

## THE ARGENTINE ALLUSION: *On the Significance of the Southern Cone in Early Twentieth-Century São Paulo*

**ABSTRACT:** This article examines a much cited but little understood aspect of the Latin American intellectual and cultural ferment of the 1910s and 1920s: the frequency with which intellectuals from the southeastern Brazilian state of São Paulo referred to developments in post Sáenz Peña Argentina, and to a lesser extent in Uruguay and Chile. In books, pamphlets, speeches, and the pages of a vibrant periodical press—all key sources for this article—São Paulo intellectuals extolled developments in the Southern Cone, holding them out for imitation, especially in their home state. News of such developments reached São Paulo through varied sources, including the writings of foreign travelers, which reached intellectuals and their publics through different means. Turning from circuits and sources to motives and meanings, the Argentine allusion conveyed aspects of how these intellectuals were thinking about their own society. The sense that São Paulo, in particular, might be “ready” for reform tending toward democratization, as had taken place in Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, was accompanied by a belief in the difference of their southeastern state from other Brazilian states and its affinities with climactically temperate and racially “white” Spanish America. While these imagined affinities were soon forgotten, that sense of difference—among other legacies of this crucial period—would remain.

**KEYWORDS:** Brazil, Argentina, political ideas, electoral practices, regionalism

The second and third decades of the twentieth century are recognized as especially fruitful as far as Latin American intellectual and cultural life is concerned. The caesura of European civilization in the First World War, the introspection inspired by that conflagration and by the centennials of national independence celebrated between 1910 and 1925, and postwar political and intellectual tidings from the North Atlantic all brought forth much that was new, or at least understood as new at the time.<sup>1</sup> In looking at

This article benefitted from the cogent insights provided by *The Americas*' two anonymous readers. Earlier versions were presented to the Brazilian Studies Committee of the Conference on Latin American History and to one-off events hosted by the University of London and Johns Hopkins University; those drafts were sharpened through discussion and email exchanges with Barbara Weinstein and Ori Preuss.

1. Charles A. Hale, “Political and Social Ideas in Latin America, 1870–1930,” in *Cambridge History of Latin America*, 11 vols., Leslie Bethell, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984–2008) [hereafter *CHLA*], vol. 4, esp. 416–417, 420–421, 423–424, 432–433, 440; Gerald Martin, “The Literature, Music, and Art of Latin America, 1870–1930,” in *CHLA*, vol. 4, esp. 476, 480, 489–490, 495–496, 510, 526; Richard Morse, “The Multiverse of Latin American Identity, c. 1920–c. 1970,” in *CHLA*, vol. 10, esp. 7–12, 17–18; Torcuato S. Di Tella, “Political and Social Ideas in Twentieth Century South America,” in *Political Culture, Social Movements, and Democratic Transitions in*

Brazil, in particular, historians point to new intellectual fora, to the much mythologized announcements of *modernismo*, and to the early development of figures who would tower over that country's twentieth-century letters.<sup>2</sup>

Yet much remains obscure or little understood. Concerns central in their day have escaped the attention of contemporary scholars altogether, or while noted in passing are left unexplained. One example of the latter is a persistent recourse to comparisons with Argentina—and to a lesser degree Uruguay and Chile—on the part of intellectuals based in the southeastern Brazilian state of São Paulo, the most economically dynamic of the country's provincial units, just then beginning to rival the national capital of Rio de Janeiro in its life of the mind. The comparisons made by Paulistas in the 1910s and 1920s were different from earlier ones, and not only in their inclusion of other Southern Cone countries alongside Argentina. These comparisons also demonstrated greater familiarity with those countries and at the same time raised the possibility that São Paulo, if not the rest of Brazil, was or could become like its neighboring nation-states, understood as more advanced in civilizational terms. This tradition—the Argentine allusion of the era—was mostly the work of opposition intellectuals, liberal or further left, who saw Argentina's democratization under the electoral reforms introduced by president Roque Sáenz Peña in 1912 as worthy of emulation. They also admired other progressive measures enacted there, as well as in Chile and Uruguay. Typically noted in passing, or hastily sketched in a handful of works—one of them the classic English-language study of São Paulo state—this aspect of Paulista intellectual and political discourse begs further questions.<sup>3</sup>

