício de Lacerda's son Carlos at a crowded, enthusiastic meeting in the João Caetano Theater in Rio on March 30, 1935.<sup>3</sup>

The ANL, in calling meetings and establishing cells throughout much of Brazil, made the most of Prestes's name. The new organization was given strong press support in the PCB's *A Manhã* and appealed to many who disliked Plínio Salgado's Green Shirts.<sup>4</sup> Stressing that living conditions throughout Brazil were miserable, the ANL presented five basic demands: (1) cancellation of all foreign imperialist-based debts, (2) nationalization of foreign-controlled enterprises, (3) full personal freedoms, (4) the right to popular government, and (5) ceding feudally held land to the peasantry, while protecting the property of the small and middle-sized proprietor.<sup>5</sup>

"The mission of the Communists," the Comintern wrote, was to expand the ANL in order to generate a national uprising based on the "popular revolutionary program against the imperialistic bandits and against the internal reactionary oppressive governments, represented by the government of Getúlio."<sup>6</sup>

Trotskyites and anarchists had both fought at the side of the PCB against the Integralista Green Shirts.<sup>7</sup> Now both joined the ANL al-

<sup>3</sup> Carlos Lacerda, a law student, was about to address the crowd in the theater "in the name of the students," when Major Carlos da Costa Leite, who had rebelled in 1924, told him: "We think it would be a very good idea if you suggest, in your speech, that Luís Carlos Prestes be honorary president of the ANL." Apparently the suggestion, made in Carlos Lacerda's speech, was not a surprise to everybody because, after it was made, big banners were unfurled: "Luís Carlos Prestes, Honorary President" (Carlos Lacerda, interview, July 3, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> The director of *A Manhã* was Pedro Mota Lima, the *tenentismo* enthusiast who in 1931 had been accused by Luís Carlos Prestes of the "most shameless demagoguery." Otávio Malta, who was secretary of *A Manhã* and who covered the ANL for Orlando Ribeiro Dantas's *Diário de Notícias*, feels that the ANL movement was more *tenentista* than Communist (Otávio Malta, interview, October 9, 1968). In *Os Tenentes na Revolução Brasileira* (pp. 96-97), Malta tells of dissatisfied *tenentes* such as Herculino Cascardo, ANL president, and Miguel Costa, ANL leader in São Paulo. The ANL, Malta writes, was the "rebirth of non-conformist *tenentismo* and a reply to *integralismo*."

<sup>5</sup> This wording of the demands is taken from Levine, *Vargas Regime*, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> Quotation given in Leoncio Basbaum, *História Sincera da República*, III, 84.

<sup>7</sup> The high point of the antifascists' fight against the Integralistas was the shooting on Green Shirt paraders from *sindicato* offices adjoining São Paulo's Praça da

though each group had some reservations. The Trotskyites, "very doctrinarian," complained that the ANL represented a departure from leftism. They opposed what they called the ANL's "opportunism" in "mixing classes" and asserted that the ANL should be led by workers.<sup>8</sup>

Anarchists, among them Edgard Leuenroth and the infirm Florentino de Carvalho, gathered in São Paulo on June 29, 1935, to evaluate the ANL. The principal speaker, G. Soler, said that the Aliancistas would find the anarchists at their side as long as they fought fascism, large landholdings, and government tyranny. But the ANL was warned by Soler, Leuenroth, and Florentino de Carvalho against *caudilbismo* and the glorification of individuals. Soler, noting that the ANL wanted to seize power, said that the anarchists would try to replace any ANL-organized state by a federalist regime of free agreements, in which all people would enjoy happiness and liberty. Florentino de Carvalho observed that the anarchist movement antedated the revolutionary movements of 1922, 1924, 1930, and 1932, and that anarchism's participation in those movements, as well as its previously defined position, assured to it "the right of belligerency."<sup>9</sup>

Prestes, who entered Brazil with a false passport and a German-born wife in April 1935, no longer heaped abuse on the *tenentes*. He extolled them in his proclamation of July 5, 1935: "The cannons of Copacabana thunder! The heroic companions of Siqueira Campos fall! With Joaquim Távora the soldiers of São Paulo arise and for thirty days the worker city is barbarously bombarded by the generals at the service of Bernardes! Then—the retreat. The heroic struggle in the backlands of Paraná! The uprisings of Rio Grande do Sul! The march of the column through the interior of the entire country awakening the population of the most impassible backlands for the struggle against the tyrants who go on selling Brazil to foreign capital. What energy, what bravery!"<sup>10</sup> But not a few

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Sé on October 7, 1934. During this battle, organized in part by Mário Pedrosa, anarchists fired on the Green Shirts from the roof of the building that housed the *sindicatos* (Mário Pedrosa, interview, December 4, 1967). In telling of the event, in which several Green Shirts and policemen and one "antifascist" were killed, *A Plebe* (October 13, 1934) emphasized that the preparatory work, which included issuing bulletins inviting the people to "repel" Salgado's Integralista movement, had been carried out jointly by the antifascists even though they had "different political, ideological, and philosophical points of view."

<sup>8</sup> Mário Pedrosa, interview, December 4, 1967.

<sup>9</sup> "Uma Conferencia Libertaria," *A Lanterna*, no. 398 (São Paulo, July 13, 1935).

<sup>10</sup> Quotation given in Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 304.



Fascismo, Nazismo, Integralismo—A Dansa Macabra. (*A Plebe*, October 13, 1934)

veterans of the uprisings of the 1920's felt that Prestes was distorting the cause for which they had displayed such bravery. He described the ANL as the "continuer" of the combats that the *tenentes* had begun "for the liberation of Brazil from the imperialistic game."<sup>11</sup>

Prestes, still representing the revolutionary Prestes Column in the minds of the masses, attracted many to the ANL. But his more recent activities warned the government of the deep Communist interest in the ANL. Furthermore, he was so eager to use the ANL primarily to overthrow the government that he assured its repression. In his proclamation of July 5, 1935, he declared that "the idea of assault ripens in the conscience of the great masses," and he used such slogans as Down with the Odious Government of Vargas, and All Power to the National Liberation Alliance.

The government, making use of a recently enacted National Security Law, closed down the ANL on July 12, 1935. A rally of protest, planned

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

in Rio, never occurred because more policemen than would-be participants were present.<sup>12</sup> In São Paulo, Caio Prado Júnior—who, with Miguel Costa, was codirector of the local ANL—led a march of five hundred, the only mass protest.<sup>13</sup> During the following months, Roberto Henrique Sisson, ANL secretary-general, tried to help Prestes by keeping some ANL cells alive on a clandestine basis. They became, in effect, cells of the PCB,<sup>14</sup> which now claimed a Party membership of eight or ten thousand.<sup>15</sup>

In Moscow early in August 1935, Fernando de Lacerda reported on the ANL to the Comintern's Seventh World Congress, of which he was a Presidium member.<sup>16</sup> Inaccurately he said that the Brazilian people had "rallied in millions around the ANL." He said the people were infuriated by the government's action against the ANL and were calling strikes and attending new ANL meetings by the thousands. "The masses of people in Brazil, the united national front, the revolutionary proletariat and the Party—the PCB—will be able to begin the counteroffensive and, in spite of the Saturnalia of reprisals, will proceed to decisive battles for bread, land, and liberty, and for the power of the ANL."<sup>17</sup>

In Brazil Francisco Mangabeira and other enthusiasts of the extinct ANL organized a new popular front: the Popular Front for Bread, Land, and Liberty.<sup>18</sup> In October 1935 Mangabeira launched an impressive sixteen-page "weekly" newspaper, *Marcha*, to push for the popular front.<sup>19</sup> The Brazilian people, *Marcha* wrote, had to defeat the Green Shirts as the first step for achieving "a popular revolutionary government with Prestes at its head."<sup>20</sup> Mangabeira's collaborators on the newspaper were Rubem Braga, Caio Prado Júnior, Di Cavalcanti, Newton Freitas, and Carlos Lacerda.

