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Workers and the Rise of Adhemarista Populism in São Paulo, Brazil 1945-47

JOHN D. FRENCH*

Contemporary polemicists and scholarly analysts agree that populism and demagoguery are inseparable. Yet the literature on twentieth-century Latin American politicians who labeled themselves populists leaves us with a perplexing paradox. While radical labor and the left hated them as “capitalist tools” who undermined working-class movements, these same populists have been detested by industrialists and conservatives as incubators, if not instigators, of subversion. The example of Adhemar de Barros allows us to explore this social ambiguity in order to clarify the link between populism and class mobilization.

Although he died in 1969, São Paulo’s formidable politician Adhemar de Barros remains a principal reference point in scholarly efforts to understand populism in postwar Brazil. Born into a family of politically active coffee planters, Adhemar’s career spanned the tumultuous transformations between the Revolution of 1930 and the military coup of 1964. Having served as chief state executive on three occasions (1938-41, 1947-50, 1962-66) and as mayor of the city of São Paulo between 1957 and 1961, Adhemar’s figure looms large in the political life of Brazil’s most populous and economically developed state. Adhemar was also an important force on the national scene, and his endorsement helped to assure the 1950 presidential election of Getúlio Vargas as candidate of Vargas’s Brazilian Labor party (PTB) and Adhemar’s Social Progressive party (PSP). Although primarily a regional figure, Adhemar’s subsequent presidential candidacies received significant national support (26 percent in 1955 and 19 percent in 1960), and his PSP was Brazil’s fourth largest party by the early 1960s.

Yet a generic and timeless vision has continued to dominate our under-

*The author thanks Thomas Skidmore, Michael Conniff and other participants in the 1986 AHA panel on Brazilian populism, and Richard Walter. Special thanks to Emília Viotti da Costa for her many incisive comments on earlier drafts of this material. The map of ABC was drawn by Jeff Welter.

standing of Adhemar de Barros, who, like his Paulista populist antipode Jânio Quadros, is most often remembered solely “as a demagogue without any sociological content.”¹ To date, there have been few efforts beyond several well-known contemporary critiques to grapple, however schematically, with the phenomenon of Adhemarismo.² While an excellent 1982 study by Regina Sampaio explored Adhemar’s political trajectory, the broader social meaning and historical significance of Adhemar and Adhemarista populism remains unexplored.³

Adhemar de Barros is best remembered as the epitome of the self-seeking, clientelistic populist who eschewed any ideological or programmatic emphasis in favor of whatever advanced his personal electoral, if not financial, interests. In a career spanning four decades, the pragmatic Adhemar could and did ally himself with just about every group at least twice. His unprincipled flexibility was dramatized for many by his 1947 election with Communist support, followed, within months, by a break with the Brazilian Communist party (PCB) and a large-scale repression of labor and the left. Having backed Getúlio Vargas in 1950, Adhemar nonetheless campaigned actively against the presidential candidates of the national coalition that expressed the Vargas legacy in 1955 and 1960. Yet his 1958 gubernatorial campaign led him to actively solicit and win *trabalhista* (PTB) and Communist support. This feint to the left was followed in 1962 by Adhemar’s return to the governorship of the state as the candidate of the anticommunist “forces of order.”⁴ In the years that followed, this prime beneficiary of the Populist Republic became a key actor in the conspiracies that brought an end to competitive electoral politics in March 1964. However, within two years Adhemar himself would fall victim to the military’s distrust and antipopulist animus. His political rights were cancelled in 1966 and he died in exile in Paris in 1969.⁵

1. Maria do Carmo Campello de Souza and Bolivar Lamounier, “Jânio, três momentos na vida de um político,” *Isto É*, 4 (1976), 55–57.

2. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, “Partidos e deputados em São Paulo (o voto e a representação política),” in *Partidos políticos e eleições no Brasil*, de Souza and Lamounier, eds. (Rio de Janeiro, 1975), 45, 50–52.

3. Regina Sampaio, *Adhemar de Barros e o PSP* (São Paulo, 1982). For biographical details, see also Israel Beloch and Alzira Alves de Abreu, eds., *Dicionário histórico-biográfico brasileiro, 1930–1983*, 4 vols. (Rio de Janeiro, 1984), I, 316–324. An analysis of a single example of Adhemar’s public discourse is provided in Guita Grin Debert, *Ideologia e populismo* (São Paulo, 1979), 29–69. Unfortunately, the author has chosen Adhemar’s conservative 1963 inaugural speech that does not reflect the more aggressive criticism of the status quo by his populist discourse in earlier periods.

4. On the dynamics of the statewide elections of 1954, 1958, and 1962, see Oliveiros S. Ferreira, “Comportamento eleitoral em São Paulo,” *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Políticos*, 8 (Apr. 1960), 162–228 and “A crise do poder do ‘sistema’ e as eleições paulistas de 1962,” *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Políticos*, 16 (Jan. 1964), 179–226.

5. Beloch and Abreu, eds., *Dicionário*, I, 324; Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics*:

There is remarkable agreement, spanning both the left and right, as to the major features of Adhemar's unquestioned political success. Having overseen many of the major public works of the 1940s, Adhemar was proud of his reputation as the "great doer" whose prodigious public spending lent substance to his image as the "accessible, generous, and good patriarch" of the people.⁶ At the same time, he is credited with being the great architect of a patronage-based political machine whose corruption, symbolized by his famous *caixinha* (cashbox), was only lightly masked.⁷

Observers are agreed that Adhemarismo is not to be understood primarily as a party phenomenon and its leader as a loyal party man. As his aides have always emphasized, Adhemar's PSP machine was above all a vehicle to build a broader and intensely personalistic appeal (Adhemarismo) that extended beyond party ranks.⁸ Thus, Adhemar appears to epitomize the conventional notion of a Latin American populist: a charismatic, paternalistic leader with a mass lower-class following or clientele, bound together by "the personalistic, particularistic ties" between the powerful leader and his "dependent followers."⁹

With an uncanny nose for the prevailing political winds, Adhemar seemed to his many opponents to be the essence of the dishonest huckster and scoundrel, a "charlatan messiah" who embodied the most negative connotations of the term populist. For the antipopulist middle and upper classes, Adhemar was a corrupt, sleazy, and immoral hack politician whose demagoguery fed on the ignorance and gullibility of the masses. For the Communists and other leftists, Adhemar was the unrelieved "demagogue," a reactionary who, using meaningless social verbiage, was nonetheless capable of filling the minds of the popular classes with "his showy ideas and never-to-be-fulfilled promises."¹⁰

Changing Patterns in Brazil (Princeton, 1971), 220; Peter Flynn, *Brazil: A Political Analysis* (Boulder, 1979), 341.

6. Francisco Weffort, "Raízes sociais do populismo em São Paulo," *Revista Civilização Brasileira*, 1:2 (May 1965), 39–60; Thomas Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930–1964* (New York, 1986), 68.

7. Flynn, *Brazil*, 144; Antônio Carlos Felix Nunes, *PC linha leste* (São Paulo, 1980), 37. A man with a great sense of humor, Adhemar and his supporters are alleged to have campaigned, half-jokingly, with the informal campaign slogan: "[H]e robs but he gets things done." Silas Cerqueira, "Brazil," in *Guide to the Political Parties of South America*, Jean Pierre Bernard et al., eds. (Harmondsworth, England, 1973), 19.

8. Cerqueira, "Brazil," 198; Robert J. Alexander, *Latin American Political Parties* (New York, 1973), 17; Mário Beni, *Adhemar* (São Paulo, 1973), 77, 80.

9. Paul Drake, *Socialism and Populism in Chile, 1932–1952* (Champaign-Urbana, 1978), 8; Steve Stein, *Populism in Peru: The Emergence of the Masses and the Politics of Social Control* (Madison, 1980), 14.

10. Weffort, "Raízes sociais"; Eduardo Dias, *Um imigrante e a revolução (memórias de um militante operário, 1934–1951)* (São Paulo, 1983). Elias Chaves Neto, a leading Communist intellectual, speaks of the "populist masses" who gave their support to Adhemar "in

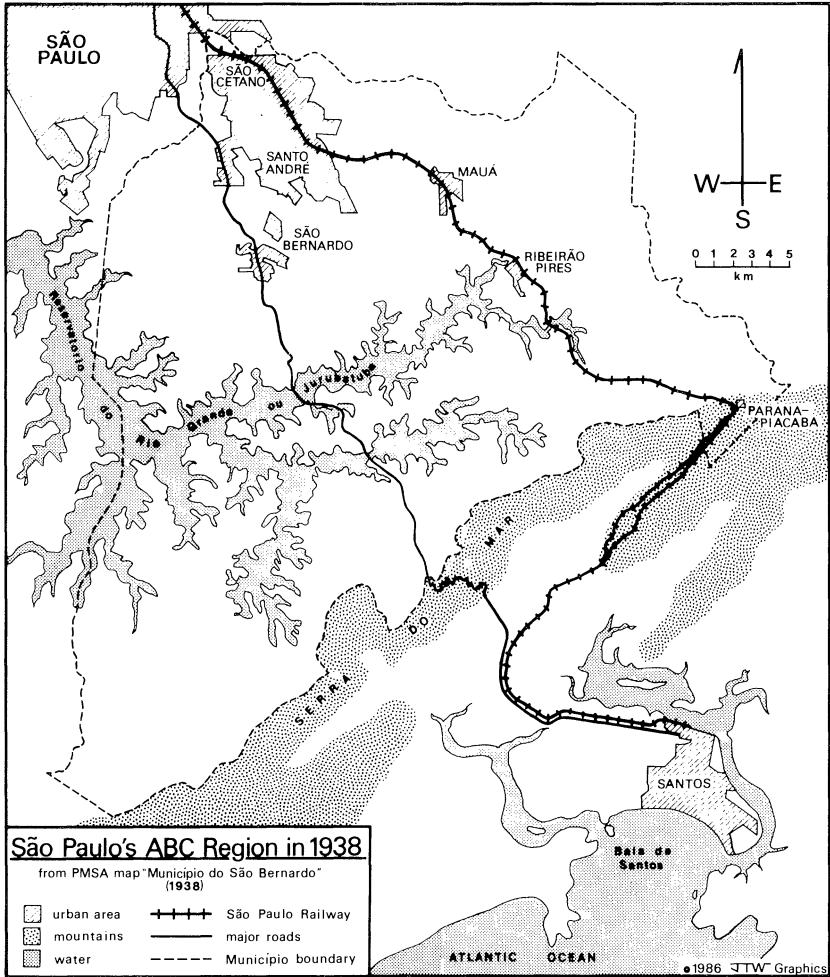
The scholarly interpretations of Adhemar's Brazilian contemporaries did not venture far beyond the prevailing left-of-center critique. In a 1954 essay, Hélio Jaguaribe interpreted Adhemarismo as "the political manifestation of the masses who persist as such, . . . [being] unable to achieve class consciousness." The same line of argument was developed further in a famous 1965 essay by Francisco Weffort. Weffort argued that both Adhemarista and Janista (Jânio Quadros) populism were instances where "the working class assumes the comportment of the masses," that is, of the "petty bourgeoisie."¹¹

As these rather abstract critiques suggest, Adhemar's "unprincipled opportunism," which is thought to make the man and his motives so easy to understand, has made the phenomenon of Adhemarismo a perplexing puzzle. It is therefore time to reject the prevailing terms of discussion that focus less on what Adhemarismo *was* than on what it *was not*. We must examine its historical trajectory and reject the notion of an unchanging essence of Adhemarismo that was the same in 1947, 1955, or 1962. Indeed, the very chameleon-like nature of Adhemar's politics demands that attention be focused on the prevailing social and political trends of each period that guided his actions.

This essay will examine specifically the year and a half between 1946 and 1947 that marked Adhemar's advent as a postwar populist and will seek to place his election in January 1947 as governor into its broader historical context: the transformation of Brazilian politics, especially in São Paulo, that resulted from the little-understood "populist gamble" of Getúlio Vargas in 1945. Throughout, Adhemar and other upper-class politicians will be looked at in terms of their relationship to the working class, the organized labor movement, and labor's main political expression of that period, the PCB—with examples drawn from the industrial ABC

exchange for favors, at times reduced to vain promises" (*Minha vida e as lutas de meu tempo* [São Paulo, 1977], 92). Cerqueira writes that Adhemar, to attract the votes, "made lavish use of patronage . . . [with] grossly exaggerated promises to the electorate in true demagogue style" ("Brazil," 200). Yet Adhemar and his associates could easily justify such election-eve promises as a natural part of the shift to mass politics in Brazil. Under these conditions, Beni noted that "the promise, although not always realized or realizable, became an obligatory theme, the dorsal spine of campaigns" (*Adhemar*, 46).

11. Hélio Jaguaribe, "Que é o adhemarismo?," *Cadernos de Nosso Tempo*, 2:2 (1954), 139–149; reprinted in *O pensamento nacionalista e os "Cadernos de nosso tempo"*, Simon Schwartzman, ed. (Brasília, 1981), 23–30; Weffort, "Raízes sociais." The fact that workers did vote for Adhemar on many occasions has led to these efforts to disqualify them as having a petty bourgeois mentality or to classify them, as Cerqueira does, as a "sub-proletariat" ("Brazil," 198). In a similar vein, another author has discussed Paulista populism as the "spontaneous reaction" of a working class "unable to go beyond its instinctive reactions" due to the absence of correct, revolutionary leadership. José Álvaro Moisés, *Greve de massa e crise política (estudo da greve dos 300 mil em São Paulo—1953–54)* (São Paulo, 1978), 66, 109, 111.