---

*South America in the Twentieth Century*, Fernando J. Devoto and Torcuato S. Di Tella, eds. (Milan: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 1997), 13, 15–21, 23–25, 28–29, 33–34; Olivier Compagnon, *O adeus à Europa: a América Latina e a Grande Guerra*, Carlos Nougué, trans. (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2014); Patricia Funes, *Salvar la nación: intelectuales, cultura y política en los años veinte latino-americanos* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros, 2006); Alejandro Cattaruzza, *Historia de la Argentina, 1916–1955* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 2009), chaps. 3, 6; Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), chaps. 5 and 6; Helena Carvalho de Lorenzo and Wilma Peres da Costa, eds., *A década de 1920 e as origens do Brasil moderno* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade Estadual Paulista, 1997), esp. parts 2 and 3.

2. For example, see Tania Regina de Luca, *A "Revista do Brasil": um diagnóstico para a (n)ação* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade Estadual Paulista, 1999); Martin, "Literature," 517–520; Morse, "Multiverse," 15–24; Maria Lúcia García Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre: um vitoriano nos trópicos* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade Estadual Paulista, 2005); Angela de Castro Gomes, ed., *Em família: a correspondência de Oliveira Lima e Gilberto Freyre* (Campinas: Mercado de Letras, 2005); and Paulo Henrique Martínez, *A dinâmica de um pensamento crítico: Caio Prado Jr., 1928–1935* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2008).

3. The classic study is, of course, Joseph L. Love's *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation, 1889–1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 237. See also Paul Manor, "The Liga Nacionalista de São Paulo: A Political Reformist Group in Paulista Academic of Yore, 1917–1924," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 17 (1980), 322; Ilan Rachum, "Nationalism and Revolution in Brazil, 1922–1930: A Study of Intellectual, Military, and Political Protesters and of the Assault on the Old Republic" (PhD diss.: Columbia University, 1970), 229; and James P. Woodard, *A Place in Politics: São Paulo, Brazil, from Seigneurial Republicanism to Regionalist Revolt* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 76–77. Examining the impact of the Sáenz Peña reforms would also appear to deliver on Fernando Devoto's educated guess that inter-South American intellectual exchange

The first of these questions is that of the sources of Brazilians' ideas of progress in Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, and the means by which they reached the Paulistas who adopted and propagated them. By which circuits were news and views transmitted from Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Santiago to São Paulo's inland state capital, the hub of its intellectual life? If it must be so classified, this is an intellectual history question, one whose answer requires a study of the transmission and reception of ideas. It is also one that restores South America to its place in the Atlantic crossings of early twentieth-century reformers.<sup>4</sup>

Our second question hinges on São Paulo-based intellectuals conclusion that their society was ripe for reform similar to that observed abroad. What was the broader meaning of comparisons between São Paulo and the Southern Cone countries? The answer speaks to how São Paulo was imagined in that age of climactic determinism, scientific racism, and empire, including its imagined affinity with a portion of Spanish America envisioned as climactically temperate, racially white, and morally and materially progressive.

## THE ALLUSION ELABORATED

The Argentine allusion was formulated earlier and better than most in the lead story of the radical-republican newspaper *O Combate's* issue of March 3, 1916. It was a month before the most meaningful, transparent presidential election yet held in Argentina, the first since enactment of the package of reforms known as the Sáenz Peña law, which established universal, compulsory manhood suffrage with secret balloting. While historians now point to the

---

was greater than has been supposed: "The situation would probably appear different . . . if we were to look into a far less studied area, namely, the impact of certain political or legal experiments carried out in some South American countries, which soon became a point of political debate in other countries, about the advantages or inconveniences of adopting them" (in Devoto and Di Tella, *Political Culture*, 5). Since publication of the latter volume, Ori Preuss has published two important monographs examining interaction and exchange between Brazil and Spanish America before the era of the Sáenz Peña reforms, with the national capitals of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires as his twin poles. Preuss, *Bridging the Island: Brazilians' Views of Spanish America and Themselves, 1865–1912* (Madrid: Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2011), and *Transnational South America: Experiences, Ideas, and Identities, 1860s–1900s* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