Maurício de Lacerda, who had belonged to the ANL and whose name

<sup>12</sup> Febus Gikovate, interview, November 21, 1968.

<sup>13</sup> Levine, *Vargas Regime*, p. 101.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>15</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, August 28, 1935.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, August 8, 1935.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, December 2, 1935. Robert M. Levine writes about an ANL claim of 400,000 members: "A more realistic estimate, based on surviving ANL records, probably would range between 70,000 and 100,000 persons at the height of its success" (*Vargas Regime*, p. 79).

<sup>18</sup> Eurico Bellens Porto, *A Insurreição de 27 de Novembro: Relatório*, p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> *Marcha* 1, no. 1 (Rio de Janeiro, October 16, 1935), and 1, no. 2 (October 25, 1935). *Marcha's* fifth and last number appeared on November 22, 1935.

<sup>20</sup> *Marcha* 1, no. 5 (November 22, 1935).

was associated with the Popular Front for Bread, Land, and Liberty, wrote to Luís Carlos Prestes on November 15, 1935, to advise that "companions have chosen me president of the Popular Front for Liberty." The front, Maurício promised, would do everything possible to strengthen the forces congregated around Prestes's name. "Our past separation thus finds a point of national conciliation for our struggles for the good of Brazil. I extend my hand to you."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Eurico Bellens Porto, *A Insurreição de 27 de Novembro: Relatório*, p. 139.

#### 4. Dissent in the PCB (1935)

Arthur Ernst Ewert explained to some of the Brazilian conspirators that "in the first stage we shall not organize soviets because to do so would prematurely reduce the necessary large popular front." Later, however, "the Popular National Revolutionary Government, with Prestes at its head," was to be transformed into a "Soviet Government of Workers and Peasants."<sup>1</sup>

Prestes in August and September 1935 wrote letters in which he tried, without much success, to attract old comrades-in-arms to join the struggle for the Popular National Revolutionary Government.<sup>2</sup> Many of these old comrades were men whom Prestes had denounced in 1931 and had not been in touch with for over five years. When Miguel Costa received an All Power to the ANL letter in which Prestes asked for his military support, the top-ranking officer of the Long March replied that an uprising in the near future would be idiotic and that a successful revolution would require a great many preparatory steps.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Ernst Ewert (Harry Berger), memorandum in Eurico Bellens Porto, *A Insurreição de 27 de Novembro: Relatório*, p. 8. In Brazil, Ewert used the name Harry Berger and has become known by that name.

<sup>2</sup> Robert M. Levine, *The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-1938*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Maurício Goulart, interview, November 17, 1968. Prestes's follower, Major Carlos da Costa Leite, wrote to Police Chief Filinto Müller (*a tenente* in the 1920's) and Naval Commander Ari Parreiras, governor of Rio State, asking them to join the struggle. Both replied that they would consult Colonel Eduardo Gomes, the sole surviving officer of those who revolted at Fort Copacabana in July 1922 (Carlos da Costa Leite, interview, July 5, 1971). They did not "join the struggle" in the way that Costa Leite wanted.

In Moscow in August 1935, at the Seventh World Congress, Prestes was named to the Comintern's Executive Committee (as Astrogildo Pereira had been at the Sixth Congress). In October, at the suggestion of Comintern leaders, Prestes was placed on the PCB's CC and Politburo on account of "the situation in Brazil" and the "special role and work" he had already carried out.<sup>4</sup>

Miranda (Antônio Maciel Bonfim), bustling with activity and proud to be PCB secretary-general, presided over the CC meetings and ran the Party's affairs. Closely associated with him in this work were Álvaro Ventura (a sincere, uneducated stevedore who had become—via class representation—the only PCB member in the Chamber of Deputies), Bangu (Lauro Reginaldo da Rocha, from Rio Grande do Norte), and Martins (the Eton-educated Honório de Freitas Guimarães).<sup>5</sup> Communist leaders were then commonly using *nomes de guerra*, or cover names. Since Prestes was known as Garoto (Boy), Ghioldi as Índio, and Arthur Ernst Ewert as Negro, Party members began hearing about these three in an abbreviated form: GIN says this, or GIN thinks that.<sup>6</sup>

The frail, dark-complexioned Bangu worked for the PCB's Regional Committee in Bahia. He printed anti-imperialist leaflets and wrote reports for the CC that inaccurately described the people in Bahia as ready to revolt en masse.<sup>7</sup>

The road being taken by the PCB was not liked by all of its members. Cristiano Cordeiro felt that the ANL, at least in the northeast, was characterized by insincerity and poor organization. Although Fernando de Lacerda in Moscow proudly praised All Power to the ANL for being a slogan the Brazilian masses understood,<sup>8</sup> Cordeiro considered it a crude copy of All Power to the Soviets. With his criticism of the slogan, his influence in the PCB began to decline.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See letter to Miranda (Antônio Maciel Bonfim) from Rodolfo Ghioldi and Arthur Ernst Ewert, in Porto, *A Insurreição de 27 de Novembro*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>5</sup> Febus Gikovate, interview, November 21, 1968; Heitor Ferreira Lima, interview, November 6, 1968. According to Leôncio Basbaum ("Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," pp. 220-221), Honório de Freitas Guimarães had been a friend of Cina de Lacerda's and had assisted the PCB financially when she had been in the leadership in 1932.

<sup>6</sup> João Batista Barreto Leite Filho, interview, December 17, 1967; Porto, *A Insurreição de 27 de Novembro*, p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos," pp. 213-215.

<sup>8</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, December 2, 1935.

<sup>9</sup> Cristiano Cordeiro, interviews, October 28, 1967; October 11, 1968. Cristiano Cordeiro, who did not use a *nome de guerra*, was later surprised to read in police reports that he went under the name of Jesus.

Cristiano Cordeiro learned that Silo Meireles, who had been with Prestes in Buenos Aires and Russia and who had joined the Party, was preparing for the uprising in the northeast. This preparation, like the organization of the ANL, seemed weak to Cordeiro. Above all he felt that the whole idea was premature and that the people of the northeast were uninterested in supporting those who wanted an uprising.<sup>10</sup>

Heitor Ferreira Lima, who had not been released from Ilha Grande until December 1933, considered Miranda and Martins *aventureiros*<sup>11</sup> who wanted to carry out a simple Latin American *golpe* (coup). His expulsion from the Party followed a talk he gave to fellow members warning against a "barrack uprising." Allowed to reenter in July 1935, he did not change his point of view.

For much the same reasons as were given by Heitor Ferreira Lima, João Batista Barreto Leite Filho began a small Party schism in May or June 1935. The reporter who had interviewed Prestes and Brandão for *O Jornal* in 1928 and 1930, Barreto Leite was a UTLJ leader and organizer of a printers' strike. He had recently joined the PCB and was acting as liaison between the Party and non-Communist opponents of Vargas. A student of Marxism-Leninism, he felt that the Party leadership was guilty of *aventurismo* and excessive rightism. It was, he believed, ignoring all theory in making its play to grab power, and was thus letting down intellectuals who were faithful to Communist theory.<sup>12</sup> Barreto Leite's views ran counter to those pronounced in Moscow by the Chinese Communist Wan Min, considered an expert on underdeveloped agrarian countries. Wan Min said that the PCB "must overcome the sectarianism of some individual Communists and go forward to the highest forms of struggle for power."<sup>13</sup>

Barreto Leite's fellow dissidents were Febus Gikovate, an intellectual, and two of the Besouchet brothers (Augusto and Marino) and their sister Lídia. For a while they attracted an important group, the able leadership of the Rio bank workers, which was unhappy about what was being done in its sector by the PCB directorship. The PCB was "overbidding," trying to make the most out of every minor possibility of fighting, calling general strikes that labor leaders considered impossible.<sup>14</sup>

The Barreto Leite group and the bank worker leaders addressed docu-

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Heitor Ferreira Lima, interviews, November 8, 1967; November 8, 1968.