MAP 1

region (named after Santo André, São Bernardo do Campo, and São Caetano do Sul) of Greater São Paulo. Adhemar's election with PCB support, usually dismissed as merely a slick maneuver, will thus be shown to represent a major break in the long-established forms of upper-class political domination in São Paulo (see Map 1).¹²

12. A derisive treatment of the PCB's alliance with Adhemar goes back to the contemporary polemical literature. The North American cold warrior journalist Edward Tomlinson argued, for example, that by supporting Adhemar, the "arch-prototype of [the] grabbing capitalist," the Communists had revealed themselves as "the cynical opportunists they are" (Tomlinson, *Battle of the Hemisphere: Democracy vs. Totalitarianism in the Other America*

*Paulista Politics and the Dynamics
of Class Conflict, 1945–46*

The January 1947 defeat of the Paulista gubernatorial candidate of conservative President Eurico Dutra's Social Democratic party (PSD) by Adhemar de Barros was a logical consequence of Vargas's populist opening in 1945, during the disintegration of the Estado Novo dictatorship. Marginalized by the candidacies of two conservative military men in 1945, Vargas regained the initiative with a bold gamble that would alter the structure and terms of Brazilian politics.¹³ In May 1945, in slashing attacks on his enemies, Vargas issued a dramatic call to Brazil's industrial workers, urban laborers, and employees to actively enter the political arena in defense of their interests through his newly founded PTB.

To make this opening to urban workers bear fruit, Vargas had to unilaterally alter the terms of the upcoming election. The electoral legislation that emerged from Vargas's cabinet differed radically from earlier Brazilian laws and even from the recommendations of the committee Vargas himself had appointed in February 1945: in every aspect, it was systematically designed to effectively enfranchise the working class and favor urban over rural voter registration and electoral participation. Locked in conflict with his elite opponents, Vargas sought to prevent the return to political power of the conservative landed classes with their millions of dependent voters. As part of his effort to create an urban-industrial counterweight to the *coroneis* who still ruled the countryside, Vargas maintained the literacy requirement for suffrage, which discriminated against the rural population, while making voting obligatory for virtually all literate Brazilians (only women who did not work outside the home were free from a fine if they did not vote).¹⁴ Even more importantly, the new law

[New York, 1947], 66–67). A more recent history of the PCB fails to go much beyond this, merely citing the pact with Adhemar as an example “of the party’s traditional opportunism” (Ronald Chilcote, *The Brazilian Communist Party: Conflict and Integration, 1922–1972* [New York, 1974], 299, 301).

13. Recent research has dethroned the previous explanations of the coup that overthrew Getúlio Vargas in October 1945. See Oswaldo Trigueiro do Vale, *O General Dutra e a redemocratização de 1945* (Rio de Janeiro, 1978) and Stanley Hilton, “The Overthrow of Getúlio Vargas in 1945: Intervention, Defense of Democracy, or Political Retribution?,” *HAHR*, 67: 1 (Feb. 1987), 1–37. However, none have grasped the nature of Getúlio Vargas’s strategy in 1945 and its undoubted success. Indeed, Michael Conniff has incorrectly argued that Vargas rejected a populist strategy in Dec. 1944, and that Getúlio’s “continuing lack of nerve and grasp of populist strategy” led to failure in 1945 (*Urban Politics in Brazil: The Rise of Populism, 1925–1945* [Pittsburgh, 1982], 169–170). For fuller treatment of what I have called his “populist gamble” in 1945, see chap. 6 in John D. French, “Industrial Workers and the Origin of Populist Politics in the ABC Region of Greater São Paulo, Brazil 1900–1950” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1985).

14. For the first results of a wider study on women, the vote, and working-class mobi-

established an ex-officio group voter registration procedure specifically designed to favor urban areas.¹⁵

Vargas's ambitious and carefully crafted strategy was accompanied in late 1945 by a daring rhetoric of protest, presidential encouragement of popular mobilization (known as *queremismo* from "queremos Getúlio"), and an informal Getulista alliance with the newly legalized PCB of Luís Carlos Prestes. After the fears aroused among conservatives led to Vargas's ouster in October, few established politicians expected the Getulista victories that marked the elections of December 2, 1945. However, defying the elitist "common sense" of the traditional holders of power, Vargas had opened the way for the participation of millions of Brazilians from the urban popular classes in the affairs of politics. The electoral marketplace in 1945 was totally transformed, as participation increased from 10 percent of all adults in the 1930s to 33 percent in 1945, out of a total adult population that was about 50 percent literate.¹⁶

As intended, electoral participation increased most dramatically, by 400 to 500 percent, in the country's urban/industrial heartland. For the first time in Brazilian history, the state of São Paulo displaced Minas Gerais as having the nation's largest state contingent of voters. As the centers of Brazilian industry, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the national capital, also had the largest number of voters who were registered ex-officio. Fully 33 percent of the Paulista electorate had been so registered compared to only 15 percent for the less-developed state of Minas Gerais.¹⁷

Mass enfranchisement clearly meant that electoral politics were no longer the exclusive realm of traditional rural oligarchies. The new legislation also dramatically increased the clout of urban areas within a given

lization, see French, "Women and Popular Politics in Postwar São Paulo, Brazil," paper presented at the Fourth Latin American Labor History Conference, Apr. 18–19, 1987.

15. The little-studied ex-officio registration procedure has most often been depicted, as it was by Getúlio's opponents, as a form of "officialized fraud" that affected mainly government employees (de Souza, *Estado e partidos políticos no Brasil (1930–1964)* [São Paulo, 1976], 121; Maria D'Alva Gil Kinzo, *Representação política e sistema eleitoral no Brasil* [São Paulo, 1980], 81–82). In fact, the largest number of ex-officio voters came from factory payroll enrollments. The appropriate company official was required to submit a list of employees to an electoral judge, who returned the required electoral identification cards for distribution within the factory. Since the lists submitted did not have the signature of the applicant, many illiterate urban workers thus escaped disfranchisement despite the law's literacy provisions.

16. Gláucio Ary Dillon Soares, *Sociedade e política no Brasil: Desenvolvimento, classe e política durante a Segunda República* (São Paulo, 1973), 41.

17. Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (hereafter TSE), *Dados estatísticos* (Rio de Janeiro, 1950), I, 8; "1945: Resultado final do número de eleitores devidamente inscritos . . ." (unpublished document), Serviço de Informática, Tribunal Regional Eleitoral de São Paulo (hereafter TRE SP).

state. While holding less than one-third of the population, São Paulo's urban/industrial centers provided 44 and 48 percent of the total electoral turnout in 1945 and 1947. And half of the voters in these areas were registered ex-officio, compared to only one-fifth of the electorate from rural areas. The urban political scene itself was transformed by this expansion in participation. After dominating electoral politics for decades, ABC's politically active middle class found its small and narrow patronage networks overwhelmed by a mass of new working-class voters. From 6,000 voters in 1936, electoral participation in ABC jumped fivefold to 28,000 in December 1945. Not surprisingly, the conservative parties did poorly in ABC, garnering less than one-third of the total vote.

The 1945 election results in every major urban center of the state of São Paulo were startling in their uniformity, with the Labor and Communist parties receiving an absolute majority. In the ABC region, the two class-identified popular parties received a staggering 71 percent of the votes cast (compared to 32 percent on the state level). Yet modern urban/industrial areas differed most radically from the prevailing political norms in the degree of support given to the candidates of Luís Carlos Prestes's Communist party. The PCB's presidential candidate Yedo Fiuza came in first in the legendary "red port" city of Santos, tied for second place with Brigadeiro Eduardo Gomes of the National Democratic Union (UDN) in the capital, and beat the UDN's candidate in both the textile city of Sorocaba and the ABC region.¹⁸

"The year 1945," as Aziz Simão wrote in 1956, marked "the entrance in mass of workers into electoral disputes [in São Paulo] and of the weight of their votes in deciding the results of the elections."¹⁹ Nor was working-class activism in industrial regions like ABC restricted to the voting booth. Working-class anger, protest, and hope also revitalized the trade unions and spurred, within a month of their electoral victory of December 1945, a strike wave of 100,000 in metropolitan São Paulo that surpassed the famous mobilizations of 1917 and 1919. In 1945, Brazil's military, economic, and political establishment had seemed impotent to hold back the popular tide. As the new republic began to take form, the urban popular classes enjoyed a freedom of expression and organization the breadth and vigor of which were unknown in the nation's history.

18. For a fuller discussion of the political and trade union events of 1945–47, see French, "Industrial Workers," chaps. 6–9. For a summary of the grass-roots dynamics of working-class militancy, see French, "Industrial Workers and the Birth of the Populist Republic, 1945–1946," paper presented to the Latin American Studies Association meeting, Oct. 23–25, 1986.

19. Aziz Simão, "O voto operário em São Paulo," *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Políticos* 1:1 (Dec. 1956), 130–141.

President Dutra and his powerful backers remained convinced, however, that the more vigorous reassertion of discipline and order would put the genie unleashed in 1945 back in the bottle. Similarly, São Paulo's industrial employers, backed by the PSD at the national and state level, pursued a vigorously repressive policy in 1946 designed to demobilize the newly militant trade unionism. In the aftermath of the strikes of early 1946, they set out to purge their factories of union activists while encouraging police harassment of labor and the left, and government intervention in the trade unions. All this was wholly typical of the attitude of Brazil's political and economic establishment as a whole: the more visionary leadership offered by Vargas and Labor Minister Alexandre Marcondes Filho during the last years of World War II had not converted the majority of business and governmental leaders. While the latter behaved with exquisite etiquette toward one another, their power over the masses was exercised with a customary, if ill-advised, crudeness.

Throughout 1946, the Dutra government continued its heated denunciations of "communism," which was increasingly equated with the newly aggressive grass-roots trade unions. Official hostility to trade unionism became even more open as 1946 came to a close, on both the federal and state levels. In October, Dutra named an open advocate of a crackdown on labor, the Paulista industrialist Morvan Dias Figueiredo, as his new labor minister. In São Paulo, Dutra's PSD Interventor Macedo Soares placed the State Labor Department (DET) in the hands of a notoriously antilabor former police *delegado* from ABC, the repressive official of the political-social police (DOPS) Eduardo Gabriel Saad.²⁰

The intent of Brazil's governing elite was transparent, and one result was a strengthening of ties between ABC's emerging left/center labor leadership, including the PCB, and its working-class constituents. Determined to bar a return to a past they so thoroughly rejected, the leaders and members of São Paulo's revitalized unions elaborated policies for a mass trade unionism independent of the hostile federal government under Dutra.²¹ At the state level, they had a clear and immediate interest in seeing the PSD ousted from the executive branch in São Paulo while electing as many labor state deputies as possible.

Labor's potential for political influence in São Paulo had greatly increased since the oligarchic First Republic (1891–1930). At that time,

20. *Jornal de São Caetano*, Nov. 10, 1946.

21. This treatment of the policies of the postwar left/center labor movement diverges from previous characterizations of "populist unionism" by Weffort, "Origens do sindicalismo populista no Brasil," *Estudos CEBRAP*, 4 (Apr.–June 1973). For more, see French, "Industrial Workers," chaps. 6–8; Ricardo Maranhão, *Sindicatos e democratização (Brasil 1945/1950)* (São Paulo, 1979); and the superb study of gold miners in Minas Gerais by Yonne de Souza Grossi, *Mina de Morro Velho, a extração do homem* (Rio de Janeiro, 1981).

labor's prospects for any state-level alliance had been nil, given the integration of the political and economic power under conditions of unchallenged one-party rule.²² Overturning Paulista domination of national politics, the Revolution of 1930 led to the first courting of urban workers by chief executives appointed by Getúlio Vargas. This relationship, however, was more a function of the regime's conflict with São Paulo's ruling groups than of labor pressure. Despite the rhetoric of interventors in the early 30s, these ties were not defined by working-class leaders since labor had no real leverage, a situation that continued during the *Estado Novo*.

The representative democratic system of the postwar period offered, for the first time, the possibility for labor to advance its interests by electoral means, working through the PTB and PCB. In both *trabalhista* and Communist variants, the labor-oriented parties of postwar São Paulo had decided advantages over the fragile organizations of the previous decade. Not only was Paulista trade unionism immeasurably more massive, firmly rooted, and powerful, but this successful economic organization went hand in hand with an unprecedented degree of political unity among urban workers. When they surveyed the political scene in late 1946, furthermore, labor leaders had grounds for optimism, because almost half of the Paulista electorate was now located in the six industrial cities that were the center of trade union strength. As election fever grew, the state labor movement hoped to punish its enemies and guarantee election of a candidate sympathetic to its interests. Although defensive in origin, the unions' political initiatives were also an offensive effort to alter the political environment in which future collective bargaining would take place.

