

Pages from a Yellow Press: Print Culture, Public Life and Political Genealogies in Modern Brazil

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Abstract. An examination of the Brazilian newspaper *O Combate*, this article accomplishes four goals. First, it defines the politics of a periodical long cited but little understood by historians. Second, it documents *O Combate*'s place, alongside other 'yellow press' outlets, in the making of a 'public sphere' in São Paulo. Third, it situates the same publications' role in the bringing into being of a more commercial, publicity-driven press, which would shed the yellow press's radicalism and abet the collapse of the public sphere of its heyday. Fourth, it suggests that *O Combate*'s radical republicanism was one fount of the democratic radicalism of the late 1920s and early 1930s, as well as of the regionally chauvinist constitutionalism of 1932–7. In this rare application of the 'public sphere' idea to twentieth-century Brazil, readers may also detect an account closer to Jürgen Habermas' original formulation than that found in the historiography of nineteenth-century Spanish America.

Keywords: São Paulo, press, public sphere, republicanism

The newspaper *O Combate* has been a source for several important monographs, from Boris Fausto's *Trabalho urbano e conflito social* to George Reid Andrews' *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo*. But even as historians have drawn on *O Combate*, the newspaper remains little understood, given the divergent labels scholars have attached to it. According to Fausto, *O Combate* represented 'social democracy' and 'radical democracy', while Wilson Martins, writing at about the same time, described it as one of São Paulo's 'conservative organs'. A few years later, Barbara Weinstein identified *O Combate* with

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São Paulo's 'grand press', made up of 'large conservative and liberal newspapers ... in contrast to the popular press or that of the working class'. A decade on, Andrews grouped it in São Paulo's 'labour press', while Joel Wolfe saw it as a 'leftist newspaper'.¹

More than confusion or inattention to the substance of a historical source is at issue. *O Combate* has been difficult for historians to define because, as an artefact of and an agent in São Paulo's public life, it confounds much of the established wisdom shaping the formulation of scholarly work on the politics, society and culture of the 1910s and 1920s.

At once regionally patriotic and cosmopolitan, pro-worker but bourgeois in its sensibilities, streetwise and schoolmasterly, nationalistic but anti-*étatiste*, civic-minded and scandal-mongering by turn, deeply attached to the symbols and stories of insurgent, pre-1889 republicanism and to the idea of a 'republicanised republic' but repulsed by the practices and personalities of the republic that was, *O Combate* was neither a 'conservative organ' nor a 'labour newspaper', nor did it represent liberalism or social democracy. Rather, the newspaper's politics were republican in their attachment to a nineteenth-century ideal, radical in their challenge to the existing political order and peculiar to São Paulo in their regional patriotism. Here, in São Paulo in the 1910s and 1920s, was a radical republicanism absent from the scholarship, which holds that 'the [only] radicals of the republic' (that is, of 1889–1930) were the xenophobic Jacobins who enjoyed their heyday in Rio de Janeiro in the 1890s.²

Given its apparent anomalousness, defining *O Combate*'s radical republicanism requires significant description of the newspaper's first run, from 1915 to 1922, during which it remained under the control of a single family and maintained a consistent editorial line. Such description also provides a broader

¹ Boris Fausto, *Trabalho urbano e conflito social* (4th edition, São Paulo: Difel, 1986 [1976]), pp. 160 n. 7, 210; Wilson Martins, *História da inteligência brasileira*, vol. 6 (2nd edition, São Paulo: T. A. Queiroz, 1996 [1978]), p. 98; Barbara Weinstein, 'Impressões da elite sobre os movimentos da classe operária: a cobertura da greve em *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 1902–1907', in Maria Helena Capelato, Maria Lígia Prado and Barbara Weinstein, *O bravo matutino: imprensa e ideologia no jornal 'O Estado de S. Paulo'* (São Paulo: Alfa-Omega, 1980), pp. 135–6; George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888–1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 340; Joel Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 23. It should be noted that none of these authors took *O Combate* as their principal subject; for most, the use of *O Combate* as a source forced them to characterise a newspaper that, despite its importance, hardly features in the historiography of the Brazilian press.

² See Suely Robles Reis de Queiroz, *Os radicais da república* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986); and Boris Fausto, 'Brazil: The Social and Political Structure of the First Republic, 1889–1930', in Leslie Bethell (ed.), *Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 808–9.

vista on the history of these years, which in turn offers a second contribution beyond the uncovering of a neglected political tradition.

This contribution concerns *O Combate's* place in São Paulo's print culture, and that print culture's place in São Paulo's public life. *O Combate's* circulation never matched that of São Paulo's leading morning newspapers, but it did reach tens of thousands of people, from 'humble workers' to 'the intellectual class', at a time in which such reach was thought boastworthy.³ Nor was *O Combate* alone in reaching this substantial, socially variegated audience. The newspaper was just one of a number of publications that made up a Paulista 'yellow press', a slur *O Combate's* editors embraced from the beginning.⁴ This yellow press gave voice to some of the concerns of men and women who are often assumed to have had no place in the public life of these years by opening its columns to readers and seeking to interpret and direct 'public opinion'. The experience of *O Combate* and similar publications thus belies portrayals of these years which insist that public life was so anaemic that 'space for spontaneity and creativity [on the part of] citizens [did] not exist' and 'local life went on as if History did not occur there, as if its space was on the margin of History'.⁵ Indeed, the reach and range of *O Combate* and its sister publications, together with their transcendence of individual readership and their engagement of word-of-mouth communication and public mobilisation, suggest that they may be pointed to as key institutions in the making of a public sphere during years in which the reigning historiographical wisdom

³ Quotes from *O Combate* (hereafter *OC*), 30 June 1915, p. 2.

⁴ *OC*, 24 April 1915, p. 2. The term 'Paulista' as an adjective indicates that something is of the state of São Paulo; as a noun it refers to someone from the same state. The term 'yellow press' was borrowed, in translation (*imprensa amarella*, in the orthography of the early twentieth century), from the Anglo-American press. In its original sense, it indicated the lower quality of paper used in printing, but it came to reference a host of reader-friendly features found in yellow press publications, from photographs to voyeuristic stories, cartoons to an 'us-against-them' populist humour. For a chatty, 'great men' introduction to the transatlantic exchanges that created the Anglo-American yellow press, see Piers Brendon, *The Life and Death of the Press Barons* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), chaps. 1–8 (on Lord Northcliffe, whose influence on the founders of *O Combate* and of *O Estado de S. Paulo's* evening edition is noted below, see esp. chap. 7). Among many other things, Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace's *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) provides a history-in-miniature of the western Atlantic side of this story, where the journalists involved tended to have politics closer to the Rangel Pestanas' radical republicanism than to Lord Northcliffe's Toryism: see pp. 522–8, 640–1, 676–9, 1151–4, 1189–90, 1213–16.

⁵ Hercídia Mara Facuri Coelho Lambert, 'Festa e participação popular: São Paulo, início do século XX', *História*, 13 (1994), p. 123; José de Souza Martins, *Subúrbio. Vida cotidiana e história no subúrbio da cidade de São Paulo: São Caetano, do fim do império ao fim da república velha* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1992), p. 13. See also Barbara Weinstein's résumé of the widely shared understanding of Paulista public life that undergirds these two quotations: 'Postcolonial Brazil', in José C. Moya (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 227–31.

has scarcely considered the possibility of such a development.⁶ In this public sphere – ‘a space of mediation between civil society and the state, and for the participation of vast sectors of the population in ... public life’, to quote Hilda Sabato – the Paulista ‘little press’ stood with the ‘grand press’ represented by newspapers like *O Estado de S. Paulo* as an institutional facilitator and fomentor of public agency.⁷

Amid a brief golden age, the success of the editors and writers of *O Combate* and their yellow-press fellows was such that they attracted allies, imitators and employers whose importance in the unfolding of Brazil’s twentieth-century history is widely acknowledged. Among the imitators and employers were the forerunners of today’s *Folha de S. Paulo* and the Paulista outposts of the Diários Associados chain, ‘modern’ newspapers that were midwived by the experience and expertise of yellow-press veterans. The history of *O Combate* and the print culture of which it was a part thus offer a third contribution to understandings of twentieth-century Brazil and, in particular, the deep roots of the newspapers that would tower over that century’s history.

By the time of the full flourishing of these ‘modern’ newspapers, *O Combate* and the now-forgotten public sphere within which it had thrived were no more, the former having been overtaken by the new competition, the latter increasingly swamped by ‘publicity work’, more or less as a good Habermasian would expect.⁸ The radical republicanism of *O Combate*’s founders was spent by then also, but not before it had contributed to the making of two regional political traditions of widely acknowledged import, a fourth and final contribution that an accounting of the newspaper’s history may make to understandings of twentieth-century Brazil.

⁶ Weinstein writes, ‘[Maria Lígia] Prado and others have used the many newspapers published in São Paulo as crucial primary sources, while some historians have made the press their specific object of inquiry. Despite the robust state of newspaper journalism in this era, with at least a dozen mainstream dailies being published, along with more ephemeral popular and working-class publications, these are rarely portrayed as forming the basis for a bourgeois public sphere’: see Weinstein, ‘Postcolonial Brazil’, p. 229. That essay’s footnotes suggest that one could replace Weinstein’s ‘are rarely portrayed’ with ‘have not been portrayed’.