<sup>12</sup> João Batista Barreto Leite Filho, interview, December 17, 1967.

<sup>13</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, August 17, 1935.

<sup>14</sup> João Batista Barreto Leite Filho, interview, December 17, 1967.



ments to the CC telling of their disagreement with PCB policy and plans. On October 26, 1935, Barreto Leite sent a long letter to Luís Carlos Prestes to advise him of the ideas of the dissidents. The PCB therefore canceled the approval it had given to Barreto Leite's recent membership application, and his expulsion was announced in *A Classe Operaria*.

## 5. The Insurrections of 1935

For the Comintern's "experiment" to see whether the "ground was fertile" for insurrection in South America, Moscow sent \$100,000 via New York to Youamtorg, the Soviet Union's trading company in Montevideo. It was understood that if the experiment about to be carried out in Brazil was successful, "increased efforts and resources would be devoted to a further movement."<sup>1</sup>

The PCB leadership gave strict orders that those in charge of carrying out the insurrection in different areas of Brazil were to await the signal from the central headquarters in Rio. However, on the evening of November 23, 1935, an uprising broke out in Natal, the northeastern city that had been the scene of considerable conspiring and unrest, mainly related to local issues, in the early 1930's.<sup>2</sup> The uprising was started by discontented Army sergeants, corporals, and soldiers, few of them Communists. They dominated the Army battalion in the name of the ANL and were joined by civilians and former members of the Guarda Civil,

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, wires of November 26 and 27, 1935, from United States Ambassador Hugh Gibson (in Rio de Janeiro) to the secretary of state, and despatch of December 4, 1935, from Ambassador Gibson to the secretary of state. These messages conveyed information received from the Brazilian ambassador to Uruguay and from the Brazilian foreign minister. On the subject of Russian assistance, a sister of Prestes asserted in 1940 that the "movement of the Aliança Nacional Libertadora" was financed by the money received by Prestes from Aranha for the 1930 revolution, and that he did not, as charged, make use of "Moscow gold" (see Jorge Amado, *O Cavaleiro da Esperança: Vida de Luiz Carlos Prestes*, p. 230 n.).

<sup>2</sup> Good accounts of the uprisings in 1935 are given in Robert M. Levine, *The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-1938*, and in Hélio Silva, 1935: *A Revolta Vermelha*.

which the governor of Rio Grande do Norte had recently disbanded on the grounds that it consisted largely of "bandits."<sup>3</sup>

While the governor found asylum on a small Mexican warship, about fifty members of the state police defended the state police barracks against rebels who attacked throughout the night. The wounding of some state policemen, as they fled the barracks after their munitions ran out, constituted the only casualties during the fighting. However, while a "Popular Revolutionary Government" tried to run Natal, sympathizers of the new government committed two murders.<sup>4</sup>

When radios brought reports of this successful rebellion to Recife, José Caetano Machado decided that the time had come for an uprising in Pernambuco. His view prevailed over that of Silo Meireles, who argued that proper instructions had not been received from Rio.<sup>5</sup>

Early Sunday morning, November 24, rebels from the Army barracks at Socorro, outside of Recife, advanced on the state capital. They were led by Captain Otacílio Alves de Lima and Lieutenant Lamartine Coutinho Correia de Oliveira, nephew of former PCB member Rodolfo Coutinho. Lieutenant Alberto Besouchet, the youngest of the Besouchet brothers, participated in the uprising.<sup>6</sup>

When the rebels from the Socorro barracks, joined by armed civilians, reached Largo da Paz on the outskirts of Recife, they met determined resistance led by the state police. There a battle developed during which a rebelling corporal made effective use of a machine gun nested in a church tower. The rebels, besides controlling the corridor between Largo da Paz and Socorro, held isolated pockets elsewhere in the Recife-Olinda area.

State Security Secretary Malvino Reis Neto arrested the "leftist" state Justice Secretary Nelson Coutinho, brother of Rodolfo and uncle of rebel Lieutenant Lamartine Coutinho Correia de Oliveira. Thereupon the state finance secretary refused to issue money for the state police unless Nelson Coutinho were released. Malvino Reis arrested the finance secretary.<sup>7</sup>

The arrival of loyal Army units from nearby Maceió and João Pessoa

<sup>3</sup> Francisco Bilac de Faria, interviews, October 19, 20, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*; Luís da Câmara Cascudo, interview, October 18, 1968. The victims were Arnaldo Lira, a friend of Cascudo's, who imprudently mocked Natal's new rulers, and Otacílio Werneck, an engineer.

<sup>5</sup> Ilvo Meireles, interview, November 1, 1968.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* See Pernambuco State, Secretaria de Segurança Pública, Delegacia de Ordem Política e Social, "Relação dos Implicados no Movimento Extremista de Novembro de 1935 em Pernambuco, Condenados pelo Tribunal de Segurança Nacional," Recife, December 31, 1938.

<sup>7</sup> Wandenkolk Wanderley, interview, October 17, 1968.

doomed the uprising. It was finally crushed late on November 25, after having cost about one hundred lives, mostly of civilian insurrectionists.<sup>8</sup> Some participants were captured in the countryside. Many gave up in Socorro, after being forced back from Largo da Paz, and were driven by truck to the well-filled Recife jail. Leading conspirators, among them Army Sergeant Gregório Bezerra, a Communist who rebelled at the cadet training quarters in Recife, were captured.<sup>9</sup> Alberto Besouchet was one of the very few who escaped.<sup>10</sup>

With the Recife rebellion quelled, loyal troops started in the direction of Natal. Insurrectionists responsible for the Popular Revolutionary Government in Natal fled on November 27, but many were picked up, some in the interior and others aboard a vessel.<sup>11</sup> The governor, who had moved from the Mexican warship to the Italian consulate, returned to his palace.

On November 25, before the fall of the Popular Revolutionary Government in Natal, Congress, on Vargas's recommendation, voted a one-month state of siege for the entire country.

On the same day Luís Carlos Prestes sent a note from Rio to André Trifino Correia in Minas Gerais: "We are about to have the revolution. Here we cannot wait longer than two or three days. I am counting on you."<sup>12</sup> That evening Miranda, Arthur Ernst Ewert, and Luís Carlos Prestes met<sup>13</sup> to synchronize the outbreaks at local military units and set the time at shortly after midnight, November 26-27.

On the twenty-sixth the PCB made plans to have workers strike. Its daily, *A Manhã*, which had been featuring the uprisings in the north, prepared a special edition meant to foment a mass uprising.<sup>14</sup> Prestes signed orders to be delivered to conspirators at military barracks in and around

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Gregório Lourenço Bezerra, considered guilty of killing Lieutenant Sampaio Xavier, was given the longest prison sentence of the Recife insurrectionists, twenty-six and one-half years.

<sup>10</sup> Alberto Bolmicar Besouchet was killed in the Spanish war at the side of a semi-Trotskyite group fighting on behalf of the Republican government. In the opinion of João Batista Barreto Leite Filho (interview, December 17, 1967) and Augusto Besouchet (quoted in Leoncio Basbaum, "Uma Vida em 6 Tempos: Memórias," p. 208), Alberto Besouchet was killed on orders of Stalinists.