For the Communist party, the approaching elections were crucial because of the looming threat of being outlawed by the government. A favorable outcome in São Paulo might determine whether their formidable organization there could survive such an adverse development. Too small to aspire to the governorship for one of its own, the PCB watched as Paulista politicians went through a dizzying routine of negotiations, rumored deals, and betrayals between and within each party.²³ With 180,000 Paulista voters in 1945 and 60,000 members in the state, the Communist movement represented a new and potentially decisive element in the electoral calculations of these aspirants to state office. To increase its leverage,

22. On the relationship between workers and the state government in São Paulo between 1900 and 1945, see French, "Industrial Workers," chaps. 1–5. The Paulista case stands in marked contrast to the situation in the federal capital of Rio de Janeiro where the absence of a rural vote and an expanded franchise led to populist-style political and electoral mobilizations of workers as far back as the 1890s. Indeed, Rio pioneered in the emergence of both populism and a more sophisticated and conciliatory statecraft toward labor long before 1930.

23. Cecil M. P. Cross to Paul C. Daniels, Nov. 6, Dec. 2, 1946, U.S. Consulate in São Paulo, Brazil, Record Group 84, United States National Archives (hereafter USNA).

the PCB did not include a gubernatorial candidate on the slates that it filed on October 19, 1946, and did not make an endorsement until two weeks before the January 1947 election.²⁴ The final line-up in the gubernatorial race included two traditional candidates, Mário Tavares of the PSD and the UDN's Antônio de Almeida Prado, and two figures oriented towards the newly enfranchised popular sectors: the *trabalhista* Hugo Borghi and Adhemar de Barros.

The conservative PSD of State Interventor Macedo Soares was the only party that showed no interest in negotiating with Communists. Its repressive course toward labor indicated the interventor's belief in the traditional power of incumbency. To willingly alienate a large block of urban voters, PSD strategists must have been confident of electoral support from the state's rural *coroneis*. Generations of boss rule on the state level had proven to their satisfaction that the incumbents who controlled the state and local governments never lost when elections had to be held.

The state's political and economic establishment thus demonstrated little insight into the political changes of the past year that had emboldened urban workers. The direct gubernatorial elections of 1947 would not be based on the restricted suffrage and fraud that sustained boss rule in the First Republic. And unlike its predecessors during the '30s and early '40s, the Paulista PSD faced the prospect of popular electoral retribution for the antilabor policies it had openly pursued over the previous year.

In urban-industrial areas like Santo André, appointed PSD *prefeitos* like José de Carvalho Sobrinho also had to contend with the continuing climate of ill will generated by the high cost of living (*carestia*), the black market (*cambio negro*), and the monopolization (*açambarcamento*) of essential goods. Popular anger focused on the incumbent municipal administrations held by the PSD which were entrusted with the thankless task of rationing essential foodstuffs and other goods.²⁵

A popular explosion was widely expected, and the PCB and its allied organizations sought to give this discontent an organized form with marches and protest demonstrations. Yet the Communists were not alone in their efforts to use the issue of *carestia* for political gain.²⁶ Industrialists from the district of São Caetano opened two provisioning posts in the district in an ambitious effort to win votes through alleviating the problem. For the manager of the Cerâmica São Caetano, Armando Arruda Pereira,

24. Processo 8b (1946), TRE SP.

25. For the functioning of the rationing and price control machinery, see Associação Commercial e Industrial de Santo André, *Anais*, III, passim; *Diário de São Paulo*, Jan. 14, 1947; *Borda do Campo*, May 12 and 19, Aug. 11, 1946.

26. *Hoje*, July 15, Aug. 28, Sept. 3 and 14, 1946; *O Imparcial*, July 13, 1946; *Jornal de São Caetano*, Aug. 18, 1946; *Borda do Campo*, Aug. 25, 1946.

the motivation was straightforward, since he and Roberto Simonsen, the owner of the enterprise, were PSD candidates for state deputy and federal senator, respectively.²⁷

Simonsen's heavily financed campaign made highly visible, if awkward, efforts to win popular support throughout ABC. An advertisement in the *Jornal de São Caetano*, for example, declared, "Worker, your vote belongs to Roberto Simonsen and Armando de Arruda Pereira."²⁸ The propaganda for the PSD gubernatorial candidate Mário Tavares was equally inept and lacked the popular touch. Some proudly hailed his service in the government of the last Partido Republicano Paulista (PRP) president of the First Republic, the Paulista Washington Luís, deposed by Vargas in 1930. Another advertisement hailed the PSD candidate as "the symbol of São Paulo against Communism."²⁹

The PSD's difficulties might have provided the opposition UDN, the state's second largest party, with a golden opportunity to overcome its minority status. The supporters of Brigadeiro Eduardo Gomes had long denounced the "regime of chronic hunger" caused by Getulismo and the Estado Novo. Moreover, socialist and communist intellectuals had helped to found the UDN. Yet like the PSD, the state UDN nominated a highly respectable politician of impeccable credentials and little popular appeal, Antônio de Almeida Prado, a liberal professor of medicine at the University of São Paulo.

In opening his campaign, Almeida Prado showed an acute intellectual awareness of the crisis of his style of Brazilian liberalism. The people, he said, in a hurried judgment in December 1945, had unjustly perceived the UDN's presidential candidate Brigadeiro Gomes as "a plutocrat . . . [and] an exponent of the refined classes remote from the working and humble masses."³⁰ Yet the state UDN and its candidate were to prove incapable of moving beyond the restricted social boundaries of their 1945 electorate. For all his sympathy, this intellectual advocate of a reformist and mildly socialistic liberalism still spoke of the workers as the "others." Does not

27. *Borda do Campo*, Sept. 22, Oct. 20, Nov. 10 and 24, Dec. 22, 1946; *Hoje*, Sept. 10, 1946, Feb. 20, 1947.

28. *Folha da Manhã*, Jan. 15, 1947; *Diário de São Paulo*, Jan. 3, 1947; *Hoje*, June 28, 1946; *Jornal de São Caetano*, Jan. 12, 1946. In 1954, a Paulista sociologist described these efforts by the PSD's men of industry to win urban votes in the postwar period. Like rural *coroneis*, "the great industrialist has around him a court of dependents who support him; not the workers, but all of the interests that have come to depend on him through his multiple business affairs." Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, "Contribuição para o estudo da sociologia política no Brasil," in *Anais do I Congresso Brasileiro de Sociologia* (São Paulo, 1955), 227.

29. *Jornal de São Caetano*, Jan. 12, Dec. 22, 1946; *Folha da Manhã*, Jan. 18, 1947.

30. Antônio de Almeida Prado, *Jornada de democracia: Discursos pronunciados na campanha eleitoral como candidato ao cargo de governador do estado de São Paulo* (São Paulo, 1948), 6.

the fault for the 1945 defeat, he asked, lie with those of us who failed to provide *them* with education, exploited their ingenuousness, and failed to fulfill our promises? We must, he declared, “give up, without reserve and with our heart in our hands, a little of that which our privileges have granted us.”³¹

However irritating Almeida Prado’s sense of noblesse oblige may have been, the Communists had by no means ruled out the possibility of supporting the candidate of the state’s second largest party. Negotiations continued until the first days of January, when the state UDN leadership finally decided not to match the latest competing offer made to the PCB. This failure to effect a PCB-UDN alliance involved far more, however, than the mere breakdown of the negotiating process; it also involved questions of tactics and purpose.³²

Almeida Prado was trying to confront a sense of loss and confusion shared by his stratum of São Paulo’s high intelligentsia. The exodus from the interior to the capital, he said, brought with it far more than just the “abandonment of agriculture” and urban overcrowding. This migration unleashed a whole series of “social and economic maladjustments,” such as “the housing crisis, strikes, popular agitations, [and] all sorts of unrest and disturbances.”³³ While recognizing that it was impossible to stop these processes, Almeida Prado understood the threat they posed to the role that his group of native-born Paulista intellectuals had played in the past.³⁴ Faced with an agonizing choice, this group sought to stand aside from the dramatic confrontations around them. “In an epoch agitated by the most violent and controversial social demands,” Almeida Prado said in his last speech of the campaign, “when all the classes have risen, attacking each other, fighting for their rights, it is extremely difficult for a statesman who does not wish to exploit any sentiment of hate on his behalf.”³⁵

The lesson of postwar politics demonstrated, however, that not everyone was willing to forsake the political advantages to be gained from existing social cleavages. In Almeida Prado’s eyes, a new type of politician, “disreputable and irresponsible,” had erupted onto the scene—populists such as Getúlio Vargas, Hugo Borghi, and Adhemar de Barros. These “unscrupulous adventurers” and “demagogues,” he complained, have turned

31. *Ibid.*, 86, 90.

32. Aureliano Leite, *Páginas de uma longa vida* (São Paulo, n.d.), 367–368; *Diário de São Paulo*, Jan. 5 and 11, 1947; Almeida Prado, *Jornada*, 81–82; Herbert Levy, *Problemas básicos da nação* (São Paulo, 1950), 36.

33. Almeida Prado, *Jornada*, 33.

34. *Ibid.*, 90–92. Sergio Miceli has explored the historical background of this Paulista “fraction [whose members] specialized in political, technical, and cultural work.” *Intelectuais e classe dirigente no Brasil (1920–1945)* (São Paulo, 1979), 2, 6.

35. Almeida Prado, *Jornada*, 81–82.

the people into “a faithful flock of sheep.” Speaking in “the simplicity of their language and needs,” they promised the people “everything to which they aspire.”³⁶ The competing gubernatorial candidacies of *trabalhista* Hugo Borghi and Adhemar de Barros for the new PSP were an affront to the elitist sense of political propriety shared by supporters of the PSD and UDN. The shocking characteristic of these controversial politicians had nothing to do, however, with their social origin or upbringing. Hugo Borghi was an industrialist, banker, and cotton speculator, while Adhemar de Barros was the son of a politically well-connected family of coffee planters active in the PRP.³⁷ Educated as a medical doctor, Adhemar was involved in numerous entrepreneurial ventures including several factories.

Having established himself as São Paulo’s most visible PTB leader, the flamboyant federal deputy Hugo Borghi represented a formidable threat to the PSD’s Mário Tavares and the UDN’s Almeida Prado. As financier of the *queremista* movement in 1945, the controversial Borghi had been a key speaker at the climactic October 3, 1945 rally in Rio de Janeiro where 100,000 demonstrators had called on Getúlio Vargas to become a presidential candidate.³⁸ An aggressive personality, Borghi responded with vigor to the avalanche of hostile propaganda to which he was subject as the personification of Getulista “corruption.” With a sense for the dramatic, Borghi had launched his propaganda assault in 1945 by charging that the UDN’s Brigadeiro Gomes disdained the votes of the working class; and with personal interests at stake, he had also been an early and consistent advocate of Vargas’s endorsement of Dutra’s candidacy in November 1945.³⁹

Like the PSD industrialist Roberto Simonsen, Borghi used his personal financial resources and connections to the maximum. Since the PTB lacked a São Paulo newspaper, Borghi’s radio station became the party’s most important means of communicating with its urban constituency. As president of São Paulo’s Rádio Clube, Borghi arranged for the nomination of the station’s director, Gabriel Migliore, on the PTB slate for state

36. *Ibid.*, 86–87, 126.

37. On Borghi, see Gastão Pereira da Silva, *Constituintes de 1946: Dados biográficos* (Rio de Janeiro, 1947), 227–228. For a summary of Borghi’s views as expressed to U.S. diplomatic representatives, see Cross to Daniels, Oct. 16, 1946, U.S. Consulate in São Paulo, Record Group 84, USNA.

38. While denying that Borghi’s monetary support for the PTB was as extensive as claimed, national PTB leader Baeta Neves admitted in 1947 that some funds had been received from companies controlled by Borghi in 1945. “Weekly Labor Notes,” 11, Apr. 1947, by Labor Attaché Edward J. Rowell, U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Record Group 84, USNA.

39. Hélio Silva, *1945: Porque depuseram Vargas* (Rio de Janeiro, 1976), 142, 276–277, 286, 289.

assembly in 1947. Like Simonsen and Arruda Pereira, Borghi also sought votes in Santo André by establishing a food distribution post of his Popular Provisioning Tents of the Workers of Brazil in November 1946.⁴⁰

As the Paulista personification of *trabalhismo*, Borghi had no opponents for the gubernatorial nomination of the PTB. Yet his ambitions went beyond what Vargas and the national PTB were willing to countenance, so they cancelled the state PTB *diretório* that had registered Borghi's candidacy. On the eve of the January 1947 election, the Supreme Electoral Court upheld the national PTB's position against Borghi.⁴¹ By then, however, his candidacy had momentum, and he received PTB votes despite his formal registration as the nominee of the newly formed National Labor party (PTN).

While this PTB factional conflict was of little significance at the mass level, Borghi's *trabalhista* candidacy was unlikely to win the support of the Communists despite their cooperation with the *queremista* movement in 1945. Deteriorating relations between the PTB and the PCB reflected the bitter trade union conflicts that pitted the PTB's rightist union leaders against the left/center forces allied with the PCB.⁴² While the exact course of the negotiations is unclear, the PCB apparently ruled out the *trabalhista* option at an early point. Thus, 20 days before the election, the PCB was engaged in negotiations only with the UDN—and with a small party, the PSP, that belonged to a competing candidate Adhemar de Barros, another one-time protege of Vargas.