⁷ Hilda Sabato, *The Many and the Few: Political Participation in Republican Buenos Aires* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 2. Sabato’s oeuvre (see also ‘Citizenship, Political Participation, and the Formation of the Public Sphere in Buenos Aires, 1850s–1880s’, *Past and Present*, 136 (1992), pp. 139–63) offers the most celebrated example of the application of the Habermasian ‘public sphere’ idea to Latin American history. It is also representative of the literature in that the latter is dominated by work on nineteenth-century Spanish America, while the twentieth century and especially twentieth-century Brazil have been conspicuously absent until recently. For an overview, see Pablo Piccato, ‘Public Sphere in Latin America: A Map of The Historiography’, *Social History*, 35: 2 (2010), pp. 165–92; a recent exception is James P. Woodard, *A Place in Politics: São Paulo, Brazil, from Seigneurial Republicanism to Regionalist Revolt* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

⁸ See Jürgen Habermas (trans. Thomas Burger), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), part IV.

'A Modern-Style Newspaper', Its Politics and Its Public

O Combate was founded in April 1915 by two brothers, Nereu and Acylyno Rangel Pestana, whose late father, Francisco Rangel Pestana, had helped lead São Paulo's late nineteenth-century republican movement. Nereu, born in the city of São Paulo in 1878, received his early education at the Escola Neutralidade, founded by Antônio Silva Jardim and João Köpke as a haven for the children of republicans, positivists and freethinkers. He was subsequently trained in dentistry and orthodontics but appears never to have established a practice, instead alternating between journalism and public service; the latter included an early twentieth-century stint as a propagandist for Brazil in France, where he might have been inspired by the Third Republic's newspaper wars. Eleven years older than Acylyno and seven years older than Ludolpho (a third brother, who joined *O Combate* at some point after 1915), Nereu was the newspaper's director until March 1918, when he stepped down from all editorial responsibilities. Thereafter, he became famous for the send-ups of São Paulo politicians that he published as 'Ivan Subiroff', a selection of which were reprinted in a book entitled *A oligarchia paulista*. An attempt at stretching this pseudonymous celebrity into a new tabloid, which he dubbed the *Jornal do Subiroff*, failed, and early 1922 found him living in Rio de Janeiro. Along the way, he joined the quasi-socialist Clarté group, a further indication of the influence of French intellectual life.⁹

Acylyno, born in 1889, was Francisco Rangel Pestana's youngest son. He was a graduate of the São Paulo Law School, but journalism rather than the law was his calling. At *O Combate*'s founding, Acylyno's formal title was secretary; in 1918, Acylyno replaced his brother as director, a position he held until December 1922, when ill health and unspecified financial pressures compelled him to transfer the newspaper's title, offices and print shop to another group of journalists and their deeper-pocketed backers. In 1925 Acylyno regained control over *O Combate*, but his role in this third stage of the newspaper's publishing history was cut short the following year by his untimely death. His funeral procession brought out thousands of local residents.¹⁰ Ludolpho, born in 1885, joined *O Combate* in the late 1910s or soon thereafter, although his

⁹ Edith Saboia, 'Francisco Rangel Pestana: notas biográficas por ocasião do centenário do seu nascimento, 1839–1939', *Revista do Arquivo Municipal*, 61 (1939), p. 32; Luís Correia de Melo, *Dicionário de autores paulistas* (São Paulo: n.p., 1954), p. 470; J. P. Leite Cordeiro, 'Necrológios dos sócios falecidos em 1951', *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo* (hereafter *RIHGSP*), 50 (1952), pp. 261–2; 'Falecimentos', *O Estado de S. Paulo* (hereafter *OESP*), 19 April 1951, p. 6; *OC*, 12 March 1918, p. 1; *OC*, 7 Dec. 1920, p. 1; *OC*, 25 March 1922, p. 1; Everardo Dias, *História das lutas sociais no Brasil* (2nd edition, São Paulo: Alfa-Omega, 1977 [1962]), p. 108; Martins, *História da inteligência*, p. 200.

¹⁰ *OC*, 1 Oct. 1926, p. 1; *OESP*, 2 Oct. 1926, p. 6; *OC*, 2 Oct. 1926, p. 1; *OC*, 8 Oct. 1926, p. 1; *OC*, 1 Oct. 1928, p. 1.

name would not appear on the masthead until 1925. After Acylino's death, Ludolpho attempted to carry on the family tradition in an increasingly competitive newspaper-publishing environment, at points in cooperation with Nereu, but Acylino was clearly irreplaceable.¹¹

Through *O Combate's* early years, the self-proclaimed 'modern-style newspaper' was usually published as a tabloid – a single, double-sided sheet of newsprint, folded once to form four pages, each roughly 48 by 65 centimetres. Subsequent technological improvements made for larger runs, larger pages, multiple daily editions and issues of six or more pages, but a single four-page afternoon edition remained the usual format. Throughout the newspaper's first incarnation, from 24 April 1915 to 5 December 1922, *O Combate's* masthead bore a simple motto: 'Independence, Truth, Justice'. The cover also nearly always carried at least one photograph, a reader-friendly feature rarely seen in more traditional newspapers before the advent of the yellow press (in São Paulo as had been the case elsewhere in the world). A single issue cost 100 reals, the same as *O Estado de S. Paulo* (then the largest-circulation São Paulo newspaper, liberal in politics but traditional in style), but its 12-month and six-month subscriptions were considerably cheaper. As a newspaper dedicated to 'patriotic propaganda and the defence of the weak and oppressed', *O Combate* was also available by monthly subscription, 'in view of the innumerable and insistent requests of ... readers' who could not afford annual or six-month subscriptions.¹²

The cover of *O Combate's* debut issue was dominated by a call to arms. Taking a page from Montesquieu ('The ruin of a republic is the absence of struggle'), the Rangel Pestana brothers declared their desire for a press that would 'reinforce and purify the voice of [public] opinion, this complex voice made up of the rumour of all of the towns and cities'. 'It would not be immodest', they argued, 'to say that journalism, understood thusly, almost does not exist today in S. Paulo', with lamentable results:

Without a free press, or more accurately, with a press timidly circumscribed to its industrial [i.e., economic] function, it is not possible for honest government to exist, nor proper administrative management, nor political education of the popular masses, nor a school for continual betterment of our statesmen. How many small abuses would be avoided and how many others would cease to assume the proportions of astonishing, unpunished crimes, if our leaders were accustomed to seeing all of their acts submitted to severe and impartial criticism!¹³

Their call to arms indicated that the Rangel Pestanas aimed to struggle within São Paulo's patriotic, republican tradition rather than against it, with

¹¹ Saboia, 'Francisco Rangel Pestana', p. 32; João Gogliano to Nilo Peçanha, São Paulo, 19 July 1921, in 'Correspondência recebida dos estados de São Paulo ... de junho a setembro de 1921...', Museu da República, Arquivo Nilo Peçanha, caixa 55.

¹² *OC*, 5 May 1915, p. 2.

¹³ *OC*, 24 April 1915, p. 1.

references to such fallen greats as Campos Salles and to their home state as ‘the land of the Andradas’ – two key appeals to regional patriotism – as well as to the constitutional principles ‘so curiously applauded out there [outside of São Paulo] by Paulista politicians’. *O Combate*’s founders also made plain their intention to abstain from the degraded practices overseen by those politicians: none of the newspaper’s staffers, it was held, ‘aspire[d] even to be justice of the peace’, a typical starting point for a career in machine politics.¹⁴

Over the years that followed, the Rangel Pestanas counted on the collaboration of dozens of writers. The most important was Rubens do Amaral, both for his influence on the newspaper and for his importance in the history of Paulista public life. A career newspaperman from the interior who made his start writing for the sales clerks and stock boys of the state capital, he was the first journalist to contribute a signed article to *O Combate*, a piece that welcomed the newspaper to the field and hailed its mission as a regional sequel to nineteenth-century abolitionism: ‘to liberate morally and politically ... the Paulistas of today’. At that point Rubens do Amaral was the director of another newspaper, but soon thereafter he left that job for an editorial position at *O Combate*, a job he held, save for one interruption, into late 1919. His influence was such that one of *O Combate*’s employees would later remember him as having been a co-founder. As an in-house journalist and an editorial board member, Rubens do Amaral’s contributions to *O Combate*’s columns went unsigned, but he was also an avid contributor, under his own name, to São Paulo’s greatest publishing sensation of the 1910s: the scandal-mongering magazine *O Parafuso*, likewise founded to ‘defend the cause of the Paulista People’. The two yellow-press periodicals shared not only a key contributor but also an anti-government outlook and a populist, irreverent style.¹⁵

Other contributors linked *O Combate* to political traditions old and new. Carlos de Escobar had been an active republican and abolitionist in the 1880s; in the following decade he was a co-founder of one of Brazil’s first avowedly ‘socialist’ groups, though his socialism was eclectic, shot through

¹⁴ *Ibid.* On Paulista machine politics during these years, see Woodard, *A Place in Politics*, esp. pp. 33–47.

¹⁵ *Revista da Academia Paulista de Letras*, 9 (1940), pp. 123–24; Edgard Cavalheiro (ed.), *Testamento de uma geração* (Porto Alegre: Livraria do Globo, 1944), pp. 227–36; Silveira Peixoto, *Falam os escritores*, vol. 1 (2nd edition, São Paulo: Conselho Estadual de Cultura, 1971 [1941]), pp. 185–91; Melo, *Dicionário de autores*, pp. 44–5, 372; Raimundo de Menezes, *Dicionário literário brasileiro* (2nd edition, Rio de Janeiro: Livros Técnicos e Científicos, 1978 [1969]), pp. 38–9; João Gabriel Sant’Ana, *Repertório biográfico e genealógico paulista* (São Paulo: n.p., 1987), pp. 67, 69; Freitas Nobre, *História da imprensa de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Edições Leia, 1950), p. 209; *OC*, 27 April 1915, p. 2 (quoted); *OC*, 14 March 1916, p. 1; *OC*, 14 March 1918, p. 2; *OC*, 3 Nov. 1919, p. 2; *OC*, 3 Nov. 1919, p. 3; *OC*, 4 Nov. 1919, p. 3; Benedicto de Andrade to Ruy Barbosa, Rio de Janeiro, 15 April 1915, Casa de Rui Barbosa, CR71/5 (‘to defend...’).

with Comtean positivism. Nicolau Soares de Couto Esher had served in the field as a young volunteer in defence of the nascent republic against the rebellions of the 1890s; like Escobar, his faith led him to anticlericalism, though he was a Presbyterian rather than a positivist. Benjamin Mota, a key contributor to São Paulo's anticlerical and anti-capitalist press of the turn of the twentieth century, was by the time of his contributions to *O Combate* drifting away from an anarchist-tinged internationalism and toward re-engagement with republican politics and the nation-state.