<sup>11</sup> Levine, *The Vargas Regime*, p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> Eurico Bellens Porto, *A Insurreição de 27 de Novembro: Relatorio*, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Testimony of Miranda (Antônio Maciel Bonfim or Adalberto Andrade Fernandes), given in *ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>14</sup> Levine, *Vargas Regime*, p. 119.

Rio. The orders to the conspirators at the Third Infantry Regiment at Praia Vermelha, in the heart of Rio, called for the "Third Popular Revolutionary Regiment" to take control of the regiment's barracks at 2:00 A.M. on November 27, and at 3:00 A.M. to send forth detachments to take over the Navy Arsenal, the barracks of the special police, the barracks of the military police, and the presidential palace.<sup>15</sup>

The men who received their orders from Prestes were badly outnumbered and had lost the element of surprise. Loyal commanders, already alerted by events in the northeast, received additional warnings from Vargas's police who knew about Prestes's orders of November 26 calling for a rebellion that night.

The rebels at the Third Infantry Regiment at Praia Vermelha (Red Beach), led by Captains Agildo Barata and Álvaro de Sousa, gained control of the seventeen-hundred-man regiment. But it was utterly impossible to follow Prestes's orders to send contingents to police headquarters or the presidential palace, because First Military Region Commander Eurico Gaspar Dutra, who had been in readiness, brought all manner of troops and artillery against the regiment. He ignored a note from rebel Captains Barata and Sousa advising that "the movement is not Communist, but national, popular, revolutionary, with the most meritorious companion, Luís Carlos Prestes, at its head."<sup>16</sup>

The regiment's quarters, old structures of wood and stucco boxed in by two granite cliffs, were hit by a formidable barrage. Exploding shrapnel started a fire, warships joined in the bombardment, and planes dropped bombs from overhead. At about midday on November 27, after about twenty men, mostly cadets, had been killed,<sup>17</sup> the rebels tried to negotiate with Dutra outside the burning and battered barracks. They were disarmed and taken prisoner.

These rebels had been hoping assistance would come from the Aviation School at Campo dos Afonsos, which was located some fifteen miles west of Rio and was the only other military unit affected by the uprising.

Several hardy Communist plotters, among them Captains Sócrates Gonçalves da Silva and Agliberto Vieira de Azevedo, drove in the Aviation School's hospital entrance at 3:00 A.M. After a short skirmish in which two or three loyal officers were killed, the Communists dominated the school. Then they set forth with thirty men to attack the nearby First

<sup>15</sup> Agildo Barata, *Vida de um Revolucionário: Memórias*, p. 261.

<sup>16</sup> Hélio Silva, 1935: *A Revolta Vermelha*, p. 368.

<sup>17</sup> *The New York Times* (AP dispatch), November 29, 1935, quoted in Levine, *Vargas Regime*, p. 119.

Aviation Regiment, commanded by Colonel Eduardo Gomes. After one of the Communists fired a shot at Gomes, hitting the hand in which he held his revolver, Gomes's men forced the Communists back to the school. Before sunrise, loyal troops arrived from Vila Militar, assuring an end to the Aviation School uprising.

In the words of Leôncio Basbaum, "the reaction which followed finds no parallel in our history, not even in the dark days of the state of siege of Artur Bernardes. . . . Thousands were arrested. Not only Communists and their sympathizers. Even relatives and neighbors, and members and directors of the ANL who knew nothing about the uprising were jailed."<sup>18</sup>

Full use was made of the prison ship *Pedro I*, anchored off Rio, and of the island prison camps on Fernando de Noronha, in the northeast, and Ilha Grande, west of Rio. Rio's Casa de Detenção held over 1,200 prisoners although its capacity was 400.<sup>19</sup> In Recife jail cells for two were used for five.<sup>20</sup> In São Paulo the "Paradise" Prison and the prisons in the city's districts (such as "the Bastille of Cambuci") could not handle all who were arrested. Therefore, late in 1935 Jorge Street's defunct Maria Zélia textile plant became an additional jail.<sup>21</sup>

The prisoners were not limited to men like Miranda, Caetano Machado, Prestes, Ewert, Ghioldi, Agliberto Vieira de Azevedo,<sup>22</sup> and Agildo Barata, who were responsible for the uprising or had participated in it. Cristiano Cordeiro, who had opposed the insurrection, found himself in the Recife jail instead of the Recife Municipal Council, to which he had recently been elected.<sup>23</sup> The Trotskyites, who had also opposed the revolt,<sup>24</sup> were rounded up and their organization dismantled.

Among the arrested anarchists was José Oiticica.<sup>25</sup> Oreste Ristori, the

<sup>18</sup> Leoncio Basbaum, *História Sincera da República*, III, 96-97.

<sup>19</sup> Abguar Bastos, *Prestes e a Revolução Social*, p. 342.

<sup>20</sup> Malvino Reis Neto, interview, September 2, 1963.

<sup>21</sup> Antônio Vieira, *Maria Zélia*, pp. 48, 136.

<sup>22</sup> Agliberto Vieira de Azevedo, considered guilty of killing Lieutenant Benedito Lopes Bragança, was given the longest prison sentence of those at the Aviation School insurrection, twenty-nine years and eight months.

<sup>23</sup> Four federal congressmen (Abguar Bastos, Domingos Velasco, João Manguabeira, and Otávio da Silveira) and federal Senator Abel Chermont were jailed. See "Reaction and Repression" in Levine, *Vargas Regime* (pp. 125-137).

<sup>24</sup> Edmundo Moniz, interview, December 14, 1967.

<sup>25</sup> Ilvo Meireles, interview, November 1, 1968. Jailed in Rio, Oiticica gave a course in Portuguese literature, which was attended by Trifino Correia and other prisoners.

great anarchist agitator, who had come from Italy to Brazil via Argentina and Uruguay, and had founded *La Battaglia* in São Paulo in 1904, suffered his second and final expulsion from Brazil in 1936.

The government made the *atestado de ideologia* (certificate of ideology) mandatory for labor leaders. The certificates, affirmations that the persons concerned had no records in the political sectors of the police, were not issued to known Communists.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Ari Campista, interview, October 9, 1968.

## 6. Why the Great Mistake?

Looking back on what had gone wrong in November 1935, Luís Carlos Prestes later wrote: "The influence of small-bourgeois radicalism in the directorship of the Party, in the specific form of *golpismo tenentista*, led us to commit the great mistake of starting the insurrection when our strength in the working class was still weak and when the labor-peasant alliance was practically nonexistent due to the lack of backing in the peasant mass. For the triumph of a popular insurrection the support of soldiers and sailors is indispensable, but to reduce the insurrection to a struggle almost entirely limited to the barracks is a grave error, which would cause, as it did, the defeat of the movement of November 1935."<sup>1</sup>

It might be added that the decision to undertake a rebellion, reached in Moscow in 1934, was based on reports made by a few Brazilians who appear to have had no accurate idea of what was going on in Brazil. It is enough to examine Prestes's account of the Paulista uprising of 1932 to appreciate that he relied on incorrect information. Inaccurate and misleading articles about Brazil in the Comintern's *International Press Correspondence* might have made good propaganda but apparently they were taken seriously by men whose responsibilities required the aid of a worthwhile intelligence service.

The men who reported to Moscow in 1934 on Brazilian conditions were Miranda (Antônio Maciel Bonfim), Fernando de Lacerda, and José

<sup>1</sup> Luiz Carlos Prestes, "Informe de Balanço do Comitê Central do PCB ao IV Congresso do Partido Comunista do Brasil," *Problemas*, no. 64 (December 1954-February 1955), pp. 90-91.