A reluctant backer of Brigadeiro Gomes in 1945, Adhemar was isolated from the major currents of postwar Paulista politics because of his role as Vargas's interventor in São Paulo during the Estado Novo. Ousted by Vargas in 1941, Adhemar was unwelcome in the PTB, while the Paulista PSD was led by former members of the traditional PRP irritated by his independence and antiparty behavior as interventor. For the anti-Getulista UDN,

40. Pereira da Silva, *Constituintes*, 228; *Folha do Povo*, June 19, 1953; Processo 8746/46, Prefeitura Municipal de Santo André. For more information on the politics of radio, see French, "The Communications Revolution: Radio and Working-Class Life and Culture in Postwar São Paulo, Brazil," paper presented at the Third Yale Conference on Latin American Labor History, Apr. 18–19, 1986.

41. Sampaio, *Adhemar*, 53; *Hoje*, Nov. 28, 1946; *O Estado de São Paulo* (hereafter *ESP*), Jan. 10, 1947.

42. While having enormous appeal to Paulista workers at the ballot box, the PTB had little success as a functioning organization at the grass roots in industrial areas like ABC, unlike the Communists. Within the labor movement, the party's fate was linked to an unpopular faction of union leaders (the so-called *pelegos*) who had flourished under the uncompetitive conditions of the Estado Novo. Fearing a threat to their positions, this labor right collaborated with employers and the government against the new currents in labor represented by the Communists and the left, as well as the center forces, the large number of Getulista unionists who nonetheless favored greater working-class militancy.

which in São Paulo also inherited the tradition of the anti-PRP Democratic party, Adhemar's past association with Vargas (and earlier with the PRP as well) was sufficient to keep him marginalized within their party.⁴³

In September 1945, Adhemar formed the Republican Progressive party, based on the ties in the interior which he had cultivated as interventor. In June 1946, he merged his skeletal organization with two other tiny parties, the National Union party and the National Agrarian party to found the PSP as the vehicle for his candidacy for the governorship of São Paulo.⁴⁴ An improbable candidate, Adhemar nonetheless saw the electoral possibilities to be had by exploiting the clash of the elite parties, UDN and PSD, in the interior, and the bitter rivalry of the PTB and PCB in the cities.

*Adhemar's Search for Urban Allies: Populists and
Communists in the Elections of January 1947*

Adhemar drew important lessons from the failure of the UDN's "campaign of the white handkerchiefs" in 1945. Single-mindedly devoted to returning to the post of Paulista chief executive, he was realistic enough to recognize that a triumphant return could not be based solely on support from the interior of the state. The experience of 1945 convinced him of the need to penetrate urban areas, and he quickly realized that a radically new and pragmatic approach was needed to compete successfully in the urban electoral marketplace.

A man of enormous ambition, Adhemar was willing to take great risks in pursuit of the main prize. Although a product of the conservative PRP and the Estado Novo dictatorship, he had positioned himself to the left of center in the immediate postwar period. When Communists in ABC and elsewhere were jailed following the October 29, 1945 coup against Getúlio Vargas, Adhemar announced his support for the continued legality of the PCB. Over the next year, Adhemar's PSP would also cosponsor and participate in many activities with the PCB.⁴⁵

Adhemar quite correctly perceived that the control of the established urban "political class," as exercised by the PSD and UDN, would yield far less in electoral terms than in the past—a conclusion strengthened by the results of the 1945 voting. In early 1946, Adhemar began to seek out other leaders in urban areas, however unconventional, who could demonstrate any degree of popular support. Unlike the UDN's Almeida Prado, he was fully willing to exploit the hostilities generated by various sorts of social

43. Sampaio, *Adhemar*, 49–51.

44. Processos 4, 6, 9 (1945), TRE SP.

45. *Hoje*, Nov. 4, 1945 and Feb. 27, Sept. 27, 1946.

cleavages, as he did in the ABC municípios of São Bernardo do Campo and Santo André.

Although it was less urbanized than the rest of ABC, São Bernardo's 18,000 residents had also suffered from black marketeering and shortages of essentials such as sugar, lard, cooking oil, and soap. The ongoing provisioning crisis in 1946 gave rise to a charismatic leader, the dynamic and pugnacious 27-year-old Tereza Delta, who to this day remains a controversial figure in local history. Known to her partisans as the Joan of Arc of São Bernardo, she was attacked as an irresponsible and demagogic carpetbagger by the local establishment.

A native of the state capital, Delta was born to a single mother and married and separated at an early age before opening the Delta Beauty Institute. She eventually went to live with the owner of the neighboring Castro House of Sewing Machines and in 1943 moved to São Bernardo where her companion had business connections. Delta quickly established a reputation as a pretty and unpredictably brash young woman prepared to take on anything and anybody.⁴⁶ On Monday, August 5, 1946, she led a protest march to the São Bernardo *prefeitura municipal* (city hall). Anticipating trouble, police had already been posted at the *prefeitura* and the bigger local shops. The crowd of angry housewives, their children, and some local workers were confronted by the local police *delegado* who displayed orders banning the parade. With tempers rising, PSD *Prefeito* Wallace Cockrane Simonsen finally agreed to meet a small delegation if the crowd would disperse.⁴⁷

In the meeting, *Prefeito* Simonsen argued that the problem was beyond his control, while denying the committee's right to speak for the people. The wealthy São Paulo banker, landowner, and industrialist was unprepared for what followed. Hundreds of workers from local factories took their lunch breaks on the streets and resolved not to return to work until the committee's demands had been met. With these additional demonstrators, the crowds began to systematically canvass the local shopkeepers, demanding that they display all of their stocks and sell them at the official price. Intimidated, merchants hastened to produce some scarce products, while those without invited the crowd to search their premises.

For the small, peaceful village of São Bernardo, the events of August 1946 were unprecedented—guarded in the local memory as a veritable upheaval that marked an epoch. Indeed, São Bernardo's traditional way of life was already undergoing rapid change in 1946 with the construction

46. "Dados biográficos dos prefeitos de São Bernardo do Campo," Banco de Dados, Prefeitura Municipal de São Bernardo do Campo; Atílio Pessotti, *Vila de São Bernardo* (São Bernardo, 1981), 108–109.

47. *Hoje*, Aug. 6 and 7, 1946.

of Brazil's largest and most ambitious highway project, the Via Anchieta from São Paulo to Santos. Initiated when Adhemar de Barros was intervenor, the Anchieta had destabilized the social hierarchy of São Bernardo by bringing several thousand construction laborers to the region. Scattered in camps along the highway's route, they were largely recruited from Minas Gerais and the northeast region of Brazil.⁴⁸ They were also active participants in the August turbulence, and they were central to Delta's emerging constituency. Without established ties in São Paulo, the laborers on the Anchieta lived in makeshift camps and were subject to arbitrary treatment by the State Department of Roads.⁴⁹ Unskilled, poor, and often darker skinned, they were the object of disdain by long-time residents, including the skilled local furniture makers. Their local reception reflected the gap between São Bernardo's cohesive and rather conservative community of the past and these migrant laborers, carriers of new problems and difficulties.

The Communists had been quick to realize the political potential of the São Bernardo movement which they hailed as the state's first "general strike against hunger."⁵⁰ Although the first to court Delta, however, the PCB did not remain alone in seeking her support. In the latter part of 1946, Adhemar de Barros approached Delta with an eminently practical proposal: a future appointment as *prefeita* of São Bernardo in exchange for persuading her popular following to vote for him. In doing this, Adhemar coopted an insurgent local leadership without concern for the normal proprieties of elite politics or the established norms of respectability among the "conservative classes."

Tereza Delta, on her part, is the epitome of many established ideas about populism and populist politicians. Demonstrating great personal courage, she used a militant but nonclass rhetoric that cast the people against the villains. While avoiding any systemic critique, Delta focused her attacks against merchants far more than employers. This strategy avoided any emphasis on class struggle in favor of a mobilization based on the general populace as consumers. A "courageous fighter for the cause of the humble ones," Delta also maintained the sort of patron-client relationship with her supporters that has often been described in the literature on populism. Of recent rural origin, Delta's supporters were highly vulnerable to abuse and found in her the sort of patron they were looking for. While the Communists sought to politicize popular anger and direct

48. Ademir Medici, *São Bernardo, seus bairros, sua gente* (São Bernardo, 1981), 84–90; interview by the author with Raymundo Nonato da Silva, São Bernardo do Campo, July 29, 1982.

49. *Hoje*, Aug. 22, 1946 and Mar. 3, 1947.

50. *Ibid.*, Aug. 7, 1946.

it against the PSD interventor, Macedo Soares, the tone of the protest was best captured by a worker who complained that “no one takes the side of the people; no government authority, that is.”⁵¹

Yet the aptness of an illustration such as Tereza Delta has too often led scholars to ignore the variability of the populist phenomenon at the grass roots. If the São Bernardo case stands at one end of a continuum, very different populist dynamics can be found at the other end in the more heavily industrialized districts of Santo André and São Caetano do Sul. With a population of 100,000, they represented a far greater challenge for Adhemar de Barros, given the preexisting political and trade union mobilization of their 40,000 factory workers.

In Santo André, Adhemar could count on a small but experienced group of supporters, affiliated with his own political party, who, although electorally insignificant, were more open to the new political realities than any other group within the local political class. “A new world is being born” in the agitations of the postwar period, their second vice-president wrote in February 1946. “The old ideas, prejudices, and injustices are tumbling down.” While “disillusioned statesmen find themselves at an impasse,” he concluded, “only the aristocracy of money remains unshakable and without understanding, immune to the red injunctions of the present.”⁵²

The consciously innovative stance of this small middle-class faction, willing to court the Communists and labor, is exemplified by its Santo André party president, the 43-year-old Antônio Braga. Active in the local PRP in Ribeirão Pires before 1930, Braga had served as a city councilman in Santo André from 1936 to 1937 and remained politically active throughout the Estado Novo. Associated with the outgroup within the political class that opposed the appointed *Prefeito* Carvalho Sobrinho, the local newspaper of Braga’s faction, *O Imparcial*, was confiscated by censors in 1943, and several of its journalists were briefly imprisoned by the police.

Since 1940, Antônio Braga had owned a small pharmaceutical laboratory, which employed ten workers in 1945. A visit by an Uruguayan trade union leader, the Communist Enrique Rodríguez, provided this small industrialist with his first opportunity to radically distinguish himself from his fellow employers and their political allies. On January 9, 1946, he published an article in the Communist newspaper, *Hoje*, in which he discussed his favorable impressions of the meeting.⁵³ Braga reported that some workers viewed him with a certain distrust and others with curiosity,

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Diário de São Paulo*, Nov. 25, 1945; Edmundo Soares de Souza, “Gênese da hora que passa,” *O Imparcial*, Feb. 16, 1946.

53. *Hoje*, Jan. 9, 1946.

intrigued at the paradox of an industrialist attending a meeting to discuss “genuinely working-class interests, notably unionism,” the “bugbear” of his fellow employers. Decrying the typical employers’ “unbridled ambition and greedy spirit,” he denounced the “false thinking and inhospitable pride” that led them to oppose the just demands and “perfectly rational and profoundly human aspirations” of their workers.

Braga combined this carefully crafted rhetoric with an open admission of truths about employer-employee relations that must have easily won the approval of *Hoje’s* readers. Describing a “sad and revolting truth” about the labor justice system, Braga said that many “bosses prefer to spend ‘one hundred’ on able lawyers so as not to pay ‘ten’ to the worker who demands it with reason.” Braga eschewed the condescending tone that infected the discourse of *UDNistas* like Almeida Prado, and flatly rejected the use of terms such as “philanthropy, altruism, or charity” that only increased “the vanity of the rich.”⁵⁴ He emphasized the need to make the ideals of equity, justice, and, above all, fraternity a reality, and concluded that it was simple justice to give the workers a little of what they were owed.

Braga’s discourse offered an alternative to the left’s rhetoric of class struggle, the PSD’s overtly anticommunist, antiworker polemics, and the elitist condescension of Almeida Prado. In both tone and stance, Braga’s rhetoric also presented a striking contrast to his fellow Adhemarista in São Bernardo, Tereza Delta. The astute Braga avoided depicting himself as the workers’ patron, while his more substantive discourse went beyond Delta’s simple oppositions of good and evil men. Accepting equality of the parties involved at least at the level of rhetoric, Braga and his group proposed a partnership between themselves and workers who now possessed something that these professional politicians needed: their votes.

From the point of view of Santo André’s Communist party, which had a third of the local vote, Antônio Braga’s remarks, while flattering, served at most to illustrate the feasibility of the party policy of “national union.” They no doubt facilitated the PCB’s eventual alliance with the PSP in January 1947, but there was no evidence of any mass response to or enlistment in the PSP in Santo André in the aftermath of such appeals. The Braga episode was thus of less significance for the workers than for the local political class of Santo André. These PSP initiatives represented the first, isolated dissent from the hegemony of conservative, elitist, and antilabor ideas among local politicians.

To credibly seek the governorship, Adhemar realized that he needed far more substantial support in urban areas like ABC than could be offered

54. Braga’s rejection of charity’s unequal exchange was of recent origin. In 1941, he had served as the head of an ACISA committee charged with organizing “The First Great Christmas for the Children of the Workers of Santo André.” *O Imparcial*, Dec. 6, 1941.

by Tereza Delta and Antônio Braga. Tereza Delta's ability to turn out voters at the polls had never been tested, and his Santo André supporters had mustered a mere 4 percent (964) of the total votes. While giving 71 percent of their votes to the PTB and PCB in 1945, Santo André's most voted candidate for federal deputy had been the Communist president of the local metalworkers union, Euclides Savietto, with 5,647 votes.