The precise number of readers reached by the contributions of Mota, Esher and Escobar – or by any of *O Combate*'s single issues – is impossible to calculate. Newspapers rarely published circulation information during these years, and when they did, such information was often unreliable. Moreover, the number of copies printed was in almost every case smaller than the actual number of readers, as single copies routinely reached more than one reader.

That said, a scouring of the record – including press sources and confidential correspondence – indicates that *O Combate* quickly became one of São Paulo's leading afternoon newspapers and that this success gave it a financial position that allowed for periodic technological improvements and a sizeable staff. Further extrapolation from this data suggests that around 8,000–9,000 copies of the newspaper were sold each day during *O Combate*'s early years, including to subscribers, with issues reaching runs in the low to mid-10,000s in the late 1910s and early 1920s.¹⁶

During these years, printed matter frequently changed hands before being consigned to the rubbish bin. In 1915 Monteiro Lobato estimated that the 40,000 copies of each issue of *O Estado de S. Paulo* reached 'one hundred thousand readers', a number that certainly increased as the circulation did.¹⁷ In 1919 *O Parafuso*'s director addressed his magazine's 'fifty- or hundred-thousand readers', a claim suggesting an even greater number of readers

¹⁶ *O Parafuso* (hereafter *OP*), 20 Oct. 1917; *A Guide to the Press of Central and South America*, 2nd edition, part II: *Brazil. Paraguay. Guiana (French)*, March 1921, from Foreign Office Library, published in George Philip (ed.), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, part II: *From the First to the Second World War*, Series D: *Latin America, 1914–1939*, vol. 1: *South America, 1914–1922* (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1989), pp. 271–339; Association of National Advertisers, *Advertising and Merchandising in Brazil: Material Gathered by Harold McD. Brown, Corona Typewriter Company, for the Export Committee* (New York: Association of National Advertisers, 1921), p. 50; Annibal Machado to Diretório Central, São Paulo, 30 Aug. 1926, Arquivo do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo, Arquivo Partido Democrático, pacote 45; C. R. Cameron, 'Fascism in São Paulo', Report no. 167, São Paulo, 29 Oct. 1928, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Record Group 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Consular Posts, São Paulo, Brazil, vol. 90, class 800.

¹⁷ Tania Regina de Luca, *A 'Revista do Brasil': um diagnóstico para a (n)ação* (São Paulo: Editora da UNESP, 1999), p. 38.

per copy.¹⁸ For their part, *O Combate's* editors explained that a single newspaper 'never has just one reader: the one who buys it lends it to someone who hasn't bought it, and you may calculate an average of three readers for every issue'.¹⁹ Using these estimates and the circulation estimates above, one may make the conservative guess that each issue of *O Combate* reached between 24,000 and 36,000 people at a time in which there were at most 200,000 literate adults living in the state capital.²⁰ Keeping in mind that only 5 per cent of Brazilians were thought to read newspapers regularly during a period that was perhaps the print media's peak, despite much-improved literacy rates, the likely number of readers reached by *O Combate* as copies of the tabloid changed hands seems somewhat more impressive than it otherwise might.²¹

Much of this reading took place in public spaces. In 'the drugstores, the barbershops, the cafés, the cultural and recreational associations and clubs', periodicals were kept on hand for clients and members.²² Given its coverage of the city's associational life – along with the press, one of the two institutional poles of the public sphere, in São Paulo as elsewhere – one imagines that *O Combate* was also on hand in the meeting rooms of the city's working men's groups, the social halls of neighbourhood associations and the lodges of the city's freemasons.

The practice of posting up-to-the-minute notices outside newspapers' offices was a further means by which news was disseminated. As a result of such postings, the streets and squares in front of these offices, including *O Combate's*, became gathering places and spaces of sociability for the curious and committed alike; when attempts were made to rally the public one way or another, these spaces became sites for speeches and demonstrations.²³

The city's newspaper boys served to further propagate the news of the day and expand the reach of the press as they traipsed through the city bellowing the headlines. While the precise extent to which newspaper boys brought non-readers or occasional readers into São Paulo's republic of letters is unclear,

¹⁸ *OP*, 25 Feb. 1919.

¹⁹ *OC*, 15 March 1921, p. 1.

²⁰ De Luca, *A 'Revista do Brasil'*, p. 59; Ana Luiza Martins, *Revistas em revista: imprensa e práticas culturais em tempos de república* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial, 2001), pp. 199–201; Joseph L. Love, *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation, 1889–1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980), pp. 26, 92; Jorge Caldeira, 'Júlio Mesquita, fundador do jornalismo moderno no Brasil', in Júlio Mesquita, *A guerra, 1914–1918* (São Paulo: Terceiro Nome, 2002), p. 21.

²¹ The 5 per cent estimate is from Maria Helena Capelato, *A imprensa na história do Brasil* (São Paulo: Contexto, 1988), p. 11.

²² Martins, *Revistas em revista*, p. 234.

²³ Jorge Americano, *São Paulo nesse tempo, 1915–1935* (São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 1962), p. 222; Ecléa Bosi, *Memória e sociedade* (São Paulo: T. A. Queiroz, 1979), p. 263; *OC*, 28 Jan. 1916, p. 4; *OC*, 24 Oct. 1921, p. 1.

their commercial importance is illustrated by periodic contests awarding cash prizes to top sellers.²⁴

Still more people came into the orbit of *O Combate* and the yellow press of which it was a part through rumour and word of mouth more broadly. These incompletely understood social networks were both a source for stories and a vehicle for the further extension of the press's influence. As Afonso Schmidt remembered of the cartoonist Lemmo Lemmi, a frequent contributor to the yellow press, 'his criticisms, published in the newspapers, were repeated in salons, in cafés, on streetcars, on street corners, everywhere'.²⁵

'For the Proletariat'

In their first issue, *O Combate's* editors explained that given its 'popular character' their tabloid 'could not keep from dedicating one of its sections to the proletariat, as the European newspapers and the most important Carioca dailies do'. This section would provide 'the workers of S. Paulo' with news of 'everything of interest that occurs in working-class life'.²⁶

It was a tall order, but *O Combate* delivered on this commitment. Initially in the column 'For the Proletariat' and later throughout the paper, readers received coverage of strikes, meetings and recreational events. Although *O Combate's* editors, like most of São Paulo's opinion leaders, came to support Brazil's joining the war against the Central Powers, its columns remained open to antiwar Left-labour militants.²⁷

Access to the pages of *O Combate* was not limited to the working men and women of the city of São Paulo; it extended to workers in outlying counties and throughout the state. For example, when the stoneworkers and brick-makers of Ribeirão Pires were subjected to police harassment, they counted on the newspaper to publicise their protests. Similarly, the dismal treatment that workers received at Sorocaba's Votorantim textile factory was the subject of a front-page report in June 1917.²⁸

Amid the unprecedented militancy that began the following month and continued, in fits and starts, into the early 1920s, *O Combate* remained a friend to labour, supporting the demands of strikers in cities and towns throughout São Paulo and lobbying the government for the release and repatriation of

²⁴ Jorge Americano, *São Paulo naquele tempo, 1895-1915* (2nd edition, São Paulo: Carrenho, 2004 [1957]), pp. 172-3; Tito Batini, *Memórias de um socialista congênito* (Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP, 1991), pp. 115, 118, 120, 136; Bosi, *Memória e sociedade*, p. 247; Martins, *Revistas em revista*, pp. 234, 481-2, 484; *OC*, 21 May 1915, p. 1; *OC*, 21 May 1917, p. 1.

²⁵ Afonso Schmidt, 'Voltolino', *Paulistania*, March/April 1949, p. 14.

²⁶ *OC*, 24 April 1915, p. 2. The adjective 'Carioca' refers to the city of Rio de Janeiro.

²⁷ *OC*, 27 April 1915, p. 2; *OC*, 19 April 1917, p. 3.

²⁸ *OC*, 31 Jan. 1916, p. 1; *OC*, 27 June 1917, p. 1.

leaders who were jailed and exiled. Even in late 1919, by which time public sympathy had begun to ebb, *O Combate* continued to note the ‘calm and resigned attitude’ of rank-and-file strikers, to publish statements by the editors of the anarchist *A Plebe*, and to protest the illegal detention and expulsion of workers and working-class leaders. A regular labour column continued to run as long as the Rangel Pestanas controlled the newspaper.²⁹

‘To Defend the Rights and Interests of the People’

O Combate’s working-class reporting and remonstrations were directed at and issued for wage-earning manual workers (and thus, under ordinary circumstances, would be limited in their intrinsic interest to a well-defined social group), but other materials were designed to appeal to and on behalf of larger but less distinct portions of the population. The newspaper’s consistent championing of São Paulo’s ‘people’ as consumers of civic services and goods and its support for consumer-based public mobilisation illustrate this aspect of its programme, in which a unitary social category elided distinctions between wage-earning and salaried, manual and non-manual, propertied and unpropertied.