Caetano Machado. These were the men who had been at work against Leôncio Basbaum, Astrogildo Pereira, and other Brazilian intellectuals in the early 1930's. Whether or not that disparagement of intellectuals had anything to do with it, the PCB leaders of 1934 ended up relying on one of the worst intelligence services ever to have been assembled. In 1935 it was blind to the situation described by Prestes years after the event. While police spies kept the Vargas regime well informed about details of the Communists' plans, Party leaders like Bangu (Lauro Reginaldo da Rocha) wasted their time reporting to the Central Committee about how the people were ready to revolt en masse.

The anti-intellectual Fernando de Lacerda asserted that "All Power to the ANL" was a magnificently successful slogan, well understood by the Brazilian masses, and he delivered misleading views to the Comintern's Seventh World Congress in August 1935. It seems to have been mandatory for all good Brazilian Communists to hold such views and to act on them. Wiser counsel was ignored and dissidents were told by Moscow that the Communists of underdeveloped, agrarian China knew what was best for Brazilian Communism.

Caetano Machado, the foremost hater of intellectuals, consistently displayed the characteristics of a man of action. He might have played a very useful role in the Russian Bolshevik revolution, where the action of such men was coordinated by some realistic intellectual geniuses. As it was, Caetano Machado lived up to his reputation by acting precipitously in Recife on November 24, 1935. He and others in the northeast ignored the sensible evaluation of the situation expressed by the modest man who had given them some elementary education and built up the Party in Recife, Cristiano Cordeiro.





APPENDIX, GLOSSARY,  
SOURCES OF MATERIAL,  
and INDEX



## APPENDIX

### Notes about Prices, Wages, and Strikes, 1917-1935

The following quotations, in mil-réis, were obtained from *O Estado de S. Paulo*. Except for coffee, they are quotations that prevailed in the city of São Paulo. The coffee quotations are for ten kilograms of No. 4 coffee in Santos and are included to give an idea of general business conditions.

The corn quotations are for sixty kilograms of *amareirão* corn.

*Mulatinho* bean quotations are for sixty kilograms of *bom, claro* grade.

Rice quotations are for sixty kilograms of *agulha, beneficiado, bom* grade. An asterisk (\*) denotes "second grade" instead of *bom*.

Manioc meal quotations are for fifty kilograms of "first grade" from Rio Grande do Sul. An asterisk (\*) denotes that the manioc meal was shown as coming from "the south," instead of from Rio Grande do Sul.

Sugar quotations are for sixty kilograms of *crystal* sugar produced in São Paulo State. An asterisk (\*) denotes that the *crystal* sugar came from Maceió; a dagger (†) denotes that it came from Bahia. These differences of origin appear to have had little, if any, effect on the quotations for *crystal* sugar.

#### WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX, SAO PAULO

Date	Commodity						
	Coffee	Corn	<i>Mulatinho</i> Beans		Rice	Manioc Meal	Sugar
Das Águas			Da Seca				
1917							
January 3					24.8*		35.4
February 4					22.7*		35.0
February 23	6.0				20.7*		34.0
May 5	6.0				27.4*		38.5
June 2	5.7	7.0			25.9*		36.0
June 13	5.5				26.4*		40.5
September 2	4.9				26.1		45.0
September 30	4.9				26.6		41.0
October 28	4.9	6.3			27.2		38.0
November 6	4.9	6.3			27.2	17.2*	38.5
December 2	4.9				27.2	17.8*	
December 30	4.9				28.8	17.2*	42.5

Date	Commodity						
	Coffee	Corn	Mulatinho Beans		Rice	Manioc Meal	Sugar
			Das Águas	Da Seca			
1918							
February 1	4.9	6.8			29.0		
March 31	4.9	6.2				25.0*	49.3
May 29	5.0	7.8			31.5		54.3
June 28	6.0	9.5		18.0	35.5		53.3
July 27	7.0	9.4		23.4	37.5*		57.5
August 30	7.6	9.7	14.0	23.5	45.0		64.5
October 16	9.3						
October 20		8.2	11.0	21.0			53.5
October 23		8.2	9.0	20.5			54.5
November 24	12.0						
1919							
January 4		13.0		18.0	46.3		67.5
January 10	12.5						
February 6			18.5		45.5		66.0
February 23	13.1						
February 28		11.7	18.5		43.5		66.0
May 6	14.0	9.4	17.0	13.5			53.0*
May 9				12.5	38.0	18.5	
June 1	14.7	9.0		10.3			53.0*
June 21	17.8	10.6		15.7			53.0*
August 12	19.5	11.5			39.5	16.5	
September 6	18.8	11.2			39.0	16.5	51.0*
October 8	16.7	10.2		10.8	37.0	16.5	51.5*
October 29	17.0			10.5	36.0	16.5	
December 4	14.2					16.5	
December 23	13.3		11.5	11.3		16.5	
1920							
January 3	13.3					16.0	
January 6	13.6			11.7		16.5	
January 20	14.8		11.5	11.3	37.5	16.0	
February 3	14.8	10.6	14.6	10.9	37.5	17.0	
February 24	14.6	9.6	14.8	10.0	35.0	15.0	
March 30	13.5	11.3	15.8	10.0	38.0	16.0	69.5
April 29	12.8	12.3			38.5	16.0	87.0
July 2	11.8	11.2		13.8	32.0		78.0
August 5	11.2	10.8		11.8	29.5	16.0	72.0
August 27	10.6				33.5	16.0	72.0
August 31	10.3	10.6		13.2		16.0	
November 4	10.5	13.7		12.3	35.0	16.0	59.5

Date	Commodity						
			<i>Mulatinho</i> Beans				
	Coffee	Corn	Das Águas	Da Seca	Rice	Manioc Meal	Sugar
December 4	9.0	15.1		10.7	34.5	16.0	52.5
December 28	9.0	13.7		12.0	32.3	16.0	51.0
1921							
January 4	8.8	13.7		12.0	32.3	16.0	51.5
February 1	9.4				31.3	16.0	
February 27	8.6	16.0			31.3	16.0	59.0
May 3	10.8	11.2			25.5	13.5	52.0
May 31	11.7	10.1		21.5	26.0	14.0	
June 28	14.3	10.7		25.3	26.0	14.0	48.5†
July 26	15.0	11.3		27.3	31.5	14.0	48.5*
August 19	15.0	11.0			29.5	14.0	45.5
November 4	15.5	12.9					33.5
November 27	15.6	13.5		30.8		14.0	33.0
December 14	18.0	14.6			30.5	14.0	34.8
1922							
January 1	17.3	14.2	31.5	28.8	30.5	14.0	32.5
March 3	17.0	10.2	35.8		30.5	16.5	32.5
April 4	18.5	10.9	31.0		29.0	15.0	32.8
April 27	19.3	10.9			29.0	15.0	31.0
July 4	19.2	11.0		25.8	32.0		40.0
October 5	22.6	11.0		16.8	33.0	15.0	40.0
1923							
January 6	23.0	11.2	18.3	7.0	34.0	21.0	49.0
April 5	23.4	15.8	17.0		38.0	23.0	70.8
July 4	18.0	11.5		14.5	32.5	19.5	
October 5	24.0	13.7		23.3	38.5	21.5	79.8
1924							
January 3	26.0	16.0	61.0	35.0	47.5	26.0	84.5
April 3	27.0	17.3			37.5	29.0	92.3
July 4	30.4	26.8			67.0	27.5	
November 1	41.0	31.8		104.0	74.0		67.5
1925							
January 3	43.5	33.5			75.0	34.0	55.5
February 4			64.0		91.5		
March 10					104.0		
April 3	39.0	26.0	32.5				65.5
July 7	35.0	25.0		59.0	87.5		70.5
October 3	27.5	17.5		35.5	78.0		60.5
October 10	26.0	17.5		31.0	80.0	32.0	59.0