4. The reference is to Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), a justly celebrated book of puzzling geographic orientation, for Rodgers's Atlantic is an odd place: geographers and Latin Americanist historians might scratch one another's heads upon encountering a study of Atlantic social reform that includes California and even Australia but excludes precociously social-democratic Uruguay, whose welfare state was in place from the 1910s. Brazil's absence from Rodgers's Atlantic is more reasonable. In a country in which the vast majority of the population remained illiterate, preventable disease ran rampant, and republican politics were viewed as rotten to the core, educational reform, sanitation, and ending political corruption were viewed as far more pressing needs than European-style social reform. There were exceptions, to be sure: the nineteenth-century liberal Ruy Barbosa announced his own tardy awareness of a Brazilian "social question" in 1919, though he remained more concerned with education and the opening of the political sphere than with social reform. Other figures, less well known, were outspoken in their support for such exotic doctrines as Georgism and the cooperativism promoted by the French economist Charles Gide.

election as having initiated Argentina's first experiment in democracy—a peaceful transfer of the presidency to the longtime opposition leader Hipólito Yrigoyen would ensue in October 1916—its outcome and impact were at the time of the article yet unknown. For *O Combate*, however, “the lessons of the [Río de la] Plata” were already plain, evident in a galling comparison with yesteryear: “In olden times, our statesmen, if they wanted to consider civilizations more advanced than ours . . . would have to cross the Atlantic and go to Europe to take their lessons.” Now, with the Old World riven by war, that kind of pilgrimage was no longer possible, but, the article continued:

It's not even necessary. We have here, in the south of the Colombian continent, nations that can provide lessons, by the relative perfection that the outfitting of their public services has already reached. Thirty years ago, we were a great empire and they were imitations of republics ravaged by caudillos the likes of Rosas and Urquiza. Now, without possession of the South American hegemony that traditionally belonged to us, it is we who dissolve ourselves in sometimes-bloody politicking. It is proper that we take as guides these nations that were nearly our pupils.<sup>5</sup>

The anonymous author, likely *O Combate* publisher Nereu Rangel Pestana or his brother Acylino, emphasized Argentina's balanced budgets, its public education system, and the “electoral regime” introduced under Sáenz Peña: “With good finances, good education, and good elections, we will be a great people; without them, we will proceed on the path backward we are on, in the direction of an ominous past from which our neighbors to the south distance themselves more and more.” These were the kinds of reforms—fiscal, educational, and political—that it behooved São Paulo to adopt, as the “leader” of the Brazilian federation: “Initiative and energy the Paulistas have, like the Argentines. They lack only the resources and coordination of efforts that only the public powers can provide them.”<sup>6</sup>

If *O Combate* was among the earliest boosters of Argentine-style reform, the liberal journalist Mario Pinto Serva was among the most persistent and widely read. In a volume collecting selections of his journalism from the 1910s titled *O voto secreto* (“The Secret Ballot”), in 1920 in the state's leading intellectual journal (the *Revista do Brasil*), and in any forum that would have him through the decade that followed, Serva was dogged in his promotion of Argentine-style reform, which brought that country, “after the Sáenz Peña law, . . . a

5. “As lições do Prata,” *O Combate*, March 3, 1916, 1.

6. “As lições do Prata,” *O Combate*, March 3, 1916, 1. São Paulo's largest-circulation newspaper, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, would make much of the “great civic work campaign” represented by this election, quoting its Buenos Aires counterpart, *La Nación*, on the defeat of “this pseudo-politics, the politics of combinations”: “Ecos americanos,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 28, 1916, 3.

vigorous and wise civic rebirth, whose echoes cross the frontier and reach us,” tarrying, “in the rearguard of civilization.”<sup>7</sup> “Classic types from the primitive phase of South American history, a phase already surpassed by Argentina and Uruguay, still figure in our political gallery,” Serva charged. “We have not yet reached the definitive stage in which the stable and secure course of the cultured nations begins to appear clearly.”<sup>8</sup> In still another newspaper piece, he declaimed, “The political situation of Brazil compared to that of Argentina is the most shameful possible. Argentina is a perfect democracy, while Brazil degrades itself, under the most complete caciquismo.”<sup>9</sup> And, in the same vein: “Brazil is today the only phony republic (*“republicueta”*) of South America. All the other countries of the South of the Continent are now already republics in the true sense of the word.”<sup>10</sup>