Three months after *O Combate’s* founding, a commission was formed to petition São Paulo’s municipal government and the Canadian-owned Tramway, Light and Power Company, known to residents as ‘the Light’, for lower-fare streetcars. When Nereu Rangel Pestana was asked to join the commission, he accepted, explaining that *O Combate*, ‘made to defend the rights and interests of the people, puts itself at the side of those who will request this measure from the municipal powers-that-be and the Light ... It is through insistent propaganda among all social classes that one is able to sway public opinion, forcing rulers to satisfy the aspirations of the people.’³⁰

When the city’s degree candidates (*bacharelandos*) sought lower-rate student streetcar passes, they also received the support of *O Combate*. After police prevented student leaders from addressing crowds gathered in front of other newspapers’ offices, Nereu opened *O Combate’s* offices to a medical student so that he could address the public from a second-floor window. In familiar language, the student decried police interference and argued that it was necessary ‘to continue the protest by all legal means so as to compel the public powers-that-be to protect the rights of the people and not become defenders of the gouging of the Light’. He was followed by a law student who spoke from the street, saluting *O Combate* and denouncing ‘the actions of the police, persecuting the peaceful people, who come together, unarmed, to

²⁹ *OC*, 25 Oct. 1919, p. 1; *OC*, 27 Oct. 1919, p. 3; *OC*, 3 Dec. 1919, p. 1; *OC*, 18 May 1921, p. 3; *OC*, 8 April 1922, p. 3.

³⁰ *OC*, 28 July 1915, p. 4.

demand the carrying out of the laws and the contracts of the Light'. Amid applause, Nereu replied, thanking the student for his tribute and promising that *O Combate* 'would always be on the side of the people, counselling calm, order, and persistence in this campaign against the abuses of the Light'. The crowds that these speakers addressed encompassed relatively privileged bacharelandos, manual workers, middle-class types and other urbanites.³¹

The 'Canadian Octopus', as the Light (including its power service, its gas subsidiary and, eventually, its telephone company) was also known, was a favourite target of *O Combate* and the broader yellow press. In October 1915, *O Combate* claimed that its intervention had compelled the Light to honour its contract with the municipal government and lower its electricity rates. Later in the decade, one of the newspaper's writers charged, 'The petulance with which the San Paulo Gas Co. treats the public is only equalled by that of the Light, because the one is actually a subsidiary of the other.'³²

Second only to the Light as a target for the ire of *O Combate* and other yellow-press periodicals were 'the monopolists' who controlled the processing, distribution and sale of basic foodstuffs, the most prominent of whom were the great Italian immigrant capitalists Francisco Matarazzo and Egidio Pinotti Gamba. As the world war dragged on, and with it wartime inflation and shortages, denunciations of the 'half-dozen speculators' who were 'making themselves multi-millionaires' while starving 'the Paulista people' increased in pitch and frequency, and were combined with calls for popular mobilisation and government intervention.³³

'Our Arrabaldes'

Outlying working-class and middle-class neighbourhoods, ignored by the big morning newspapers, were accorded a good deal of coverage in *O Combate*. From the beginning, the newspaper maintained an office in Brás, a largely working-class neighbourhood east of downtown; soon thereafter, it began to dedicate a column to Ipiranga, on what was then the city's south-eastern fringe. Still later, reporting on events in Lapa, a community to the north-west of the city centre, came to be a feature of the newspaper. Purlieus like Lapa, Ipiranga and Brás were identified as 'our *arrabaldes*', where the newspaper's popularity prompted the creation of new distribution networks.³⁴

³¹ *OC*, 4 Aug. 1915, p. 1 (quoted), also mentions a 'worker', a commercial employee, a solicitor and a stonemason who were injured when police broke up the protest. Decades later, José Correia Leite, not himself a student, would recall his own participation in such 'student demonstrations'. Cuti (pseud., Luiz Silva) (ed.), *E disse o velho militante José Correia Leite* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, 1992), p. 27.

³² *OC*, 22 Oct. 1915, p. 1; *OC*, 26 July 1919, p. 1. ³³ *OC*, 2 May 1917, p. 1.

³⁴ *OC*, 28 April 1915, p. 2; *OC*, 13 Nov. 1915, p. 1; *OC*, 10 Feb. 1917, p. 1; *OC*, 30 June 1915, p. 2.

O Combate did not just report on these areas – it opened its pages to their residents, just as it did for the organised working class. This service was free, and thus available to a wider public than the pay-to-print *secções livres* of the city's morning newspapers. While the epistolary nature of these appeals indicates that some access to literacy was required of contributors, it did not need to be first-hand: nothing stood in the way of the unlettered availing themselves of the services of the literate. Nor, in cases involving petitions, does it seem reasonable to assume that every petitioner possessed the same command of written Portuguese.

An example of the kind of neighbourhood grievance that found its way onto the page is provided by an anonymous denunciation featured in an early issue. Calling for paved, tree-lined streets, Brás residents complained that 'every street or lane on which a most excellent Sr. Dr. "So and So" lives is soon covered with all kinds of improvements ... while streets inhabited by the hard-working classes are, for the most part, destined to abandonment'.³⁵

At least one reader from Cambuci, another largely working-class neighbourhood, credited *O Combate's* efforts with achieving the desired results. It was due to the protests of *O Combate* – 'the valiant paladin of popular causes' – that the municipal government had begun the paving of a local thoroughfare.³⁶

Miles from downtown, in Osasco, a local businessman – for honest *negociantes* were counted among the people also – complained that Continental Products' fertiliser factory was a 'focal point of infection', an inconvenience to travellers on the Sorocabana railway and the cause of much suffering on the part of the district's 'poor residents'. *O Combate's* editors dutifully published his letter, adding that the relevant inspector was shirking his responsibilities because of the municipal government's need for 'American gold'.³⁷

Reporting and reclamations from the arrabaldes were not limited to the material conditions of the outlying neighbourhoods; moral concerns could also come into play, as in *O Combate's* appeal to authorities when an upstanding property owner in Brás was insulted by a police corporal and failed to get satisfaction. Moral concerns were similarly at stake when the newspaper took up a local appeal for a crackdown on illegal gambling.³⁸

For the Aesthetics of the City ... For Hygiene'

O Combate's dedication to the people of the arrabaldes was patent, but this should not be taken to mean that its writers and readers were immune to boosterish zeal for the beautification and development of the city as a whole,

³⁵ *OC*, 28 April 1915, p. 1.

³⁷ *OC*, 25 July 1916, p. 4.

³⁶ *OC*, 31 Jan. 1916, p. 1.

³⁸ *OC*, 3 May 1915, p. 4; *OC*, 18 Sep. 1916, p. 1.

including its chic downtown. Rather, these writers and readers sought to ensure that the benefits of progress were shared more equitably, even as they continued to pride themselves on the renovation of the city centre. The resulting campaigns for aesthetic improvements and extended services combined self-conscious civic-mindedness with middle-class moralising and anxiety over dirt and disease, much of it not unreasonable.

The aesthetic improvement of downtown São Paulo was a matter of concern for *O Combate's* editors and writers from the very beginning. The first issue carried a cover story entitled 'The Beautification of the Largo de S. Bento'. Under the caption 'For the Aesthetics of the City', the article called for the improvement of the square, a 'monument to neglect' on the part of city leaders.³⁹ Days later, under the same caption, the newspaper called for the levelling of abandoned structures in the city centre, to be 'transformed into public latrine[s]'.⁴⁰ Similar articles bore the subtitle 'For Hygiene'.⁴¹ The caption 'For Hygiene' also graced an article written in support of a proposed municipal law, put forward soon after the 1918 influenza epidemic, that would make it a crime to spit on the pavement, in the city's trams or in any building open to the public. Proceeds from fines would be donated to the Paulista Anti-Tuberculosis League.⁴²

Even as *O Combate* endorsed the remaking of downtown São Paulo and the civilising of its citizenry, access to clean water remained a concern for all city inhabitants. In 1917, with rumours flying regarding the potential consequences of Brazilian entry into the First World War, the newspaper proclaimed 'The Water Is Poisoned!', with the accompanying captions explaining: 'By the government, not the Germans'; 'Two deaths by typhoid last week'. The poor quality of São Paulo's water supply prompted constant criticism of the government's Sanitary Service.⁴³

Sanitarily prepared foodstuffs were another concern of *O Combate*, its readers and the yellow press more broadly. A story of meat that was rejected by the city slaughterhouse but later made into sausages reportedly caused a 'sensation' among readers. Cases of food poisoning received prominent coverage, and the newspaper offered to have the purity of any foodstuffs manufactured in the city tested by an independently contracted laboratory. Here, again, were stories and services specifically designed to inform, protect and engage urban consumers (and, of course, to sell newspapers).⁴⁴

Public safety and private property were subjects of similar concern. On occasion, *O Combate* congratulated the police for their efforts to serve and protect, but it was far more common for the newspaper to contrast the daring

³⁹ *OC*, 24 April 1915, p. 1.

⁴¹ For example, *OC*, 29 May 1915, p. 1.

⁴³ *OC*, 19 April 1917, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *OC*, 28 April 1915, p. 1.

⁴² *OC*, 3 Feb. 1919, p. 1.