Date	Commodity						
	Coffee	Corn	<i>Mulatinho</i> Das Aguas	Beans Da Seca	Rice	Manioc Meal	Sugar
1926							
January 9	27.5	14.3	29.5		71.0	32.0	67.5
March 7			27.0				
April 9	27.0	12.0			42.0	28.0	65.5
July 11	24.5	10.3		14.5	36.5		59.8
October 9	24.0	10.4		11.0	37.0		51.3
1927							
January 11	28.2	14.8	55.0	12.0	55.0	24.5	50.0
April 9	25.3	19.8	42.0	9.5	35.5		46.8
July 9	23.7	19.8	7.5	23.5	47.0	20.5	61.5
October 9	26.8	18.3		24.0	49.0	19.5	60.0
1928							
January 10	31.0	23.3	74.0		66.0	21.5	58.3
April 10	33.0	26.3			59.0		64.0
July 10	33.5	21.8	56.0		71.5	23.5	78.0
October 10	33.5	21.3			77.0		
1929							
January 10	33.5	20.3	67.0		75.0	20.5	
April 10	33.5	15.5	65.5		63.0	20.8	72.0
July 10	33.5	15.3		33.5	58.0		57.0
October 10	33.5	13.3			56.0		39.0
1930							
January 10	21.2	11.2	26.5		49.0		29.0
April 10	21.0	13.8	29.0		41.0		31.0
July 10	21.0	10.9		17.0	36.0		33.0
October 5	21.0	9.9			35.0		27.5
1931							
January 4		14.3	15.5		35.0		40.0
April 5	21.0	11.1	16.5		26.0	21.3	38.0
July 5	16.3	12.9		11.5	25.0	19.8	42.0
October 8	14.9	14.5		12.5	31.0	19.8	34.5
1932							
January 8	15.4	14.1	16.0		31.5	25.3	36.0
April 8	15.4	11.4	18.5		30.0	23.3	38.5
July 5	15.2	11.5		19.3	36.5	21.8	42.5
October 19	15.3	12.5		22.5	44.5	20.3	43.0

Date	Commodity						
	Coffee	Corn	Mulatinho Beans		Rice	Manioc Meal	Sugar
Das Aguas			Da Seca				
1933							
January 29	14.8	8.4		34.0	43.5		42.2*
April 23	14.1	7.9	41.0	37.0	45.5		55.7*
July 20	12.9	11.5		27.5	47.5		56.5
October 10	12.0	11.1		27.0	51.5		51.7
1934							
January 13	13.3	14.4	28.0	20.0	53.5		56.5
April 10	17.5	14.8			47.0		
July 29	16.0	13.5		19.5	45.5		
October 13	17.5	12.4		14.5	44.0		55.2
1935							
January 27		12.0	25.0				55.2
April 27	15.5	12.3	37.5		31.5		
July 18	16.1	12.9	28.5		31.5		56.5
October 25	16.3	15.1	35.5		35.5		51.2

The story told by these São Paulo wholesale food quotations, particularly with respect to 1918 and 1919, differs considerably from that told by cost of living index figures published in *Conjuntura Econômica* of May 1951 and re-published in Oliver Ónody, *A Inflação Brasileira*.<sup>1</sup> The variations in these São Paulo wholesale food quotations bear a greater resemblance—but not a perfect one—to the changes in the cost of living index given in Roberto Simonsen, "As Finanças e a Indústria."<sup>2</sup> Simonsen includes an index for wages.

#### COST OF LIVING INDEXES, BRAZIL

Year	Ónody (1829 = 100)		Simonsen (1915 = 100)	
	Index	Percent Change	Cost of Living	Wages
1915	457	+ 9.0	100	100
1916	486	+ 6.3	107	101
1917	536	+10.2	118	107
1918	478	-10.8	132	117
1919	624	+30.5	137	123

<sup>1</sup> Ónody, Oliver, *A Inflação Brasileira, 1820-1958*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>2</sup> Roberto Simonsen, "As Finanças e a Indústria: Conferencia realizada pelo Sr. Roberto Simonsen, no Curso de Engenharia Industrial do Mackenzie College a 8 do corrente," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 16, 1931, pp. 4-5. (These figures are also reproduced in Azis Simão, *Sindicato e Estado*, pp. 67-68.)

Year	Ónody (1829 = 100)		Simonsen (1915 = 100)	
	Index	Percent Change	Cost of Living	Wages
1920	687	+10.1	150	146
1921	704	+ 2.4	154	158
1922	771	+ 9.5	169	163
1923	851	+10.3	186	181
1924	993	+16.6	217	211
1925	1,060	+ 6.7	232	233
1926	1,089	+ 2.7	239	236
1927	1,119	+ 2.7	246	240
1928	1,102	- 1.5	242	253
1929	1,094	- 0.7	240	251
1930	993	- 9.2	219	240
1931	960	- 3.3		
1932	960			
1933	960			
1934	1,031	+ 7.4		
1935	1,085	+ 5.2		

Azis Simão has tabulated the occurrences of strikes in São Paulo State.<sup>3</sup> In resumé form (omitting the useful breakdowns that Azis Simão furnishes), the occurrences for the years 1917-1935 were as follows.

#### STRIKE OCCURRENCES

Year	S. Paulo City	Rest of the State	S. Paulo State
1917	9	5	14
1918	1	3	4
1919	20	17	37
1920	11	2	13
1921	0	0	0
1922	10	3	13
1923	5	2	7
1924	1	0	1
1925	0	0	0
1926	1	0	1
1927	2	0	2
1928	5	1	6
1929	6	1	7
1930	11	1	12
1931	4	2	6
1932	19	5	24
1933	1	2	3
1934	11	9	20
1935	12	8	20

<sup>3</sup> Azis Simão, *Sindicato e Estado*.



## GLOSSARY

- Agitprop:** Agitation and Propaganda Commission of the Communist Party of Brazil.
- Aliança Liberal:** oppositionist political party in the 1930 elections. Backed by the political machines of three Brazilian states, it supported Getúlio Vargas and João Pessoa for president and vice-president of Brazil and endorsed certain candidacies for the federal legislature.
- Aliança Nacional Libertadora (ANL):** National Liberation Alliance. An anti-fascist popular front, in which the Communists were much interested, founded in March 1935; in July 1935 it was declared illegal by the Vargas government.
- aliancista:** in 1930, associated with the Aliança Liberal; in 1935, associated with the Aliança Nacional Libertadora.
- ANL.** See Aliança Nacional Libertadora.
- associação de resistência:** trade union.
- Bangu:** industrial section in the area of the federal capital, Rio de Janeiro, notable for textile plants in the 1920's and earlier.
- beneficiado:** beneficiary.
- Bloco Operário:** Labor Bloc, a Communist political organization planned in 1925 for the Rio de Janeiro area, and established early in 1927. Late in 1927 it was renamed the Bloco Operário e Camponês (BOC—Labor and Peasant Bloc), and its geographical area was extended. Theoretically it was to cover all of Brazil.
- Bloco Operário e Camponês (BOC).** See Bloco Operário.
- BOC.** See Bloco Operário.
- Bolshevik:** wing of the Russian Social Democratic Party that was headed by Lenin and stressed an extreme revolutionary Marxism. It seized control of Petrograd by means of the Bolshevik revolution of November 7, 1917, and defeated its opponents in Moscow eight days later.
- Brigada Militar:** state police force of Rio Grande do Sul.