A formidable political operator, Adhemar was shrewd enough to turn his own lack of support in urban areas to his advantage since the Communists did not see him as competition for their electoral base, as they did see Hugo Borghi and the *trabalhistas*. In addition, Adhemar's imperative need for Communist support increased the PCB's confidence that it could, in fact, dictate terms in the event of victory. As a consequence, on January 4, 1947, the sensational news was released that an agreement had been reached between the PSP and the PCB. Prestes's followers nominated Adhemar as their candidate for governor, while the PSP agreed to a joint slate for federal deputies and the nomination of a Communist as one of the PSP candidates for senator. The alliance of the two parties was formalized in a published exchange of letters in which Adhemar pledged to defend the constitution, respect the legal existence of all parties, and take action against *carestia* and inflation.⁵⁵ This public agreement was supplemented by various secret assurances of positions for the PCB in his administration.

There was a great public furor over Adhemar's alliance with the Communists. São Paulo's Archbishop Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Mota and the Catholic Electoral League immediately released a letter saying that no Catholic should vote for any PSP candidate. President Dutra openly criticized politicians who let electoral considerations tempt them into negotiations with those whose loyalties lay elsewhere. The PSD's call for a fight against communism was shared by many UDN leaders and voters, horrified at the alliance of leftist subversion and Getulista corruption.⁵⁶

In breaking ranks with the state's political and economic establishment, Adhemar was taking a serious risk, and his audacious gamble would test the loyalty of his supporters throughout the state. By the date of the election, on January 19, 1947, political opinion in São Paulo had polarized into two camps. Whether backing Adhemar de Barros or Hugo Borghi, all those oriented toward the urban working class were united in their rejection of the backward-looking formulas of the PSD. The overwhelming majority of the Paulista middle and upper classes, by contrast, were equally convinced that victory for the PSD was not only inevitable

55. *Diário de São Paulo*, Jan. 5, 1947; Beni, *Adhemar*, 180–181.

56. *Diário de São Paulo*, Jan. 7 and 8, 1947; *Hoje*, Jan. 7 and 8, 1947; *ESP*, Jan. 10 and 14, 1947.

TABLE I: Results of the Gubernatorial Election in São Paulo, January 19, 1947

Candidates	As percent of urban industrial*	As percent of rural interior	State total	As percent of state vote
Adhemar de Barros:	48	23	393,637	35
Hugo Borghi:	32	29	340,502	31
Mário Tavares:	13	38	289,575	26
Antônio de Almeida Prado:	6	10	93,169	8
Total vote:	535,096	581,787	1,116,883	

*Urban industrial regions include the electoral zones encompassing Greater São Paulo, (including ABC), Campinas, Jundiaí, Santos, and Sorocaba.

Source: TRE SP, *Boletim Eleitoral*, I (1947), 81–94.

but essential.⁵⁷ Despite official harassment, the PCB retained its bold optimism.

Election day was calm and the voting took place without disruption. Voter turnout declined from 1945, but the urban electorate had actually grown in importance. While voters from urban industrial areas accounted for 44 percent of the state electorate in 1945, they had grown to 48 percent in January 1947. When the count ended, Adhemar had scored a major upset with 35 percent of the vote, followed by the *trabalhista* Hugo Borghi with 31 percent, the PSD's Mário Tavares with 26 percent, and the UDN's Almeida Prado with a mere 8 percent of the statewide vote (see Table I).⁵⁸

Adhemar owed his triumph to a massive urban vote that gave him twice the support in urban industrial areas that he received in the rural interior. Contemporary observers were quick to credit these results to the generalized atmosphere of conflict between workers and employers. Writing in the business magazine *Digesto Econômico*, one analyst argued that the election demonstrated “the accentuated progress of class consciousness and the growing antagonism of the proletariat.”⁵⁹ In giving their votes overwhelmingly to the PSP/PCB or PTB candidates, urban voters punished the PSD of interventor Macedo Soares for its antipopular sins of omission and commission. Indeed, the major weakness of the conservative parties was their lack of support in urban areas like greater São Paulo,

57. Aureliano Leite, *Subsídios para a história da civilização paulista* (São Paulo, 1954), 374. U.S. Embassy sources reported that PSD candidate Tavares was the “consensus victor, largely on the grounds that his party controls the state political machinery” (“Monthly Labor Report,” Jan. 13, 1947, by Rowell, U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Record Group 84, USNA).

58. TRE SP, *Boletim Eleitoral*, I, 94.

59. Clovis Ribeiro, “A classe média e as eleições de 19 de janeiro,” *Digesto Econômico*, 3:29 (1947), 73.

TABLE II: Results of the Gubernatorial Election in ABC Region, January 19, 1947

	As percent município of Santo André	As percent município of São Bernardo	As percent of state vote
Adhemar de Barros:	48	42	35
Hugo Borghi:	43	37	31
Mário Tavares:	5	19	26
Antônio de Almeida Prado:	5	1	8
Null, <i>em branco</i> , awaiting TRE decision:	2	2	
Total vote:	22,802	2,598	1,116,883

Sources: *Borda do Campo*, Feb. 9, Mar. 16, 1947; TRE SP, Pacote, "Mapões . . . 6^a Zona."

where the PSD vote declined by two-thirds and the UDN by one-fourth compared to the elections of 1945. The candidates of the PSD and UDN received insignificant support in São Bernardo and Santo André where the combined votes of Adhemar de Barros and Hugo Borghi were 79 and 91 percent of the total (see Table II).⁶⁰

In the most dramatic development, a Communist trade unionist from Santo André became the only state deputy elected from the ABC region. A furniture worker, Armando Mazzo had led a major 1934 strike in his trade in São Bernardo. He worked in later years with the Santo André metalworkers' union; arrested and manhandled by the police in September 1946, Mazzo could be said, in a sense, to have gone from jail to parliament.

The state assembly results in ABC demonstrated a modest increase of PSP support to 11 percent, while the PTB lost ground to the Communists compared to 1945. With 22 percent of ABC's total vote, Mazzo came in first among PCB candidates with 5,175 votes, followed by the Communist lawyer for local unions, Lazaro Maria da Silva, with 1,330, and the leading female Communist, Carmen Savietto, with 650.⁶¹ With 15 percent, the most-voted *trabalhista* candidate was lawyer Gabriel Migliore, who won election with 3,468 ABC votes out of a statewide total of 6,628. As a director of Borghi's São Paulo radio station, Migliore was associated with a message of militancy and protest, although, as a nonresident, he would come to defer to Mazzo as the authentic representative of local workers. The latter provided further evidence of class-based electoral behavior

60. Table G8 in French, "Industrial Workers," 655-666.

61. Table G9, *ibid.*; unpublished "Votação dos candidatos a Assembléia Estadual . . ." TRE SP; TRE SP, *Boletim Eleitoral*, I, 269, 285.

in decisively rejecting the extravagantly financed campaigns of Roberto Simonsen and Armando Arruda Pereira, the owner and the manager of the Cerâmica São Caetano. Despite employing 1,378 workers in their factory in São Caetano, both men lost by wide margins with Simonsen receiving only 326 votes and manager Arruda Pereira a mere 112. Their top Communist competitors, by contrast, won 1,576 and 806 votes respectively in the district of São Caetano.⁶²

The election of Adhemar, two PCB federal deputies, and strong PTB and PCB delegations to the state assembly promised a new beginning for labor in São Paulo. Workers, it seemed, would finally be accorded the recognition due them after decades of struggle. Emerging as the state's third largest party—ahead of Adhemar's PSP—the PCB included in its 11-member state assembly delegation Santo André's Mazzo; rubber worker Lourival Vilar, a state and national labor leader; textile worker Roque Trevisan, head of the state trade union federation; and the noted Marxist historian Caio Prado Junior.

For Adhemar de Barros, the elections were a personal triumph even though his party only elected nine deputies to the state legislature. With wide knowledge of the politics of the interior, Adhemar's control of the state apparatus offered him the means of consolidating his political base. Adhemar's populist rival Hugo Borghi also had reason to be happy, although his hold over the second-ranked PTB delegation was shaky. The results were most discouraging for the UDN which dropped from second to fourth place, while the PSD's control of the largest number of deputies did not make up for their catastrophic loss of the executive branch (see Table III).

For Brazilian President Dutra, the victory of Adhemar de Barros and his PCB allies was the government's biggest political setback of the January 1947 elections. In Brazil's other 19 states, the ruling PSD had done very well, winning the governorships of 5 states on its own and an additional 6 in coalition.⁶³ Only Brazil's most populated and industrialized state had elected a governor not only backed by the Communists but who had won without the support of either of the two elite parties or Getúlio's PTB.

The Paulista rebuff of Dutra's anticommunist campaign sent a resounding message to the conservative classes who had remained confident to the

62. Table G10, in French, "Industrial Workers," 667. In the senatorial race, Roberto Simonsen beat the Communist candidate, the world-famous painter Cândido Portinari, by only 3,708 votes out of almost a half a million cast for both candidates. In fact, Portinari led in the first weeks of the count until later results from the interior came in. The PCB filed a challenge of the count alleging fraud. *Processo 3708 (1948) (326/TSE), TRE SP; João Batista Berardo, O político Cândido Torquato Portinari* (São Paulo, 1983), 102–103.

63. TSE, *Dados estatísticos*, I, 63.

TABLE III: Party Vote and Representation in the São Paulo State Assembly Election, January 19, 1947

Party	Number of deputies	As percent of assembly	As percent of state vote	As percent of ABC vote
PSD	26	35	25	10
PTB	14	19	20	32
PCB	11	15	16	33
PSP	9	12	13	11
UDN	9	12	13	3
Minor Parties	6	8	13	10
Total:	75		1,079,691	23,919

Sources: TRE SP, *Boletim Eleitoral*, I (1947), 142; TSE, *Dados Estatísticos*, I.

end that the PSD's Mário Tavares would win. Indeed, the decline in the UDN's vote compared to 1945 reflected a shift in political support that was meant to guarantee the victory of the lesser evil, the PSD, over the greater one, Adhemar and the Communists.⁶⁴ Moreover, the gubernatorial defeat of the government party itself, the PSD, was without precedent in Paulista history. The conservative classes and landowning oligarchy could no longer dictate the outcomes of state elections through rural *coronelismo*, as in Brazil's less-developed states,⁶⁵ and neither did they have the urban and working-class support that was now the key to winning political control of Brazil's richest and most populous state.

Adhemar's victory fragmented the state's political and economic establishment and ended the tight top-down control that had been the essence of traditional boss rule.⁶⁶ At the same time, his triumph marked the emergence of a new type of political boss willing to court, even if opportunistically, the state's urban and working-class population. By changing the rules of the political game, Adhemar's election helped create the state's unique political system during the Populist Republic that ended in 1964.

To be sure, the upper-class establishment was far from resigned to its loss of control. In the storm that followed January 1947, it remained an open question whether Adhemar de Barros would even be allowed

64. Ribeiro, "A classe média," 73.

65. The PSD's loss in the cities, however understandable, was accompanied by an electoral disaster in the interior where both the PTB and the PSP/PCB alliance outpolled it, a political revolution that deserves fuller study.

66. The unusually high degree of interpenetration between the holders of political and economic power in São Paulo between 1889-1937 is carefully documented in Joseph L. Love and Bert J. Barickman, "Rulers and Owners: A Brazilian Case Study in Comparative Perspective," *HAHR*, 66:4 (Nov. 1986), 743-765.

to assume the governorship in March 1947.⁶⁷ Less than 20 years earlier, the Brazilian political system had regularly “beheaded” less controversial candidates whom the establishment did not want in office. If Adhemar did finally take office, how would he conduct himself in relationship to his new working-class constituency? What meaning if any did his rhetoric of collaboration with labor hold for Paulista workers, their trade unions and political leaders?

*Labor and the Populist Statecraft
of Adhemar de Barros*

The inauguration of São Paulo’s first popularly elected governor on March 14, 1947 was a time of great popular jubilation with victory parades and celebrations throughout the capital. Having mollified his elite enemies enough to be inaugurated, Adhemar savored his triumphant return to the post of state executive that he had exercised, through dictatorial appointment, between 1938 and 1941.⁶⁸ Yet Adhemar faced difficult challenges as a democratically elected governor at a moment of great working-class mobilization and employer-government resistance. Improvising in unknown terrain, Adhemar elaborated a populist statecraft toward labor between mid-March and early May 1947 that illustrates both the innovations and tensions of the populist enterprise.

For Adhemar’s Communist and labor allies, the new governor and state assembly were the start of “a government of collaboration” in which the

67. *UDNista* Aureliano Leite recalls that many members of the middle and upper classes embraced the extralegal argument that Adhemar should not be allowed to take office because he was a minority candidate with only 35 percent of the vote (*Subsídios*, 374). An editorial in a São Paulo business magazine proposed that the ex-officio registrations of 1945 be annulled. This “highly moralizing” initiative, it was argued, would have barred those “strata that, strictly speaking, cannot exercise the right to vote”—a segment of the electorate mobilized “almost exclusively” by the “antidemocratic parties” (“As eleições e seus resultados,” *Digesto Econômico*, 3:27 [Feb. 1947]).