⁴⁴ *OC*, 30 Aug. 1916, p. 1.

of the city's criminal element with the haplessness of the police: 'Thieves Broke into a Retail-Goods Store', proclaimed one headline, while '[t]he police, as always, slept'.⁴⁵

Civic concern could, and often did, lend itself to middle-class moralising, as in *O Combate's* periodic campaigns against gambling. It was also clear in a 1917 piece that asked, 'Which is the Most Moralised Neighbourhood in S. Paulo?' The answer was to be found, according to *O Combate*, in each neighbourhood's rate of out-of-wedlock births. In a populist twist, official demographic data was found to indicate that 'the rate of illegitimacy is lower precisely in the poor neighbourhoods, where workers live', proving that the working class, comprised largely of immigrants and their descendants, was more 'moral' than 'gold and *chauvinismo*' (metonymical representations of idly rich, old-stock aristocrats) would have one believe.⁴⁶

Love and Blood'

For all their civic-minded moralising and parish-pump petitioning, the Rangel Pestanas were not above exploiting scandal to sell newspapers. Sensationalism in the form of luridly illustrated stories of violent crimes and horrific accidents was an easy means of attracting public attention and boosting sales.

Beneath the caption 'Love and Blood', an early issue of *O Combate* told the story of a barber who, finding his advances rebuffed by a seamstress, stabbed her and then shot himself. A similarly bloody story made headlines in 1918, when legal-separation proceedings ended in an honour killing in a lawyer's office. Such articles were the newspaper's near-daily bread.⁴⁷

In the case of train wrecks or gruesome workplace accidents, scandalous reporting might reinforce *O Combate's* established positions in favour of working people and the broader public. One of the darkest examples of this kind of editorial comment accompanied public outcry over the case of an eight-year-old boy who lost the fingers on his right hand in an accident at a Barra Funda workshop: 'it is regrettable that the yellow press joins together with these whining individuals, at a time in which one should teach children suffering and preparation for death'. This article, following grimly sarcastic references to unanswered calls for better government oversight of child labour, closed with the parting shot: 'Therefore, do not accuse the government, which, as always, has done its duty.'⁴⁸ The Sorocabana railway, which stretched from the city of São Paulo into the western reaches of the state, was a familiar target. Periodic accidents – 'the ruin of many people' – provided opportunities for criticism of working conditions on the railway and the poor quality of the railway's

⁴⁵ *OC*, 30 July 1919, p. 1.

⁴⁶ *OC*, 9 Jan. 1917, p. 4, emphasis in original.

⁴⁷ *OC*, 29 June 1915, p. 4; *OC*, 28 Feb. 1918, p. 1.

⁴⁸ *OC*, 3 Jan. 1918, p. 1.

passenger and freight services. Scandalous reporting, in these contexts, not only responded to prurient interest but also formed part of the Rangel Pestanas' broader campaigns on behalf of São Paulo's 'people'.⁴⁹

Similarly, scandalous reporting involving priests jibed with the newspaper's republicanism. Stories of lecherous, money-grubbing men of the cloth reinforced the anticlerical rationalism that had informed pre-1889 republicanism and the curriculum at the Escola Neutralidade, and which at that point still lived on among radicals of all stripes, from old republicans like Carlos de Escobar to the anarchist contributors to 'For the Proletariat'.⁵⁰

'What the Republic is Good For'

No less scandalous than clerical lechery, in the eyes of these writers and many of their readers, were the practices of São Paulo's politicians. These leaders were ranked alongside the Light and speculators in foodstuffs as enemies of the people in daily accounts of privilege, filthy lucre, electoral fraud and political violence.

An early article entitled 'What the Republic Is Good For' made clear *whom* the Republic was good for: 'privileged families'. While *O Combate's* writers, local residents and the city's small businessmen petitioned for improvements, well-paved streets and sidewalks were built for the exclusive benefit of the powerful Rodrigues Alves family. The article ended with the remark: 'And they still say that the Republic ended highborn privileges and that all are equal before the law!'⁵¹

In 1917 *O Combate* pilloried Jorge Tibiriçá, president of the state senate, for his support of a budget that included 'scandalous measures, to his own personal benefit ... at the cost of the money of the people, who are the ones who pay for the comforts and caprices of the grandes'. Two measures that were particularly deserving of censure were pay raises for legislative staff, which typically included 'a son, a son-in-law or a nephew' of 'each of the backwoods lords', and a subsidy for a limousine that would shuttle Tibiriçá around town, at the public's expense, at a time when 'the people struggle with the misery that the government causes them, [and] in which taxes are raised barbarously'.⁵²

Tibiriçá's case involved the use of power for solely personal and familial gain, but charges of corruption involving sweetheart deals for the 'trusts' were also made.⁵³ In 1919 *O Combate* went so far as to allege that the political boss Antônio Lacerda Franco was scheming on behalf of the Light – after all, had

⁴⁹ *OC*, 13 April 1918, p. 1; *OC*, 3 June 1918, p. 3.

⁵⁰ *OC*, 19 Oct. 1917, p. 1; *OC*, 3 Sep. 1918, p. 1.

⁵¹ *OC*, 29 May 1915, p. 1. ⁵² *OC*, 11 Jan. 1917, p. 1, emphasis in original.

⁵³ For example, *OC*, 16 Aug. 1917, p. 1.

the Canadian-owned company not acquired control over the Companhia Telefônica Brasileira, which Lacerda Franco had owned previously and now represented as a native-born figurehead?⁵⁴

Electoral fraud was another frequent complaint. Following a July 1915 city council by-election, *O Combate* noted that votes for the protest candidate of the city's businessmen were tallied for the 'official candidate'.⁵⁵ Following another such election in August, *O Combate* informed readers that falsified electoral bulletins gave the 'candidate of the government' three or four times the number of votes actually deposited in the city's electoral urns.⁵⁶

Following the next regularly scheduled election, *O Combate* commented at length: 'As a rule, there was no election: some gentlemen amiably took it upon themselves to draw up the reports, after having filled the book [containing the electoral rolls] with hundreds of signatures, without so much as bothering to disguise their handwriting. In the very rare locales in which the polls in fact opened, the ballots absolutely do not represent the popular will.'⁵⁷ The slates of candidates were worked out behind closed doors,

without the slightest consultation of the electorate. These [slates] were supported by the local bosses, who only seek to conquer or maintain themselves in positions of power. They were voted on by ... public functionaries, their relatives and dependents, and the innumerable legion of the dependents of the government or the friends of the government. The people did not ever intervene, not in the selection of candidates, not in the farce of the primaries, not in the electoral act.⁵⁸

Rather, the state president and other bigwigs acted 'for the people ... with the assistance of a half dozen lesser lights'.⁵⁹

This combination of fraud and intimidation was the preferred method to manage elections, but there was another means available to establish and maintain power: the 'savage's politics' of the hired gun and the ambush. The caption 'Savage's Politics', often accompanying a more detailed title, was a ubiquitous presence in the pages of *O Combate*, one that was meant to conjure up the lamentable backwardness upon which incumbent politics ultimately rested.

Criticism of the state's power holders could cut close to home, with unpleasant circumstances for journalists and their families.⁶⁰ During the war years, *O Combate* battled official censorship, which went much further than Brazil's war effort warranted and was used as a stick with which to beat the opposition press.⁶¹ Lawsuits threatened the financial position of the

⁵⁴ *OC*, 5 May 1919, p. 1. ⁵⁵ *OC*, 6 July 1915, p. 1. ⁵⁶ *OC*, 3 Aug. 1915, p. 4.

⁵⁷ *OC*, 3 Feb. 1916, p. 1. ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ How seriously the state's leaders took *O Combate* is illustrated by a February 1917 letter from Rafael Sampaio Filho to Paulo Duarte; see Paulo Duarte, *Memórias*, vol. 3 (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1976), pp. 352–3.

⁶¹ *OC*, 20 Nov. 1917, p. 1; *OC*, 5 Jan. 1918, p. 3; Caldeira, 'Júlio Mesquita', p. 32.

newspaper and its owners; no matter how proud Nereu may have been at being called ‘the most fearless of our journalists’, he and his brothers cannot have enjoyed being dragged into court.⁶² And though Nereu, Acylino, Ludolpho and Rubens do Amaral emerged from *O Combate*’s first eight years unscathed, such was not the case for their colleague Benedicto de Andrade, of *O Parafuso*, who was shot at, at close range, by the enraged subject of one of his stories. Freakish circumstances allowed him to survive this attempt, but burdened by debt and other personal problems, he went on to finish the job himself.⁶³

‘Where Are the Defenders of the Republic?’

O Combate’s outrage regarding incumbent politicking did not extend to the republican project. On the contrary, the Rangel Pestana brothers looked back fondly on the republic’s founding, and their father’s role in it, and sought to make the republic of their day deliver on their dreams, celebrating republicanism as an idea, seeking to rally the public in defence of ‘true’ republicanism, and asking: ‘Is Paulista Civic Virtue Definitely Dead?’ and ‘Where Are the Defenders of the Republic?’ Here were the politics that led them to support all manner of would-be reformers.⁶⁴

In appealing to republicanism as an idea, the Rangel Pestana brothers were participants in a larger effort to create a suitable *história pátria*. Thus the leaders of the republican movement of the 1870s and 1880s were remembered as ‘brothers in the glory and the ideals’ of the republic, and students and the citizenry at large were called upon to honour them, as national heroes were honoured ‘in every country in which patriotic education is not mere verbiage’.⁶⁵ *O Combate* was guided by ‘an ideal: to republicanise the Republic, to make it the regime promised by the Propaganda [of the nineteenth century], to turn it into the government of the people by the people’.⁶⁶ It was an ideal that was tied to a regionalist reading of Brazilian history peculiar to São Paulo, the ‘most republican of the States’, where ‘[a]ll of the great national movements ... had their strongest impulse’: ‘the colonial expansion to the west ... Independence ... Abolitionism ... the Republic’.⁶⁷

O Combate’s publication was heralded by an announcement promising that the newspaper would act ‘without commitments to any political party or group’.⁶⁸ In practice, the newspaper and its editors supported any party,

⁶² *Revista do Brasil*, Nov. 1919, p. 275 (quoted); *OC*, 18 Sep. 1917, p. 1; *OC*, 1 June 1920, p. 1; *OC*, 2 March 1921, p. 1; Duarte, *Memórias*, vol. 5 (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1977), p. 300.