- cafezinho*: small cup of black coffee.
- Câmara dos Deputados: Chamber of Deputies (federal congressmen).
- Câmara dos Intendentes: Chamber of Municipal Councilmen.
- Carioca: pertaining to, or native of, the city of Rio de Janeiro.
- Carnaval: Carnival, days of merrymaking prior to Ash Wednesday.
- casa de saúde*: private hospital.
- Casa Militar: the military staff of the presidential office.
- caudilho: caudillo, or military leader.
- CC. See Central Committee.
- CEC. See Central Executive Commission.
- Central Committee (CC): committee elected at the national congresses of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCB) to administer the Party between congresses and to carry out the resolutions adopted at them. Prior to 1929 the CC of the PCB was called the Central Executive Commission (CEC). Under unusual circumstances selections to, and dismissals from, the Central Committee were made at special conferences of Party leaders. (The Bloco Operário e Camponês also had a CC.)
- Central Executive Commission (CEC): commission of top members of the Communist Party of Brazil to maintain "the most rigorous political control over all the organizations of" the Party, 1922-1928. After 1928 it was called the Central Committee (CC).
- Centro Cosmopolita: Rio de Janeiro headquarters for workers in hotels, cafés, restaurants, and bars.
- Centro Internacional: Santos association for hotel and restaurant workers.
- CETC. See Comissão Executiva do Terceiro Congresso.
- CGT: Conselho Geral dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro (General Council of Workers of Rio de Janeiro), Brazilian anarcho-syndicalist council set up by the Third Brazilian Labor Congress in 1920 to coordinate the activities of labor confederations and autonomous unions in the Rio area; it proved ineffective.
- CGT: Confederação Geral do Trabalho do Brasil (Brazilian General Confederation of Labor), also referred to as CGTB. Established by Communist leaders in 1929.
- CGT: Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labor). French group, anarcho-syndicalist in orientation. After 1923 anarcho-syndicalism played an insignificant role in the French labor movement.
- CGT: Confederación General de Trabajadores (General Confederation of Workers). Mexican anarcho-syndicalist minority organization of the early 1920's.
- CGTB. See Confederação Geral do Trabalho do Brasil.
- Civil Guard. See Guarda Civil.
- Clevelândia Colony: colony of the Centro Agrícola Clevelândia (Cleveland

- Agricultural Center) located near the Oiapoque River in northern Brazil. In the mid-1920's approximately one thousand prisoners were sent there.
- COB. See Confederação Operária Brasileira.
- Coligação Operária: Communist political organization in Santos, S.P., in the mid-1920's.
- Comintern. See Communist International.
- Comissão Executiva do Terceiro Congresso (CETC): Executive Commission of the Third Congress. Anarcho-syndicalist organization set up in 1920 by the Third Brazilian Labor Congress to execute the congress's resolutions and carry on with labor union organizational work until the Fourth Brazilian Labor Congress, scheduled for 1921.
- Comitê Operário de Organização Sindical (COOS): Worker Committee of Syndical Organization. Established by São Paulo anarcho-syndicalists after the overthrow of President Washington Luís late in 1930, its purpose was to reorganize São Paulo labor unions, all of which had been closed by the authorities late in the Washington Luís regime.
- Communist International: also known as the Comintern and the Third International. International organization launched by Bolshevik leaders in Moscow in March 1919 for spreading Communism by well-disciplined Communist parties in the countries of the world. World congresses of the Communist International were held in 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1924, 1928, and 1935. The Communist International was ended by Stalin in 1943, thus increasing the goodwill toward the Soviet Union by its World War II allies.
- confederação*: confederation.
- Confederação Geral do Trabalho do Brasil (CGTB or CGT): Brazilian General Confederation of Labor. Established by Communist leaders in 1929.
- Confederação Operária Brasileira (COB): Brazilian Labor Confederation, anarchist oriented. Originally called for by the First Brazilian Labor Congress (Primeiro Congresso Operário Brasileiro) in 1906; established in 1908. Inactive in 1910, 1911, and 1912, it was "reconstituted" in January 1913 and was active that year. Thereafter economic recession and the effects of World War I contributed to its demise.
- Confederação Sindicalista Cooperativista Brasileira (CSCB): Brazilian Syndicalist Cooperativist Confederation. Labor organization headed by Sarandi Raposo in the early 1920's.
- Confederación Sindical Latino Americana (CSLA): Latin American Labor Union Confederation. Communist oriented, established in Montevideo, Uruguay, in the second half of May 1929.
- conto: unit of currency. One thousand mil-réis (1:000\$000). For converting to U.S. currency, see mil-réis.
- COOS. See Comitê Operário de Organização Sindical.

CSCB. See Confederação Sindicalista Cooperativista Brasileira.

CSLA. See Confederación Sindical Latino Americana.

*delegacia*: district police headquarters.

*delegado*: district police commissioner.

*delegado auxiliar*: assistant police commissioner. In Rio de Janeiro, the third *delegado auxiliar*, sometimes abbreviated third *delegado*, was in charge of repressing anarchism and Communism during the early 1920's. During the latter part of the 1920's this job was handled by the fourth *delegado auxiliar*.

Departamento Nacional do Povoamento: Department for Resettlement. Section of the Labor Ministry, established in 1930.

*deputado*: federal congressman.

ECCI: Executive Committee of the Communist International.

*fazenda*: landed estate.

*federação*: federation. A labor federation would frequently be geographically based, made up of labor unions in different realms of activity in one state.

On the other hand sometimes it would cover one particular realm of activity throughout Brazil, as was the case of the Federation of Graphic Workers, established in 1927 to include unions of graphic workers all over the country. Federação Operária de São Paulo: Labor Federation of São Paulo. Organized in 1905, and anarchist oriented. Revived by anarcho-syndicalists in 1931.

Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro (FTRJ): Federation of Workers of Rio de Janeiro. For background, see Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro. In 1923 the Communists associated with the FTRJ.

Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro (FORJ): Labor Federation of Rio de Janeiro. In 1906 this name was given to the anarchist-oriented organization that was established in the federal capital in 1903 as the Federação das Associações de Classe. In 1917, after it had been closed down by the police, it was succeeded by the União Geral dos Trabalhadores. The União, dissolved by the authorities in November 1918, was succeeded by the Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro. In 1923 the anarchists set up the Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro (FORJ), and their foes, the Communist unions, joined the Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro (FTRJ).

First International (International Workingmen's Association): established in London in 1864 and dominated by Karl Marx. Michael Bakunin and the anarchists ceased being associated with the First International in 1872. It died in 1876.

Fluminense: pertaining to the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Fontourista: of, or pertaining to, Marshal Carneiro da Fontoura, the police chief in Rio de Janeiro during the presidential administration of Artur Bernardes.

Força Militar: Rio de Janeiro State police force.

Força Pública: São Paulo State police force.

FORJ. See Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro.

FTRJ. See Federação dos Trabalhadores do Rio de Janeiro.

Gaúcho: pertaining to, or native of, Rio Grande do Sul (southernmost state).

Gávea: area in the southwest of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

*golpe*: coup.

*golpismo tenentista*: the making of a coup by *tenentes* (q.v.).

"Gordo Law, Adolfo": (1) Federal Decree 1,641, of January 1907, for expelling foreigners who "endanger the national security or public peace." (2)

Federal Decree 4,269, of January 1921, for punishing subversives. (3) Federal Decree 4,743, of October 1923, regulating the liberty of the press.

Guarda Civil: municipal guard.

Inprecorr: abbreviation for International Press Correspondence, periodical of the Communist International.

*intendente*: municipal councilman.

Internacional, A: São Paulo headquarters for workers in hotels, cafés, restaurants, and bars.

International. See First, Second International, and Communist International.

International Labor Bureau: an official international institution created by the 1919 peace treaties. During most of the 1920's its headquarters and conferences were in Geneva.

International Workers of the World (IWW): labor federation forged in the United States in 1905 by devotees of syndicalism, direct economic action, and industrial unionism. Decline occurred during the United States participation in World War I (1917-1918) and in the postwar years.