Paulista newspapers such as *O Jornal*, owned by the Diários Associados chain of Assis Chateaubriand, openly called on Dutra, the military, and the conservative classes to bar Adhemar de Barros, a mere “puppet of Prestes,” from office (*O Jornal*, Feb. 1, 1947). The “official position” of the PSD state administration, a “generally reliable source” reported to the U.S. Embassy in late Jan. 1947, was that “regardless of the election results, . . . the state administration . . . should under no circumstances be handed over to Barros and the Communists” (memorandum from São Paulo, Jan. 28, 1947, U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Record Group 84, USNA).

68. U.S. Embassy sources reported in mid-March that “it now appears that he [Adhemar] has been successful in obtaining the support of most of the conservative parties . . . and that he will give little recognition to the communists for their support. . . . According to reports from São Paulo, business interests are quite reconciled to de Barros as governor” (“Election Results in the State of São Paulo, 13 March 1947,” U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Record Group 84, USNA).

working class would have a major role. Three days after the inauguration, the state affiliate of the newly founded left/center General Confederation of Brazilian Workers' (CGTB) launched its nationwide unionization drive with a rally of 50,000 workers in São Paulo. Aiming at 200,000 new union members nationwide, 50,000 of them in the state, the CGTB sought to exploit the newly favorable conditions under a governor who it hoped would remove the obstacles to labor action. In particular, Paulista unionists were hopeful that the new democratic state government meant the end to the treatment of labor disputes as police questions. The governor, rumor had it, was even seriously considering the abolition of the São Paulo arm of the hated DOPS.⁶⁹

The shift in the political arena left Paulista industrialists rightly apprehensive since the federal government's labor relations responsibilities had been transferred to the State Labor Department in 1946. This powerful lever was now in the hands of the Communist/Progressive governor. It appeared that the strategy of resolving labor conflicts through government intervention and police repression was about to backfire on the industrialists. In a telegram hailing the prospect of Adhemar "governing with the people," the president of Santo André's metalworkers' union, Victor Savietto, urged the governor to dismiss the head of the Labor Department, Eduardo Saad, whose past involvement in antilabor violence and union interventions in São Caetano had earned him the hatred of trade unionists.⁷⁰

Animated by their deepest hopes, São Paulo's Communists and the state's left/center labor movement were justly proud of their extraordinary victory. Indeed, Communist Senator Luís Carlos Prestes warned the Paulistas against allowing their triumph to go to their heads.⁷¹ Yet the heady self-confidence of labor's leadership was directly in tune with the mood of the state's rank-and-file industrial workers, including many who had not dared to join in the strike movements of early 1946. In the general euphoria, even workers who had voted for Borghi could not fail to see the defeat of the PSD and UDN as heralding a new day for "the people."

Encouraged by Adhemar's inauguration, a small strike wave spread among the state's workers that combined the ongoing organizing efforts of labor activists and initiative by rank-and-file workers. Four days after

69. *ESP*, Mar. 15, 1947; *Hoje*, Feb. 27, Mar. 10, 11, and 18, 1947; "Monthly Labor Report," Apr. 30, 1947 by Labor Attaché Rowell, U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Record Group 84, USNA.

70. *Hoje*, Mar. 19, May 7, 1947.

71. These "ideological weaknesses" and "dangerous illusions" among Paulista Communists, the PCB's Secretary General Luís Carlos Prestes argued, reflected their close links to "the working-class masses" of the state whose "reformist tendencies" persisted despite their display of "the greatest class consciousness." *Hoje*, Feb. 27, 1947.

that inauguration, 1,500 Santo André textile workers began a week-long strike against the Rhodiaseta spinning and weaving division of the French-owned Rhodia company. Unlike the Rhodia chemical workers in Santo André, the predominantly female textile workers had not struck in 1946 and were not well integrated into the local textile workers' union headed by the rightist PTB leader Henrique Poletto. Fearful that their union leaders would mishandle the 1947 negotiations, several hundred textile workers, led by the union's left/center opposition, gathered on Sunday, March 16, 1947, to formulate their own demands, which were presented to management the next day.⁷² When a meager wage increase was offered, the workers struck and received the immediate support of the factory's unionized foremen and supervisors (*mestres* and *contramestres*) as well. Parading from the factory to the union headquarters, the strikers convinced Poletto to call an official assembly that evening, at which the Rhodiaseta strikers were joined by activist textile workers from other plants.⁷³

Invited to address the meeting, Santo André's newly sworn-in State Deputy Armando Mazzo spoke of the looming industrial crisis which made it imperative that the proletariat defend "our national industries." The workers, he insisted, would be the first victims of the failure of any branch of industry as a result of renewed North American competition.⁷⁴ In their advocacy of a nationalist drive to industrialize Brazil, postwar Communists and unionists like Mazzo shared common ground with politicians such as Getúlio Vargas and with Brazilian industrialists who were also convinced that the nation's future lay in manufacturing. Yet broad cross-class agreement over the path for national development did little to assure tranquil relations between employers and workers. For both groups, the immediate issues at stake were far more prosaic, with each seeking to use the shared patriotic goal to advance its own distinct interests. In his comments to the Rhodiaseta strikers, ABC's first successful worker-politician favored increasing workers' productivity but argued that it must go hand in hand with fighting for better living and working conditions. One of the strikers made the implicit bargain even clearer. Acknowledging the need "to defend our industry and cooperate with the government for the progress of our country," José Rodrigues emphasized that "those who give also want to receive." To guarantee "the best, most rapid and active workers," he concluded, employers should provide "a just increase in our salary [as well as] working conditions fit for human beings and not cargo animals or slaves."⁷⁵

72. *Ibid.*, Mar. 9 and 18, 1947.

73. This account draws on *Hoje*, Mar. 22 and 25, 1947.

74. *Ibid.*, Mar. 19, 1947. A similar nationalist theme was stressed by CGTB head Roberto Morena, *Hoje*, Mar. 18, 1947.

75. *Ibid.*, Mar. 22, 1947.

The conflict in the postwar period revolved precisely around the employers' rejection of such a proposed bargain with labor. During the week-long Rhodiaseta strike, national Labor Minister Morvan Dias Figueiredo explicitly attacked the "exaggerated" requests for wage increases in current labor court negotiations. Calling for increases that did not diverge from "economic reality," the Paulista manufacturer spoke of "a plan of agitation" designed to create "economic disequilibrium" and "confusion" in order to facilitate an unnamed group's sinister aims.⁷⁶

The frontal clash of material interests between workers and employers was a problem that had bedeviled social and economic policy since the early '30s and threatened the national industrialization project. Who was to determine the balance between these two opposing forces, and how was it to be done? While Vargas believed that the responsibility lay with the state's labor relations bureaucracy, politically well-connected industrialists like Morvan Dias objected to such intervention warning that the labor justice system could all too easily be converted into a "disorganizing" force in the national economy.

As the new governor of Brazil's most industrialized state, Adhemar de Barros would have to deal with this very problem. And, as compared to his conservative predecessors, Adhemar adopted a very different style of dealing with trade unionists and their political representatives. The PSD's identification of the state with the employers' side in labor/management disputes gave way to a new, more neutral stance and rhetoric. In April, Adhemar's Secretary of Public Security Flodoaldo Mara informed his local police *delegados* that "force and violence resolve nothing satisfactorily" in a truly democratic government.⁷⁷

On March 24, 1947, Adhemar received delegations from the central labor councils of the state and city of São Paulo, accompanied by the national CGTB president, Communist Roberto Morena. Advancing demands for change in the State Labor Department, the trade unionists received a warm reception in which the governor expressed his full confidence in unionized workers and their leading organs. Adhemar promised action against the high cost of living and the people's "misery," and said he would devote his attention to the Labor Department within the week. He asked, in exchange, their cooperation in explaining to workers the need to avoid strikes. Police violence against workers or interference with union meetings, he further told his listeners, should be reported directly to him for action.⁷⁸

76. Ibid. On Morvan's avowedly antilabor views, see also the "Weekly Labor Report," May 29, 1947 by Labor Attaché Rowell, U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Record Group 84, USNA.

77. *Hoje*, Mar. 19, Apr. 7, 1947.

78. Ibid., Mar. 25, 1947.

Adhemar's meetings with such trade union and worker delegations were conducted on a far less paternalistic basis than in the past. Moreover, the labor delegations that trooped to the governor's mansion were far more assertive in their presentations, a reflection of trade union strength and labor's new-found political influence. In a symbolic departure, Adhemar even promised aid for strikers engaged in a bitter conflict with the São Paulo-Goiás Railroad.⁷⁹ Yet Adhemar's unwillingness to automatically identify with employers, in the manner of the previous PSD state executive Macedo Soares, did not mean that he unequivocally identified with the workers and their unions and political parties. In fact, Adhemar had no interest in being the spokesman for the workers and little desire to accept the controversial PCB as a true partner in the state administration. Once elected to office, the governor sought to placate every interest without decisively alienating any single group—a characteristic populist hallmark. He publicly wooed workers with such gestures as a pledge of official support for a planned union May Day rally, and secretly made deals with the industrialists.

Whatever the appearances, Adhemar had no intention of following a consistently prolabor course which would further harm his relations with the state's conservative classes, a decisive political constituency that could influence his ability to stay in office. Responsive to the industrialists who had opposed his election, a cautious Adhemar left the highly sensitive positions of secretary of public security and secretary of labor unfilled on inauguration day, when he had announced his appointees to all other top posts.

As the weeks went by, Paulista employers were displeased by the new governor's rhetoric but reassured that he had not adopted, in practice, the whole heartedly prolabor stance expected by the trade union movement. Despite earlier pledges to the unions, Adhemar did not immediately replace the antilabor Saad as head of the State Labor Department. A week after his inauguration, the hated Saad struck a blow against Santo André's labor movement when he ruled that local chemical industries must transfer their "union tax" payments from the more representative left/center chemical workers' organization to his favored group of former leaders of the chemical union.⁸⁰ Nor could he be expected to show much sympathy for the Rhodiaseta strikers.

79. *Ibid.*, Mar. 19 and 22, Apr. 2, 1947; "Monthly Labor Report," Apr. 30, 1947 by Labor Attaché Rowell, U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Record Group 84, USNA. A fascinating first-person account of the bitter São Paulo-Goiás railroad strike can be found in Dias, *Um imigrante*, 89–103. In shouldering its new responsibilities as a governing party, the PCB made efforts to moderate some strike struggles. This led to anger and disillusionment among some party leaders involved with the railroad strike, especially since Adhemar failed, in the end, to help resolve the stoppage in the workers' interests (*ibid.*, 100–101).

80. *ESP*, Mar. 15, 1947; *Hoje*, Mar. 1947, *passim*.

A strike like the stoppage at Rhodiaseta placed Adhemar in a difficult situation by demonstrating that not all conflicts could be avoided or finessed. Consenting to an interview with the strikers, Adhemar sought to curry favor with a delegation led by state deputies Armando Mazzo of the PCB and José Alves da Cunha of the PTB. But he avoided assuming any direct responsibility for the outcome of the strike, despite his control over the Labor Department, which in turn exercised decisive influence in labor court proceedings.⁸¹

Opening the Rhodiaseta hearing on March 24, 1947, Eduardo Saad even sought to use Adhemar's popular support to convince the striking workers to return to work without a settlement. Encouraged, the lawyers for the employers refused to budge from their initial offer of a 10 percent wage increase and no provision for paid weekly rest. Unable to find a conciliatory formula, another Labor Department official asked the strikers, "Do you want Adhemar to defend you?" They answered that they did, and he counseled them again to return to work. While some workers accepted this as a pledge of the governor's personal intervention to resolve their complaints, most expressed surprise that a representative of Adhemar would want the workers to return to work "with their eyes on the floor." Other unionists pointed out that two of the officials present had participated in a raid, earlier that month, on the chemical workers' union headquarters in Santo André.

In the aftermath, the Communists were quick to publicly criticize the State Labor Department for contradicting what they believed should be the policies of the "democratic" governor who met with and verbally supported strikers. The discontent was focused on Saad: had he or had he not been truly authorized to act in Adhemar's name? Thus, from Adhemar's point of view, criticism was conveniently diverted from himself; at the same time, labor discontent with Saad provided him with an excuse to replace the latter with his own appointee in early April.

The Rhodiaseta episode revealed the inherent tensions between organized workers and populist politicians. When faced with hard choices, it was clear that Adhemar's administration preferred to avoid a clear-cut decision as long as possible. As an initial response to grass-roots pressure, it preferred a vague message of "trust me," suggesting that the populist politician alone could resolve the workers' problems. When faced with sufficient pressure, however, Adhemar did in fact move toward meeting the demands of the workers' representatives. In the case of Rhodiaseta, higher level negotiations resolved the strike in the end on terms more or less favorable to the textile workers, a net gain for labor.⁸²

81. *Hoje*, Mar. 22 and 25, Apr. 8 and 10, 1947.

82. *Ibid.*, Mar. 27, 1947.