⁶³ *OP*, 18 March 1919; *OC*, 20 Dec. 1921, p. 1; Oswald de Andrade, *Um homem sem profissão* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1954), p. 131; Duarte, *Memórias*, vol. 8 (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1978), pp. 215–18.

⁶⁴ *OC*, 22 Oct. 1915, p. 1; *OC*, 19 Nov. 1915, p. 1.

⁶⁵ *OC*, 28 June 1915, p. 1.

⁶⁶ *OC*, 6 Nov. 1915, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Quotes from *OC* cover stories of 13 Oct. 1916 and 19 Nov. 1915.

group or individual that challenged the existing political machine. Attempts at mobilising businessmen received the same attention as efforts to organise working men. Protest candidates and anti-machine contenders were backed in local, state and national elections. In 1918 *O Combate* supported Luiz Pereira Barreto when he was recruited to stand in a state senate election against José Valois de Castro, a clergyman deplored by many for his sympathy for the Central Powers in the war recently joined by Brazil. The following year, *O Combate* backed Ruy Barbosa in his final bid for Brazil's presidency, during which the elder statesman ran his most convincingly anti-machine campaign and announced his tardy conversion to the cause of social reform. In 1921–2, when Nilo Peçanha challenged the establishment presidential candidate, the newspaper made his Republican Reaction movement its cause as well. In these cases, *O Combate* contributed to election campaigns that brought out more voters than the machine in certain, mostly urban areas across the state, campaigns during which the newspaper depended on the collaboration of its readers in supporting political movements that opposed São Paulo's ruling clique.

O Combate, the 'Little Press' and Brazilian Press History

O Combate's editors embraced the epithet 'yellow press' from the beginning – but at certain points, they identified *O Combate* differently. A 1917 story distinguished between 'the grand press' and 'the little press', placing *O Combate* in the latter category, made up of 'newspapers that publish fewer numbers of pages and do not possess circulations as large' as the more staid *O Estado de S. Paulo* and *Jornal do Comércio*.⁶⁹ *O Combate* and like publications were thus distinct in circulation, format and style from the 'grand', non-yellow press, but the two types of publication also shared personnel. At the same time, influences from abroad and competition for readers resulted in the two categories of periodical approximating one another.

The quintessential yellow-press magazine, *O Parafuso*, for example, emerged from *O Pirralho*, where the former's publisher-to-be did his apprenticeship. At *O Pirralho* Benedicto de Andrade worked alongside such fortunate sons as Oswald de Andrade, the magazine's founder, churning out a combination of 'politics, literature, society columns, sporting news' and '[t]ranslations, photos, caricatures; a still-incipient humour about political gossip and everyday life'. The most striking examples of this political and everyday-life humour were the work of the cartoonist Lemmo Lemmi and the satirical prose and verse that Alexandre Marcondes Machado published as 'Juó Bananere'. When Benedicto de Andrade founded *O Parafuso*, he brought Lemmo Lemmi with him as the

⁶⁸ *OESP*, 23 April 1915, p. 5.

⁶⁹ *OC*, 12 May 1917, p. 1, emphasis in original.

illustrator of the greatest number of the magazine's four-colour covers. *O Pirralho*, on the other hand, became increasingly arty and elitist, and its founder more so as he drifted into well-paying writing jobs. Meanwhile, *O Parafuso* was execrated and enjoyed for its outrageously demotic send-ups of the rich and powerful.⁷⁰

Even at its most raucous and irreverent, *O Combate* maintained a more decorous tone than *O Parafuso*, which one memoirist described as 'the worst publicity-driven scourge that the bourgeois society of São Paulo knew'.⁷¹ In fact, though it identified itself as part of the yellow press, *O Combate* was hardly anti-'bourgeois', and its editors and staff maintained cordial relations with selected representatives of São Paulo's mainstream, 'grand' press. In 1915 *O Estado de S. Paulo* welcomed the 'well done and interesting' newspaper to the field.⁷² In 1916 *O Combate*'s editors returned the compliment, identifying themselves and their counterparts at the *Estado* as the only two newspaper publishing groups that were above the influence of government press subventions.⁷³ Two years later, commemorating the *Estado*'s 43rd anniversary, *O Combate* called it 'the strongest pensative force of the Republic', 'the school in which the country's sound journalism is trained', and, as far as the press was concerned, 'the most genuine exponent of [Brazil's] greatness'.⁷⁴ After stepping down from the directorship of *O Combate*, Nereu chose *O Estado de S. Paulo*'s seção livre as the forum for the anti-government screeds that he published as Ivan Subiroff; his targets in 'the Paulista oligarchy', for their part, suspected that a member of the *Estado* group might be behind the pseudonym, perhaps even the newspaper's publisher, Júlio Mesquita.⁷⁵ Acyline remained in

⁷⁰ Maria Augusta Fonseca, *Oswald de Andrade: biografia* (2nd edition, São Paulo: Globo, 2007 [1990]), pp. 60–1, 62, 79, 81–2, 112, 115, 117–19, 154, 295–6 ('politics...' and 'Translations...' are on pp. 60 and 61); *OC*, 11 Dec. 1915, p. 4; Andrade, *Um homem sem profissão*, pp. 98–9, 103–6, 131–3, 169, 177, 194–5, 210; Paulo Duarte, *História da imprensa em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Escola de Comunicações e Artes, 1972), pp. 29, 41; and *Memórias*, vol. 7 (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1978), p. 267, and vol. 8, pp. 215–20; Affonso A. de Freitas, 'Notas á margem do estudo "A imprensa periodica"', *RHIGSP*, 25 (1927), p. 490; Jacob Penteado, *Belenzinho, 1910* (São Paulo: Martins, 1962), p. 198; Heloisa de Faria Cruz (ed.), *São Paulo em revista* (São Paulo: Arquivo do Estado, 1997), pp. 190–1, 205–6, 231–2; Aureliano Leite, *Subsídios para a história da civilização paulista* (São Paulo: Saraiva, 1954), p. 278; Martins, *Revistas em revista*, pp. 130, 133–5, 221, 238, 430–1, 436–7, 453, 495, 498, 519, 533; Nobre, *História da imprensa*, pp. 214, 222; Nelson Werneck Sodré, *História da imprensa no Brasil* (4th edition, Rio de Janeiro: Mauad, 1999 [1966]), pp. 299, 342; Brás Ciro Gallotta, 'O Parafuso: humor e crítica na imprensa paulistana, 1915–1921', unpubl. Master's thesis, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 1997.

⁷¹ Andrade, *Um homem sem profissão*, p. 131.

⁷² *OESP*, 25 April 1915, p. 2; *OC*, 27 April 1915, p. 4.

⁷³ *OC*, 21 Jan. 1916, p. 1.

⁷⁴ *OC*, 4 Jan. 1918, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Batini, *Memórias*, p. 107; Paulo Duarte, *Júlio Mesquita* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1977), p. 118; and *Memórias*, vol. 5, pp. 299–300; Ivan Subiroff, *A oligarchia paulista* (São Paulo: Seção de Obras d'O Estado de S. Paulo, 1919), p. 3.

the employ of *O Estado de S. Paulo* from the beginning of his working life to its end, even as he sacrificed his health on the labour of love that was *O Combate*.⁷⁶ For his part, Rubens do Amaral contributed to the *Revista do Brasil*, which had been founded by members of the *Estado* group.⁷⁷ Another connection came through the oldest of the Rangel Pestana brothers, Paulo, a columnist on economic and educational matters for the *Estado* whose work was occasionally featured in *O Combate*, including as the lead story in the newspaper's first commemoration of Brazilian independence – a paean to the 'political work of José Bonifácio', the Paulista patriot who forged a 'vast Brazil, unified and solidary'.⁷⁸

Not only did the 'grand press' and *O Combate*'s 'little' or 'yellow' press share personnel, they also influenced one another in matters of style and substance. In late 1915, for example, with *O Parafuso* waxing in popularity among ordinary Paulistas and *O Pirralho* increasingly catering to a belle-lettered upper crust, members of the *Estado* group launched their own illustrated magazine. Featuring Lemmo Lemmi's caricatures, Juó Bananere's mock Italian argot, and 'hair-raising criticism' of São Paulo's political elite, *O Queixoso* was classed with *O Parafuso* as one of the new magazines with which 'the galleries amuse themselves'.⁷⁹

In other cases, the approximation of the grand press and the yellow press resulted from common influences from abroad or the influence of offshoots of the former upon the latter. A month after the founding of *O Combate*, for example, *O Estado de S. Paulo* launched an evening edition. Nicknamed the *Estadinho*, it combined the 'liberal [editorial] line of the morning edition' with livelier fare aimed at the city's ever-growing population: ample photographs, enhanced sports coverage, Lemmo Lemmi's caricatures, and Juó Bananere's humorous prose and verse.⁸⁰ It was, a contributor recalled, 'a lively, unquiet, often irreverent newspaper, capable of stating with a spirited guffaw that which the seriousness and severity of the *Estadão*'s columns did not allow'.⁸¹ At least part of the two newspapers' common style stemmed

⁷⁶ *OC*, 1 Oct. 1926, p. 1.