International Workingmen's Association: (1) the First International (1864-1876), established in London and administered by Karl Marx; (2) the organization, claiming to be the true successor of the 1864-1876 association, which was established when anarcho-syndicalists from a dozen countries met in Berlin in December 1922-January 1923.

*interventor*: administrator representing the federal government. The Vargas government, which took over in November 1930, appointed *interventores* to govern the states.

IWW. See International Workers of the World.

JC. See Juventude Comunista.

Junta Apuradora: a tribunal, made up of judges, to check election returns.

Junta Pacificadora (Pacifying Junta): government headed by three military men, which took over Brazil on October 24, 1930, with the fall of President Washington Luís, and, on November 3, 1930, turned over the administration of Brazil to the government headed by Getúlio Vargas.

Juventude Comunista (JC): Communist Youth. Organization for Communists under twenty-one years of age.

KIM: Communist International of Youth.

LAR. See Liga de Ação Revolucionária.

*lei celerada*: criminal law, name given to a law aimed at anarchists and Com-

- munists, which was introduced in Congress by Aníbal de Toledo and promulgated in August 1927.
- lei de sindicalização*: syndicalization law, decreed in March 1931, to foster the organization of syndicates of workers and of employers, in accordance with rules established by the Labor Ministry.
- libertarian: anarchist; opposed to all authority.
- liga*: league.
- Liga de Ação Revolucionária (LAR): League of Revolutionary Action, founded by Luís Carlos Prestes and three others in Buenos Aires in July 1930 to make a far-leftist revolution in Brazil.
- liga operária*: trade union or labor union.
- Light and Power Company (Rio de Janeiro): Rio de Janeiro Tramway, Light and Power Company, Limited, subsidiary of the Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Company (Canadian).
- Light and Power Company (São Paulo): São Paulo Tramway, Light and Power Company, Limited, subsidiary of the Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Company (Canadian).
- Lloyd Brasileiro: steamship company associated with the Brazilian government.
- Marcha da Fome: Hunger March.
- Maximalistas: a term used in Brazil to denote Bolsheviks, or those with the "maximum Social Democratic program."
- Maximistas: variation of the word Maximalistas.
- Menshevik: wing of the Russian Social Democratic Party, which was considered less radical than the Bolshevik wing.
- mil-réis: unit of currency. One mil-réis (a thousand réis—1\$000). During the presidency of Epitácio Pessoa (1919-1922), one U.S. dollar was worth about 4.3 mil-réis; during the presidency of Bernardes (1922-1926), one U.S. dollar was worth about 7.9 mil-réis; and during the presidency of Washington Luís, one U.S. dollar was worth about 8.3 mil-réis. (These figures are the averages for the periods covered by the administrations.)
- Mineiro: pertaining to, or native of, the state of Minas Gerais.
- Minimalistas: Brazilian term for the Mensheviks.
- Monroe Palace: meeting place of the federal Senate in Rio.
- obreirismo* (as practiced in 1932-1933): the despising of intellectuals and the emulation of the ways of the most backward workers.
- Pan American Federation of Labor: hemispheric confederation that was under the influence of the American Federation of Labor and was opposed by the Communists.
- Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCB): Communist Party of Brazil.
- Partido da Mocidade: Party of Youth. Members were not to be over thirty-five years of age. This opposition political party existed briefly in 1926 and in that year merged with the Partido Democrático de São Paulo.
- Partido Democrático (PD): political party founded as a state party in São

- Paulo in 1926; founded on a national basis in 1927 to oppose the dominating state Republican parties, especially those of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, which customarily supplied the presidents of Brazil.
- Partido Republicano Paulista (PRP): Republican party of São Paulo. Dominant party in the state of São Paulo during the Republic until 1930.
- Partido Socialista Brasileiro (PSB): Socialist party of Brazil. Over the years many PSB's were founded, only to disappear after very brief lives.
- Paulista: pertaining to, or native of, São Paulo.
- PCB: Partido Comunista do Brasil (Communist Party of Brazil).
- PD. See Partido Democrático.
- Plata region, La: area on the La Plata River, which separates Argentina and Uruguay.
- Politburo: Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Brazil. A powerful body of approximately five Central Committee members.
- Praça da Sé: square in downtown São Paulo.
- Praça Mauá: Mauá Square in downtown Rio de Janeiro.
- prestismo*: devotion to Luís Carlos Prestes.
- Profintern: Moscow-based Red International of Labor Unions, organized on May 1, 1921.
- PRP. See Partido Republicano Paulista.
- PSB. See Partido Socialista Brasileiro.
- Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern): organized in Moscow on May 1, 1921.
- Regional: abbreviation for the Communist-oriented União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil (Regional Union of Civil Construction Workers of the Rio de Janeiro area), established in 1928.
- réis: plural of real, a unit of currency. One thousand réis, the mil-réis, was the standard unit of currency (see also mil-réis).
- relator do pleito*: reporter (relator) of the dispute.
- São Cristóvão: industrial area in the city of Rio de Janeiro (to the west of the docks).
- Second International: a loose association of European Social Democratic parties, established in 1889. The war in Europe in 1914 ended the Second International's "war against war" and ended the Second International.
- Secretariado Sudamericano de la Internacional Comunista: South American Secretariat of the Communist International. Established in Buenos Aires in the mid-1920's by the Communist Party of Argentina at the request of the Communist International, the Secretariado moved to Montevideo in 1930. Before the establishment of the Secretariado, the Third International had a Propaganda Bureau for South America in Buenos Aires.
- sindicato*: labor union.
- sindicato de ofícios vários*: union of workers in various trades.

South American Secretariat (or Bureau) of the Communist International (Comintern). See Secretariado Sudamericano de la Internacional Comunista.  
soviet: council.

*tenentes*: literally lieutenants; specifically the army officers who participated in the movement that resulted in the revolutions of 1922, 1924, and 1930.

*tenentismo* (noun): rebellious action by *tenentes* prior to the overthrow of Washington Luís in 1930.

*tenentista* (adjective): of, or pertaining to, *tenentismo*.

Third Brazilian Labor Congress: held in Rio de Janeiro in April 1920. Anarcho-syndicalist oriented.

Third International. See Communist International.

Tiradentes Palace: meeting place of the federal Chamber of Deputies in Rio de Janeiro.

Twenty-one Conditions: conditions, listed at the Second World Congress of the Communist International (in 1920), to be accepted by all Communist parties of the world. They called for iron discipline and adherence to the decisions of the Communist International.

União dos Operários em Construção Civil (UOCC): Union of Civil Construction Workers of Rio de Janeiro. Anarchist-oriented union, established in 1919. Whenever the authorities acted against the independent, antigovernment, labor movement, they were particularly inclined to close down the UOCC.

União dos Trabalhadores do Livro e do Jornal (UTLJ): Union of Workers in Books and Newspapers. Established in Rio de Janeiro on January 1, 1931.

União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos (UTG): Union of Graphic Workers. In the 1920's both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro had UTG's.

*união profissional*: trade union.

União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil (UROCC): Communist-oriented Regional Union of Civil Construction Workers of the Rio de Janeiro area. Established in 1928; rival of the UOCC.

UOCC. See União dos Operários em Construção Civil.

UROCC. See União Regional dos Operários em Construção Civil.

UTG: União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos (Union of Graphic Workers). In the 1920's both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro had UTG's.

UTLJ. See União dos Trabalhadores do Livro e do Jornal.

*visitante*: the visiting representative of the Comintern's South American Secretariat in a certain area.

*viúvas alegres*: "merry widows"—police cars with sirens.

Wrangelite: follower of Russian anti-Bolshevik General Peter von Wrangel.

"Yellow" labor leaders: labor leaders with good relations with the government and the police. This term was applied to such leaders by those who had poor relations with the government and the police and who considered themselves Red.



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