On the whole, the previously stigmatized PCB and its labor allies found the events of March and April 1947 to be an auspicious beginning of a new era in Paulista politics and labor relations. Speaking on behalf of the PCB state assembly delegation on April 30, Armando Mazzo proudly hailed the proletariat's decisive contribution to the "democratic conquests of the last years." While warning that the "forces of retrocession" had not given up "their reactionary aspirations," Mazzo optimistically celebrated the heightened organization and consciousness of workers, "the class of the future."⁸³

All those inexperienced newcomers to politics were far from controlling the unfolding political scenario. Indeed, the election of Adhemar de Barros and labor's new political influence posed a difficult challenge for the workers' movement in São Paulo: how to maintain and exert influence within a populist alliance. In this regard, the Achilles heel of the entire postwar upsurge of labor militancy in Brazil lay in the absence of significant organized support in the countryside.⁸⁴ The dramatic entry of workers and the urban populace into politics in 1945, after all, should not obscure the continued centrality of the rural vote which still comprised 52 percent of São Paulo's electorate.

The key to immediate postwar electoral success thus lay with politicians like Adhemar who could combine elements from the two worlds of Paulista politics. As an experienced politician, Adhemar understood these realities and immediately set about broadening and consolidating his base of support in both rural and urban São Paulo. In the interior, he strengthened his following by winning over many traditional local political families and machines, thereby virtually liquidating the PSD. Simultaneously, he wooed *trabalhistas* by incorporating Hugo Borghi into his governing coalition. Adhemar's unexpected victory in 1947 thus prompted a reorganization of party allegiances in which the PSP won over elected officials and supporters of the PSD, the PTB, and even a group of UDN dissidents led by Paulo Nogueira.⁸⁵

This display of political virtuosity and "unprincipled" flexibility could

83. Assembléia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo (hereafter ALESP), session of Apr. 30, 1947, *Anais da Assembléia*, I, 903–906.

84. Labor's political dilemma was exacerbated by the dissipation of the pro-Vargas *queremista* coalition of the PCB and PTB in 1945. The influence of working-class voters in São Paulo would have been strengthened if the two popular parties had remained united in postwar politics. While the PCB had still talked of the need for unity with the *trabalhistas* in January 1946, growing Communist strength and rivalry with the PTB's rightist union leaders led to a widening split that divided what might have been a unified urban popular vote.

85. Leite, *Subsídios*, 347; Paulo Nogueira Filho, *Regime de liberdade social* (Rio de Janeiro, 1951); Beni, *Adhemar*, 186–188; *ESP*, May 7, 1946.

not be matched by the Communists, who were increasingly dependent on an ally whose need for their support was decreasing. During March and April 1947, the PCB's leverage in its dealings with Adhemar was, therefore, weaker than it might have been. The ousting of Eduardo Saad from the DET, for example, was not followed by the prolabor policies anticipated. The Communist newspaper *Hoje* was critical of the answers given by Adhemar's new secretary of labor on such key issues as the department's autonomy from the federal government, union interventions, and freedom of association. Although eventually overruled by Adhemar after union protests, he even retreated, at first, from the governor's pledge of official support for the May Day rallies being organized by a left/center interunion commission.⁸⁶

São Paulo's May Day celebrations of 1947 were nevertheless a hopeful moment for the state trade union movement and the PCB. Whereas planned rallies the year before had been banned by Interventor Macedo Soares, the 1947 gathering of tens of thousands in the capital's Anhangabaú valley was addressed by the governor and his new secretary of labor. In São Caetano, PSP *Prefeito* Alfredo Maluf also appeared at the unions' May Day celebration in a further display of government support for the workers' movement.⁸⁷ Before long, there would be somewhat less to celebrate.

*The End of a Populist Interlude:
Adhemar's "Betrayal" of the Communists*

During the first months of his administration, Adhemar de Barros pioneered a new approach to the problems of organized labor. Whatever its limitations, his ambiguous stance reflected the strength of working-class mobilization and represented a net gain for labor. Yet Adhemar's exercises in symbolic politics were viewed with a jaundiced eye by his conservative opponents at the national and state levels. Former Minister of War General Góes Monteiro, newly elected senator from Alagoas, would even claim to find "an imminent danger for democracy in Brazil" in São Paulo's May Day celebrations.⁸⁸

The conservative parties which lost to Adhemar, the Paulista UDN and PSD, were quick to challenge the legitimacy of his electoral mandate. Formal appeals for presidential intervention were matched by a frenzy

86. *Hoje*, Apr. 18, 1947.

87. *ESP*, May 1, 1947; *Hoje*, May 6, 1947. Typically, on May 1, Adhemar also appeared at the First Workers' Sports Games organized by the employers' Social Service of Industry (SESI), headed by São Caetano's Armando Arruda Pereira. One hundred and fifty sports teams competed, including ABC's Rhodia Brasileira and Indústrias Reunidas Francisco Matarazzo (*ESP*, May 3, 1947).

88. *ESP*, May 1, 1947.

of informal conspiracies to the same end—making survival a principal preoccupation as Adhemar began his term in office. These escalating pressures from the right were not easily neutralized by the popular support cultivated by Adhemar in the months after the January 1947 election.

The Communist/Progressive victory in São Paulo had reinforced the conviction of President Dutra and his powerful backers that decisive action was needed to restore discipline and hierarchy. The central thrust of this conservative counteroffensive, which coincided with the onset of the Cold War, was the year-long drive to outlaw the Communist party. By early May 1947, the Dutra administration was exerting intense and open pressure on the one undecided judge of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal in an effort to break a two-to-two deadlock in the court. On May 7, 1947, Judge Rocha Lagoa finally announced his vote for cancellation (*cassação*) of the PCB's registry as a legal political party—an action followed by government interventions against militant labor unions.⁸⁹

Granted the power to oust state governors in the 1946 constitution, President Dutra used the threat of intervention to pressure Adhemar to ally himself with the Paulista PSD and to support the *cassação*. Thus Adhemar de Barros faced the possibility of being ousted from power if he stood by his campaign pledge to support the legal existence of the PCB. Faced with a threat to his political survival, Adhemar quickly capitulated and reached agreement with Dutra to maintain himself in office by breaking with his leftist allies and backing a PSD candidate for vice-governor in November 1947. Two days after the decision to outlaw the Communist party, Adhemar's state police raided hundreds of offices of the PCB and allied organizations throughout the state—a measure duplicated nationwide. The government's seizure of PCB records was followed by interventions, carried out by Adhemar's State Department of Labor, that ousted left/center leaderships in 36 Paulista trade unions, including two in Santo André.

Adhemar's betrayal in May 1947 came as a surprise to the Communists and their left/center trade union allies and has gone down in Brazilian political history as the most dramatic demonstration of Adhemar's unprincipled opportunism. In perfunctory comments on the episode, commentators have generally chided the Communists for their own "opportunism" and "naivete" in believing that anything but betrayal could ensue from an alliance with Adhemar de Barros. Most have assumed that Adhemar's break with the PCB was inevitable and had been planned by him from the outset. Yet there is no evidence that the Paulista governor would have turned on his leftist labor allies so decisively in May 1947 had it not

89. *Ibid.*, May 1 and 3, 1947.

been for the threat of federal intervention. Indeed, Adhemar's behavior in the six months after the *cassação* suggests that he would have preferred to continue his ambiguous policy of muddling through, conciliating all groups and alienating none.

Although cooperating with the crackdown on labor and the left, Adhemar had no intention of converting himself into a new version of the state's previous PSD interventor, Macedo Soares. Adhemar was too realistic to adopt the PSD's brand of ideologically consistent conservatism untempered by electoral calculation. Indeed, the January 1947 elections clearly indicated that a vigorous and openly antilabor stance was the road to political disaster—as it would be in São Paulo throughout the Populist Republic of 1945–64.

Past observers have also assumed that the raids of May 9, 1947 marked a definitive position taking by the Paulista governor vis-à-vis the PCB and labor. This impression is based largely on Adhemar's vigorous and murderous repression of suspected leftists in 1948 and 1949.⁹⁰ Yet such a repressive policy, as advocated by Dutra's PSD and the state's industrialists in late 1947, made no electoral sense in terms of Adhemar's key short-term political objective: winning the state's November 1947 municipal elections.

Eager to consolidate his rule in the face of entrenched and by no means resigned elite opponents, Adhemar was aware of the widespread working-class disapproval of the *cassação* of the PCB and the union interventions. A calculating politician, he was not about to assume any larger onus of blame than was absolutely necessary to satisfy his new "partners," Dutra and the Paulista PSD. Adhemar simply could not afford to squander whatever political capital he and his supporters might still retain in the state's urban industrial regions—especially since the final outcome of the PCB's supreme court appeal of the *cassação* was still uncertain.

From the governor's point of view, it was best to avoid the additional controversy that an extensive and intrusive anticommunist repression would have created in the state's urban areas. Indeed, police intervention against the PCB and its members was less between May and November 1947, a period in which the party was outlawed, than it had been during 1946 when it was legal. Actually, the de facto legality en-

90. The Communist intellectual Neto recalls Adhemar's subsequent behavior in these bitter terms: "When the winds changed, Adhemar de Barros, perhaps to mark the difference between himself and the Communists who had supported him, unleashed against them a terrible police repression during his whole term in office" (*Minha vida*, 92). Events such as the killings of three Communists at Tupã, repeated raids on the offices of the PCB newspaper, and wholesale violence against demonstrations did indeed characterize Adhemar's administration in 1948 and 1949.

joyed by the Paulista PCB greatly facilitated the victories of Communist slates, running under other party names, in the November 1947 municipal elections in industrial centers such as Santo André.⁹¹

The electoral calculations that motivated Adhemar at the state level were felt even more strongly in the micropolitical arena in urban areas. Eager to win over the Communists and their working-class voters, all of Santo André's middle-class political factions (except Dutra's PSD) actively courted the PCB. Even Santo André's PSP *prefeito*, Alfredo Maluf, joined in the protests against plans to oust elected Communist officials and even invited Communist participation in Independence Day celebrations. Moreover, the *prefeitura* agreed to distribute special lower priced textile goods through the Union of Democratic Women of Santo André, led by Communist Carmen Savietto.⁹²

As intended, the Adhemaristas' opportunistic behavior created a difficult tactical problem for the Communists as they sought to marshal public support against the betrayal they had suffered at the hands of this "reactionary capitalist politician." Adhemar's deliberately ambiguous stance was brilliantly designed to weaken the effect of these attacks at the level of mass popular opinion. By September 1947, Pedro Pomar, a prominent PCB leader, felt compelled to criticize the widespread belief that "Adhemar did not betray the people" but had been forced to do what he did "by the fascists." He declared this an "illusion" of those who still believed in Adhemar's "demagoguery."⁹³

This deliberately two-faced and opportunistic conduct represents an important dimension of the populist phenomenon as we have come to know it in postwar Brazil. Yet it is important to realize that São Paulo's conservative establishment was equally horrified by the behavior of Adhemar and his ilk in late 1947. While loudly claiming to fight communism, he was forsaking the demands of class solidarity and violating the spirit if not the letter of his deal with Dutra. As leaders of the previous PSD administration had warned Dutra in late January 1947, Adhemar's "known untrustworthiness and wild ambition" made any talk of a deal with Adhe-

91. The *Diário de São Paulo*, Oct. 19, 1947 was vocally critical of the Communists' ability to open electoral headquarters without interference. The DOPS, they reported, claimed it was unable to act unless the hammer and sickle of the PCB itself was openly displayed. For a full treatment of the extraordinary Communist successes in the municipal elections of Nov. 1947, see French, "Industrial Workers," chap. 10.

92. *O Município*, Sept. 13, 1947; ALESP, session of Oct. 11, 1947, *Anais*, V, 167. See also the Santo André *prefeitura*'s approval of a request for a film showing by the local Union of Democratic Women on May 21, 1947.

93. *Hoje*, June 19, Sept. 23, 1947. These misinterpretations, spread by Adhemaristas, were strengthened by the PCB's principled stance against any federal government intervention against Adhemar even after May 1947.

mar “to abandon the Communists” a dangerous proposition.⁹⁴

These morally censurable tactics did indeed work for new-style politicians like Adhemar de Barros and were an endless source of frustration to both left and right, workers and industrialists in postwar São Paulo. Unlike politicians definitively identified with one or another group, Adhemar’s success was based on eschewing firm loyalties in order to maximize his flexibility in the free play of electoral politics. Adhemar’s calculatingly inconsistent behavior in 1947 captured the essence of his new approach to politics: “don’t expect me to be consistently on your side, but if I’m against you today, don’t assume that I will not be with you tomorrow.” If offered a deal more advantageous to his interests, Adhemar was fully prepared to change positions.⁹⁵ When carrying through his side of the agreement, however, Adhemar avoided precluding any of his options for the future. Always gauging the prevailing political winds, Adhemar sought, whenever possible, to anticipate their future direction.

Placing Populist Opportunism in Perspective

How are we to judge this type of opportunism in larger social and historical terms? We must begin by realizing that the pursuit of principle in government and politics, so often invoked by labor leaders and industrialists alike, was not a value in and of itself for either party. In a strike or other labor conflict, there were concrete policy outputs, such as use of the police, that were at stake. For labor, the weaker of the two parties, an *opportunistic* government stance that allowed an occasional victory was clearly preferable to the sort of *principled* antilabor stance that had been typical of *all* previous periods of Paulista government.