⁷⁷ *Revista do Brasil*, Nov. 1919, pp. 218–25.

⁷⁸ *OC*, 7 Sep. 1915, p. 1. See also Eugenio Egas, *Galeria dos presidentes do estado de São Paulo*, vol. 2 (São Paulo: Secção de Obras d'O Estado de S. Paulo, 1927), p. 10; Melo, *Dicionário de autores*, p. 471; Saboia, 'Francisco Rangel Pestana', p. 32.

⁷⁹ *OC*, 9 Dec. 1915, p. 4 ('hair-raising criticism'); *OC*, 23 Dec. 1915, pp. 1, 4 ('the galleries...' on p. 1); Duarte, *História da imprensa*, pp. 29–30; Cruz, *São Paulo*, p. 214; Martins, *Revistas em revista*, pp. 123, 130, 133, 155, 344, 448, 455, 512–13, 521, 221, 430–41, 439–40; Nobre, *História da imprensa*, p. 221.

⁸⁰ Antonio Figueiredo, *Memórias de um jornalista* (São Paulo: Unitas, 1933), pp. 146–51, 156–8, 230 (quote on p. 147); Duarte, *Júlio Mesquita*, 78ff; *Memórias*, vol. 3, p. 310, vol. 5, p. 345, and vol. 6 (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1977), pp. 298–9, 301, 306–8; and *História da imprensa*, p. 31; Martins, *Revistas em revista*, pp. 439–40; Sodré, *História da imprensa*, p. 344.

⁸¹ Duarte, *Júlio Mesquita*, p. 79.

from their founding editors' admiration for and emulation of the Anglo-American 'yellow press' epitomised by Lord Northcliffe's *Daily Mail*.⁸² In matters political, the two newspapers shared a republican lineage that went back to Júlio Mesquita and Francisco Rangel Pestana's nineteenth-century anti-monarchical campaigning. In the case of sports coverage, it appears that the *Estado* group, via the *Estadinho*, influenced the editors of *O Combate*, who bettered their sports reporting in the wake of the *Estadinho*'s success.

In turn, the convergence of São Paulo's older, traditional press and its newer, yellow press resulted in the founding of press outlets that would combine the reach and scale of the grand press and the irreverence and reader-friendly features that were the key to the popularity of newspapers like *O Combate* and magazines like *O Parafuso*. The forerunners of the *Folha de S. Paulo* were among these outlets, as were the São Paulo newspapers of the Diários Associados chain, which added a marketing acumen and a mercenary sensibility that would have been out of place in São Paulo at the time of *O Combate*'s founding. These were not 'modern-style' newspapers; they were modern newspapers.⁸³

Founded by alumni of the *Estadinho* in 1921, the *Folha da Noite* was designed to be a 'popular newspaper', with its sports section, middle-class moralising, consumer-interest exposés and beloved cartoon mascot. Among the newspaper's two founding editors was Olival Costa, who years earlier had been sufficiently inspired by the contretemps of São Paulo's yellow press to co-author a play about them. Like *O Combate*, the *Folha da Noite* adopted a critical stance vis-à-vis São Paulo's office holders and opened its pages to the complaints of ordinary folks, but its criticisms were delivered in a more family-friendly fashion and its appeals on behalf of city residents were not so cutting as to scare off advertisers. The newspaper was a success, leading its owners to launch a morning counterpart, the *Folha da Manhã*, in 1925.⁸⁴

⁸² Figueiredo, *Memórias*, p. 157; *OC*, 15 Aug. 1922, p. 1.

⁸³ At the close of *O Combate*'s first calendar year of publication, its editors recognised the gulf between their ambition and the actual newspapers that they produced: 'It has not been, it is certain, and we recognise this, a model modern newspaper.' They went on to add, 'But the little that we have done, we have done with frankness, – in the way that appears most worthwhile to us: *TELLING THE TRUTH*.' *OC*, 27 Dec. 1915, p. 1. As the Diários Associados' founder, Assis Chateaubriand, well knew, telling the truth was beside the point when it came to producing a truly modern newspaper. See Fernando Morais, *Chatô: o rei do Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994).

⁸⁴ Francisco Pati, *A cidade sem portas* (São Paulo: Rêde Latina, 1956), pp. 137–67; Afonso Schmidt, *São Paulo de meus amores* (São Paulo: Clube do Livro, 1954), pp. 18–20; Figueiredo, *Memórias*, pp. 158–9; Sant'Ana, *Repertório biográfico*, pp. 284–5; Duarte, *Memórias*, vol. 6, p. 298, vol. 7, p. 302, and vol. 8, pp. 322–3, 328–9; and História da imprensa, p. 31; Nobre, *História da imprensa*, pp. 224, 229; Sodré, *História da imprensa*, pp. 356, 365;

A series of attempts to match the success of the *Folha da Noite* was made at mid-decade by yellow-press veterans, former *Folha* employees and journalists from the *Estado* group. Successive editors failed to turn a profit on the *Diário da Noite*, but relief came through a buyout by Assis Chateaubriand's Diários Associados chain. Having taken control of the newspaper, Chateaubriand (an admirer of Nereu Rangel Pestana's work as Ivan Subiroff) left its day-to-day operations in the hands of the former *O Combate* contributing editor Rubens do Amaral and the *Estado de S. Paulo* staffer Plínio Barreto. When Barreto resigned to become the *Estado's* editor-in-chief in 1927, Rubens do Amaral remained and 'the *Diário da Noite* ... began to transform itself, little by little, into a popular newspaper ... Spectacular crimes warmed the hearts of the Paulista newspaper's editorial staff ... the suicide of the actress Nina Sanzi, the public thrashing that the people gave a Japanese elected official who failed to fulfil his campaign promises, the burglary of a safe on Rua São Bento'. Attacks on São Paulo's ruling clique continued, but the Diários Associados' above-board advertisers got more than they paid for, and under-the-table contributors did even better. Among the former were General Electric and the patent medicine manufacturer Laboratórios Alvim e Freitas; among the latter was the Light, the yellow press's favourite target of yesteryear, singled out by Chateaubriand in a column declaring, 'Next month will mark another anniversary of Light & Power's activity in Brazil. If our people were of another [more advanced] mental level, it would be a national holiday.' The success of the *Diário da Noite* led Chateaubriand to launch his own morning newspaper in São Paulo in 1929 amid a promotional bonanza that borrowed liberally from all that Madison Avenue had to offer. The new *Diário de S. Paulo's* editor was Rubens do Amaral.⁸⁵

Conclusion and Epilogue

By that point, the yellow press epitomised by dailies like *O Combate* and weeklies like *O Parafuso* had been eclipsed by the *Folhas* and Chateaubriand's *Diário da Noite*, newspapers that the yellow-press example and experience had helped bring into being. Three attempts to reprise the success of *O Parafuso*

Carlos Guilherme Mota and Maria Helena Capelato, *História da Folha de S. Paulo, 1921-1981* (São Paulo: IMPRES, 1980), pp. 13-50, 309-18. Olival Costa's play is noted in *OC*, 16 July 1915, p. 1, and on the back covers of the 28 July 1915 and 5 Aug. 1915 issues.

⁸⁵ Morais, *Chatô*, pp. 153-4, 170-1, 184-7, 192 (quotes on pp. 170, 187); Geraldo Ferraz, *Depois de tudo* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1983), pp. 18, 43-4; *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 4 March 1919, reprinted in seção livre, *OESP*, 7 March 1919, p. 9; *OESP*, 6 Jan. 1929, p. 10.

had failed between 1922 and 1927, while *O Combate's* financial position was such that Ludolpho Rangel Pestana would be compelled to lease the newspaper to other journalists beginning in January 1930. The Paulista yellow press – ‘an institution of the public itself, effective in the manner of a mediator and intensifier of public discussion, no longer a mere organ for the spreading of news but not yet the medium of a consumer culture’ – had enjoyed its heyday as the 1910s became the 1920s.⁸⁶ Ten years later, having contributed to the making of a press immediately recognisable as modern, its moment had passed, and as its outlets disappeared even the terms by which they had been known – ‘the yellow press, the scandal press’ – dropped into disuse or acquired new connotations.⁸⁷

So too with the politics that had animated *O Combate* in the 1910s and early 1920s, when the Rangel Pestanas, together with Rubens do Amaral, sought to rally their home state around a regionally inflected radical republicanism and set the republic aright through the engagement of ‘conservative, liberal, and radical spirits’ on behalf of ‘political, administrative, social, and economic ideals on which we all agree’: ‘for freedom of conscience, for respect for the law, for administrative morality, for truth at the polls ... for the proper use of public monies’, and, last but not least, for ‘the flag of nationalism’.⁸⁸ Within this context they were Jacobin, not in the sense in which the word is customarily used in the Brazilian historiography, but in the classic sense of seeing themselves as on the side of the *menu peuple* – workers and small businessmen, tradesmen and students – and as rallying and representing them.⁸⁹ At the same time, *O Combate's* founders, many of its contributors and at least some of its readers expressed this radical republicanism in a regional

⁸⁶ Jürgen Habermas, ‘The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article’, *New German Critique*, 3 (1974), p. 53. ⁸⁷ *OESP*, 30 Dec. 1915, p. 4. ⁸⁸ *OESP*, 5 June 1918, p. 1.