Adhemar pioneered the sort of studied opportunism in dealing with labor that would characterize all Paulista governors through 1963–64, since politicians had to come to terms with the electoral realities of the state’s emerging populist political system. With over half the state’s electorate located in urban-industrial areas, politicians could not afford to ignore or appear to slight the interests of the industrial working class which constituted a substantial part of that key urban constituency. While later scholars have been infatuated with debates about the autonomy of the workers’ movement or the lack thereof, the real challenge for São Paulo’s

94. Memorandum from São Paulo, Jan. 28, 1947, U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Record Group 84, USNA.

95. Adhemar’s wheeler-dealer approach to politics showed, as Fernando Henrique Cardoso has noted, “a marked entrepreneurial stamp in the style of tycoon capitalism.” Although little studied, Adhemar’s rise may be linked to the emergence within the Paulista upper classes of a group of newly enriched but socially marginalized businessmen, especially the so-called “turcos” of middle eastern origin (“Partidos e deputados,” 52).

postwar labor movement was how to maximize their leverage within this inconsistently prolabor system. Of course, state governors, whatever their campaign rhetoric, had no more interest in creating or fostering labor militancy than Adhemar did after reaching office in 1947. Preferring expressions of verbal or symbolic support, they projected a vague message of “trust me,” while emphasizing that they alone could resolve the workers’ problems.

The irremediable clash of interests between workers and employers came to the fore in its most intractable form during strikes. In the manner of Adhemar, governors tried where possible to avoid a clear-cut decision as long as possible. Yet a serious work stoppage could force the governor to take a stand, because under Brazil’s highly centralized law enforcement system, he had direct control over the police, the state militia, and the DOPS. Generally the governor adopted a pro or antilabor position on a case-by-case basis, depending in part on the size of the conflict and the power or influence of the industrialists or union leaders in question, and as with Adhemar in late 1947, the electoral calendar could often play a decisive role in determining the position to be taken. Under this system, the working class and the labor movement could expect little direct assistance from the governor in building their organizational strength. However, when they could gather their forces, they had the leverage to alter the calculus behind such political judgments—as long as elections remained the route to power. The most telling example can be found in the next major labor upsurge in the state after 1945–47: the famous “strike of the 300,000” in metropolitan São Paulo in March and April 1953.

The significance of the broader political context of the latter movement has been overlooked by most commentators. Like the Rhodiaseta stoppage of March 1947, the strike began and spread in an atmosphere of working-class hope and empowerment, however illusory, generated by a political event: the unprecedented victory of Jânio Quadros as *prefeito* of São Paulo in the memorable populist campaign of the “penny against the million.” Coming a year before the scheduled 1954 gubernatorial election, the 1953 events in the state capital were of fundamental importance for all political forces. São Paulo’s *Prefeito*-Elect Jânio Quadros, already contemplating running for governor, was vocal in support of the strike movement. Adhemar de Barros, having broken with the state governor who had been the PSP’s candidate in 1950, unashamedly converted his daily São Paulo newspaper, *O Dia*, into a mouthpiece of the left/center-led strike movement (thus supplementing the reporting in the Communist organ *Notícias de Hoje*).

Incumbent Governor Lucas Nogueira Garcez did not, of course, have the same range of options as Jânio and Adhemar. The strike was marked

by many dramatic clashes between strikers, the police, and the state militia that ended in arrests and beatings—a clear payoff to the employers. Nevertheless, the governor's behavior during the strike was also shaped by the political imperatives of the impending elections: he simply could not afford, in electoral terms, to openly embrace the industrialists' side of the dispute, and his dilemma led to some strikingly schizophrenic behavior. The governor who controlled the police that attacked picketing workers also made the state-owned Mooca Hippodromo stadium available for mass strike meetings. Moreover, the governor's representatives addressed such rallies on more than one occasion, and Nogueira Garcez himself publicly assured a delegation of strikers, "I understand your problem, because I too am of the people."⁹⁶

The ultimate success of the "strike of the 300,000" also flowed from the actions of the federal government of the populist Getúlio Vargas and his controversial Labor Minister João ("Jango") Goulart. For one thing, the strike's organizational strength was due in good part to Getúlio's 1951 abolition of the hated *atestado de ideologia* (certificate of ideology) for candidates for union office. Supplied by the DOPS, the *atestado* had been the major mechanism used by the Dutra government to prevent the reemergence of aggressive trade union leaderships, whether Communists or Getulistas. Moreover, the strike of the 300,000, occurring in the state with the largest number of voters, could not help but have enormous political implications for the Vargas regime. Getúlio's presidential election in 1950, as candidate of Adhemar's PSP and the PTB, had depended on the overwhelming support received in the urban areas of São Paulo (in Santo André, for example, Vargas received 84 percent of the total vote). Taking the strike as evidence of his own neglect of this labor constituency, Vargas sanctioned Goulart's initiatives to bring about a settlement by São Paulo's Regional Labor Tribunal favorable to the strikers.⁹⁷ The self-seeking electoral calculations of each of these populist politicians decisively contributed to the success of the 1953 strike—which in turn was the key to the Paulista trade union movement's recovery from the repression of the late 1940s.

Like the more militant of São Paulo's labor leaders in 1953, later commentators have tended to focus on the gap between the loose prolabor rhetoric of such politicians and government officials and their actual performance. Judging them solely in terms of the admitted absence of a

96. Moisés, *Greve*, 70, 84, 86, 88 and photos.

97. Dennis Linhares Barsted, *Medição de forças, o movimento grevista de 1953 e a época dos operários navais* (Rio de Janeiro, 1981) also examines the relationship between labor militancy and Jango Goulart in 1953. See also Maria Andrea Loyola, *Os sindicatos e o PTB* (Petrópolis, 1980).

consistently prolabor policy, many observers have been led into a contradiction of their own making, asking why workers let themselves be fooled by the “populist demagoguery” of these “capitalist politicians.”⁹⁸ For the hundreds of thousands of rank-and-file strikers, however, it was a reasonable political judgment to credit the populist politicians with being, in some sense, on *their* side in contributing to the strike’s eventual victory. This roughest of judgments might not distinguish real from merely self-professed friends. However, since the late 1940s, Paulista workers successfully used their votes to punish the individual politicians, of whatever party, who failed to meet an admittedly none-too-stringent test as to “which side are you on” (as they had in voting against the UDN and PSD as parties during 1945–47).

We must also examine the populists’ opportunism from the employers’ point of view. In the aftermath of the 1953 strike, a Paulista industrialist could reasonably conclude that “demagogic” politicians, who had never met a payroll, had in fact contributed to a workers’ victory. Despite the politicians’ private talk and secret assurances, industrialists could and did blame them for the increase in their costs of labor and the aggravation that ensued from the revival of trade unionism. Indeed, the antipopulist animus of Brazilian industrialists stemmed precisely from such a realistic judgment.

The 1973 memoirs of the Paulista textile industrialist Marcos Gasparian are remarkably frank in their discussion of politics, politicians, and labor after 1945. Recalling the horrors of 1945–47, Gasparian hailed Dutra as the best Brazilian president for having ruled “with order and authority” in the late 1940s. The Dutra period, he noted with nostalgia, was marked by none of the “demagoguery” that returned following Vargas’s 1950 election. He bitterly recalled what leftist critics have correctly labeled the demagogic social verbiage of postwar politicians. The “harangues” of candidates for even the lowest of elected posts, he remarked, always included pledges to “do away with those exploiters of the misery of others, the industrialists, the sharks so often denounced by everyone.”⁹⁹ While having no choice but to do business with these populists once in power, industrialists found their only principled postwar allies among the military and conservative

98. In a well-known essay, Kenneth Erickson asked, “Why did workers succumb to the blandishments of populist politicians if the latter did not move the locus of political power *down* the social pyramid?” The answer, he believed, stemmed from their lack of “class consciousness,” which led workers to only “dimly” perceive class relations. (Erickson, “Populism and Political Control of the Working Class in Brazil,” *Proceedings of the Pacific Coast Council on Latin American Studies*, 4 [1975], 127, 129). An examination of mass working-class voting from the perspective of “revolution” distorts the broad, very practical rationality behind workers’ choices at the ballot box.

99. Gasparian, *O industrial*, 55, 78.

politicians based in secure rural areas. All of this, it must be emphasized, flowed from the political revolution that ensued from Getúlio's mass enfranchisement of the urban working class in 1945.

Thus, it is no accident that São Paulo, the center of Brazil's industrial working class, should have generated three of the most enduring representatives of postwar populism: Hugo Borghi, Adhemar de Barros, and Jânio Quadros. Operating in the state where the social contradictions between capital and labor were most developed, these men were acutely aware of the social cleavages which had facilitated their postwar careers (Borghi/*queremismo*; Barros/Communists; Quadros/1953 strike). Yet this understanding had to be accompanied by a careful consideration of the strengths of the employers and the conservative classes. Hence, all three Paulista populists became masters of the tricky art of finding political advantage in moving back and forth, across and between, the contending parties without—and this is essential—being captured by either workers or employers. Populism, as Mario Miranda Pacheco has written, has a mirror-like quality in its relationship to the wider social world. The essence of the opportunism of an Adhemar de Barros can be found in the way in which his policies mirrored the state's profound social cleavages without altering them. Populism, Pacheco suggests in discussing Bolivia, "is a movement that maneuvers within but does not direct these contradictions."¹⁰⁰

It has often been remarked that this two-sided, opportunistic maneuvering between conflicting social forces was also characteristic of the career of Getúlio Vargas. Although containing an element of truth, this observation fails to distinguish between what might be called postwar electoral populism (Borghi, Adhemar, and Jânio) and the reformist variant associated with Getúlio Vargas and some of his *trabalhista* inheritors.¹⁰¹ While beyond the scope of this essay, an examination of Vargas's career after 1930 suggests that, for all his notorious flexibility, there was an underlying consistency of objectives being sought. Vargas's reformist project,

100. Mario Miranda Pacheco "El populismo en Bolivia," in *El populismo en América Latina*, Werner Altman et al., eds. (Mexico City, 1983), 123, 130.

101. Drawing on his personal experience, Darcy Ribeiro provides a wonderful critical vignette of the populist politicians of Adhemar's sort. Observing that the populist label has often been applied with little attention to the differences among those so classified, he also makes a useful substantive distinction between "populists" like Adhemar and "reformists" like Vargas (Ribeiro, *O dilema da América Latina, estruturas de poder e forças insurgentes* [Petrópolis, 1978], 154–162.) I prefer to continue using the term populist to discuss both groups "as part of the same populist universe" (Octavio Ianni, *Crisis in Brazil* [New York, 1970], 94). Ribeiro's distinction can be reformulated as the difference between a more purely electoral populism and a more purely reformist populism.

which possessed an important ideological dimension, also had, as its final destination, a very different if still capitalist Brazil.¹⁰²

Adhemar de Barros, by contrast, had no long-term goal or vision beyond his own career. He never combined his undoubted insight into the social bases of politics with any larger reformist impulse or desire to change the realities of power and wealth in Brazil. A leader like Adhemar was incapable of the sort of bold, reformist initiatives that characterized Getúlio Vargas's contribution to Brazilian life, whether in labor relations or in politics. As a politician, Adhemar's talent lay in his ability to exploit the new electoral realities created by the visionary statecraft of Vargas. Unlike the *trabalhismo* of Vargas or Goulart, Adhemar and his Paulista counterparts never emphasized, even in rhetoric, the need for or desirability of organization by the popular classes—a relatively constant feature of Vargas's rhetoric. For all his working-class support, Adhemar was never comfortable with basing himself on any solid organizational foundation among working people. A consistent tie to organized labor could only crimp and constrain a figure who, like Jânio Quadros, built his career on a stance of social ambiguity combined with a fundamental loyalty to the status quo.¹⁰³

Thus, it was natural enough that, in the crisis of the early 1960s, Adhemar would find himself on the opposite side from the reformist *trabalhista* variant of Brazilian populism. It was equally natural that the new military regime would decide in 1966 to cancel Adhemar's political rights. The elimination of the electoral route to power reduced Adhemar's usefulness to the conservative upper classes, which had, moreover, never forgiven him for his cynical inconsistencies and self-interested demagoguery. In the last analysis, though, the historical significance of Adhemarista populism never depended on the personal sincerity of its leader. Whatever his motivations, Adhemar's defeat of São Paulo's political and economic establishment in 1947 opened the way to more favorable conditions for the working-class struggle at both state and local levels. Indeed, the consistency or coherence of any populist project, as Miranda Pacheco has

102. In an interesting essay, Altman demonstrates that there was indeed an ideological dimension to classic populist discourse in the 1930s and 1940s ("Cárdenas, Vargas y Perón, una confluencia populista," *El populismo*, 43–96).

103. E. Bradford Burns, *A History of Brazil*, 2d ed. (New York, 1980), 451 emphasizes the parallels between Getúlio Vargas and Adhemar de Barros. Citing their common "mass popular following," he argues incorrectly that both "appealed directly and openly to the workers, informing them of their power and advising them how to use it." While correctly characterizing *trabalhismo*, the emphasis on organized popular support is associated with reformist populists and not electoral populists such as Adhemar.

written, flows precisely from the degree of consistency and coherence of the popular mobilizations that give populism its life and meaning.¹⁰⁴ When workers and the popular classes are organized and powerful, the prevailing form of populism will mirror these realities; when weak and unorganized, there will be more leeway for populist inconsistency and maneuvering at workers' expense.

104. Mario Miranda Pacheco, "El populismo en Bolivia," *El populismo*, 130.