⁸⁹ By the standards of the post-First World War era, *O Combate's* politics may seem ideologically thin and/or confused; indeed, one of the *JLAS's* readers, applying a mid-twentieth-century yardstick, took the newspaper to be ‘empty of ideology’. European readers are likelier to be familiar with the social, political and ideological family to which *O Combate's* genus of radical republicanism belonged. In France, it would include the tradition of Marat and Hébert as it was reinvented under the Third Republic: a ‘social ideal, combining respect for (small) private property with hostility to the rich, ... an extreme, egalitarian and libertarian democracy, localized and direct’, part of ‘that universal and important political trend which sought to express the interests of the great mass of “little men” who existed between the poles of the “bourgeois” and the “proletarian”, and which ‘tended to settle down, in post-revolutionary ages [that is, after 1871], as a left-wing of middle-class liberalism, but one loath to abandon the ancient principle that there are no enemies on the left’: Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: 1789–1848* (New York: Vintage, 1996 [1962]), p. 63. In this context, Joel Wolfe’s characterisation of *O Combate* as a ‘leftist newspaper’ rings true, but it was also a ‘bourgeois newspaper’, as a one-time contributor remembered, or still more appropriately, a petty bourgeois newspaper. Figueiredo, *Memórias*, p. 151; *OC*, 7 Dec. 1926, p. 5.

idiom. Indeed, *O Combate* was an agent in the rehearsal and elaboration of a regional tradition that held that São Paulo was the once and future ‘model state’, from the epic of the *bandeiras* (Indian-hunting expeditions that had vastly increased the future territory of the nation) to the independence-era work of José Bonifácio, through the anti-slavery and anti-monarchical campaigning of Carlos de Escobar and Francisco Rangel Pestana, patriotic traditions that could and should be revived through the civic efforts of true Paulista patriots.

South American and North Atlantic exemplars of *O Combate*’s republicanism and raucousness – if not its *paulistinidade* – may be easily found. In 1913, two years before *O Combate*’s founding, the newspaper *Crítica* was launched in Buenos Aires as part of what Angel Rama described as ‘a spate of opportunistic and often sensationalistic publications’ serving ‘sectors of the population’ like those reached by São Paulo’s yellow press. In Paris, the uproarious *Canard Enchaîné* began publication in the same year as *O Combate*. Like *Crítica* and *O Combate*, the *Canard*, notwithstanding its ridicule of the French government and the grafters and fools who infested its every level, remained committed to the republic as an idea and to the ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity ... Reason [and] anticlericalism’ of true republicanism. But where *Crítica* and the *Canard Enchaîné* are recognised as having played key roles in the making of the print culture and public life of their respective countries, *O Combate* and its counterparts in São Paulo’s yellow press have been forgotten or, worse still, misunderstood by those historians who have drawn on them as sources, despite these publications having contributed to the founding and subsequent success of some of Brazil’s most important newspapers.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Angel Rama (trans. John Charles Chasteen), *The Lettered City* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 56–7; Sylvia Sáitza, *Regueros de tinta: el diario ‘Crítica’ en la década de 1920* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1998); Douglas Allen, *War, Memory, and the Politics of Humor: The ‘Canard Enchaîné’ and World War I* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times* (New York: Pantheon, 2002), p. 318 (‘Liberty...’). While the history of the Rio de Janeiro press can scarcely be sketched in the present article, it would appear that non-traditional, populist newspapers (tarred as ‘yellow’ by their detractors) emerged slightly earlier in that city than in São Paulo, and that some of the Rio newspapers made the leap into commercial, publicity-driven modernity directly, rather than through a diffuse, second-hand influence (as I argue was the case for *O Combate*, *O Parafuso* and their fellows in the Paulista yellow press). To take the most remarkable case, the Carioca transition from the age of the owner-operated, ink-stained, amateur-run, tribune-of-the-people newspaper to the modern, commercial-driven media concern can be seen in two generations of the Marinho family: the father, Irineu, an old-time journalist who at the founding of *O Globo* pronounced his newspaper to be free of ‘interesses conjugados com os de qualquer empresa’ and stated his intention to remain aloof from all ‘grupos capitalistas ou ... plutocratas’; and the son, Roberto, who made *O Globo* the tribune of foreign corporations and Rio department stores (and who later, as is well known, would build Brazil’s first national television network on the basis of an illegal partnership with

In looking back at the world from which *O Combate* sprung and in which it exerted its influence, historians might do well to defer to a giant in the field. Writing as a eulogist, Sergio Buarque de Holanda remembered these years as having been, in São Paulo, ‘the golden age of [Juó] Bananere and also of the scandal sheets, in which the incumbent politicians and the Italian magnates were criticised with the same ferocity. Alliances and conflicts were made and unmade, ceaselessly, in a land still largely provincial, despite everything, [and] naturally liable to be impressed by these clashes.’⁹¹

By the time Sergio Buarque wrote these words, in 1935 or early 1936, *O Combate* and its fellow ‘scandal sheets’ had vanished along with the world they described. The journalists of the mid-1930s employed by the *Diários Associados* and the *Folhas* did better for themselves than the hard-scrabble types of the old yellow press, who would have marvelled at the technological progress made during the intervening two decades while likely regretting that journalism’s ‘industrial function’ was more prominent than ever, that the state’s power over society and the press had increased exponentially (rather than vice versa) and that a phenomenon that would be called ‘audience fragmentation’ had rendered the old appeals on behalf of a single, cohesive ‘people’ ever more formulaic and fictive, ever less creative and credible.⁹²

Meanwhile, amid the making and unmaking of Sergio Buarque’s ‘alliances and conflicts’, elements of *O Combate*’s radical republicanism had been assimilated into newer political traditions. The most noteworthy of these were the democratic radicalism of the late 1920s and early 1930s (colonised by the Communist Party in 1934–5 and subsequently destroyed) and the regionally chauvinistic constitutionalism that defined São Paulo’s politics beginning in 1932.⁹³

Among the objectives of the men who led Brazil into dictatorship in 1937 was the effacement of these two newer traditions from public memory.

Time-Life and sweetheart deals on the part of the military dictatorship). The quotes from *O Globo*’s premiere issue may be found in Alzira Alves de Abreu et al. (eds.), *Dicionário histórico-biográfico brasileiro*, vol. 3 (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. FGV, 2001), p. 2540.

⁹¹ Sergio Buarque de Holanda, ‘Realidade e poesia’, in Agrippino Grieco et al., *Em memória de Antonio de Alcantara Machado* (São Paulo: n.p., 1936), p. 179.

⁹² If a ‘public sphere’ existed in mid-1930s São Paulo, it was one that new developments – from media consolidation and increased advertiser power to clericalist retrenchment and the National Security Law of 4 April 1935 – would have rendered strange and unappealing to the latter-day Montesquieus who authored *O Combate*’s founding statement.

⁹³ Much work remains to be done on these traditions; here and there in Woodard, *A Place in Politics*, may be found the barest outlines of their histories.

They were only partially successful in their efforts, but they were abetted by time in ensuring that a common lineage of the two traditions stretching back through the proudly Paulista radical republicanism of the yellow-press *O Combate* would be forgotten.⁹⁴

Spanish and Portuguese abstracts

Spanish abstract. Al examinar el periódico brasileño *O Combate*, este artículo busca cuatro metas. La primera define a la política de un periódico largamente citado, pero poco entendido por historiadores. La segunda documenta el lugar de *O Combate*, junto a otros periódicos amarillistas, en la construcción de una 'esfera pública' en São Paulo. La tercera sitúa el papel de estas publicaciones en el desarrollo de una prensa más comercial propulsada por la publicidad que dejaría el radicalismo de la prensa amarilla y así facilitaría el colapso de la esfera pública del momento. La cuarta sugiere que el republicanismo radical de *O Combate* fue una fuente de radicalismo democrático de finales de los años 1920 y principios de los 1930s, así como del constitucionalismo chauvinista regional de 1932–7. En esta rara aplicación de la idea de 'esfera pública' del Brasil del siglo XX, los lectores posiblemente también detectarán una narrativa más cercana a la formulación original de Jürgen Habermas que la que se encuentra en la historiografía de la América española del siglo XIX.

Spanish keywords: São Paulo, prensa, esfera pública, republicanismo

Portuguese abstract. Analisando o jornal brasileiro *O Combate*, este artigo cumpre quatro metas. Primeiro, define-se a posição política de um periódico bastante citado, mas pouco compreendido por historiadores. Segundo, documenta-se o lugar de *O Combate* em relação a outras publicações da 'imprensa amarela' na construção de uma 'esfera pública' em São Paulo. Terceiro, contextualiza o papel destas publicações no surgimento de uma imprensa mais comercial e dirigida à publicidade que terminaria com o radicalismo da imprensa amarela e contribuiria para o colapso da esfera pública de seus dias áureos. Quarto, sugere-se que o republicanismo radical de *O Combate* foi uma fonte do radicalismo democrático do final da década de 1920 e início da década de 1930 assim como do chauvinismo constitucionalista e regionalista de 1932–7. Nesta rara aplicação da ideia de 'esfera pública' no Brasil do século XX, os leitores também poderão detectar um relato que se aproxima mais da formulação original de Jürgen Habermas que daquelas encontradas na historiografia da América espanhola do século XIX.

Portuguese keywords: São Paulo, imprensa, esfera pública, republicanismo

⁹⁴ Some remembrance of the deeper history of these two traditions, including living memories of the Rangel Pestanas and *O Combate*, survived into the late 1970s and early 1980s; it has since been lost. See the oral histories of D. Lavínia (b. 1897) and D. Brites (b. 1903) in Bosi, *Memória e sociedade*, pp. 203–93 (also see pp. 376–80 and 384–5 for Bosi's discussion of what she termed the 'paradox' of 'paulistismo mais comunismo'); and Tito Batini (b. 1904), *O modelador das máscaras* (São Paulo: n.p., 1982).