In 1916, Serva was among the founders of the Nationalist League, a São Paulo-based patriotic group founded to promote civic engagement, military preparedness, and political reform.<sup>11</sup> At the investiture of the league’s Deliberative Council in July 1917, the group approved a motion calling for secret and compulsory voting, to be delivered to the state and national legislatures: “To this simple precept the Argentine Republic owes its complete political regeneration and its being today a country in perfect democratic exercise. However, before compulsory voter registration and voting, Argentina found itself under the dominion of political syndicates that monopolized power, without any action on the part of public opinion, completely indifferent and absolutely disarmed in the face of such syndicates.”<sup>12</sup> In August, the national legislature tabled a missive from the Nationalist League, “which demonstrates the advantages of secret and compulsory voting and requests its declaration, citing the example of Argentina and other countries.”<sup>13</sup>

7. Luís Correia de Melo, *Dicionário de autores paulistas* (São Paulo: Comissão do IV Centenário, 1954), 569–570; Mario Pinto Serva, *O voto secreto, ou a organização de partidos nacionais* (São Paulo: Imprensa Metodista, n.d.), “Na rearguarda da civilização,” *Revista do Brasil*, July 1920, 208–211, *Pátria nova* (São Paulo: Companhia Melhoramentos, 1922), *A lição da revolta* (Porto Alegre: Livraria do Globo, 1926), *Problemas brasileiros* (São Paulo: Livraria Liberdade, 1929), *O enigma brasileiro* (São Paulo: Editora Paulista, n.d.), *A reforma eleitoral* (São Paulo: Livraria Zenith, 1931). The quotes are from “Na rearguarda da civilização,” 208–209. That Serva—now forgotten in Brazil except among specialists—was so widely read in his day inspired a fit of pique in Gilberto Freyre, not yet Brazil’s best-known intellectual, expressed in the poem “Bahia de Todos os Santos (e de quase todos os pecados).”

8. Serva, “Política e partidos,” in *O voto secreto*, 238–239.

9. Serva, “O voto secreto,” in *O voto secreto*, 296.

10. Serva, “A aspiração nacional,” in *Problemas brasileiros*, 223.

11. “Notas e informações,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 16, 1916, 5.

12. Liga Nacionalista de São Paulo, *Discursos proferidos na sessão solenne de posse do Conselho Deliberativo da Liga Nacionalista de São Paulo, no Instituto Histórico, no dia 26 de julho de 1917* (São Paulo: n.p., 1917). The motion itself was reprinted in Partido Democrático, *O voto secreto: collectanea de opiniões, discursos e documentos sobre o assumpto* (São Paulo: Livraria Liberdade, 1927), 72–78 (quote on 73).

13. “Telegrammas,” *O Combate*, August 28, 1917, 3.

Two months later, another of the Nationalist League's founders, the sometimes independent-minded state congressman Abelardo Vergueiro Cesar, presented a bill that would introduce secret balloting in elections held in São Paulo.<sup>14</sup> The bill itself was limited to a description of the means by which the confidentiality of the vote would be guaranteed and did not mention Argentina, but in his speech in support of the proposal, Vergueiro Cesar did not stint on references to the "brilliant discussions" made in the Argentine legislature by "parliamentarians of great wisdom."<sup>15</sup>

The proposed measure was applauded by *O Estado de S. Paulo*, the state's most widely read newspaper, whereas *O Combate* supported the idea in principle while expressing doubt that it would ever become law: "We cannot fail to applaud the Abelardo Cesar bill. The secret ballot is already a triumph of the Argentine and Uruguayan peoples. We would already have it, if there was the real intention to moralize the vote." But that effective intent, which, given the structure of Brazilian politics, would have to come from the state or federal executive, would not materialize, the newspaper predicted, and so the proposal "will come to sleep the eternal slumber of mummies in the folder of some commission."<sup>16</sup>

The cynics at *O Combate* were right. Indeed, their verdict that "the moralization of the vote would be the death of the oligarchy" was echoed by Oscar Rodrigues Alves, the son of former president Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves, one of São Paulo's most powerful statesmen, who was said to have remarked, at around this time, "on the day that the secret ballot is approved, as in Argentina, we're ruined."<sup>17</sup> Despite this apparent failure, the Nationalist League continued to push for the secret ballot, leading a national campaign in 1922, the centennial year of Brazilian independence, with initiatives that included writing to newspapers, sponsoring lectures, petitioning politicians and other public figures, and printing and distributing pamphlets and other propaganda materials.<sup>18</sup> The president of the commission charged with this work, João Sampaio, spoke in the state capital on behalf of the measure in a June 1922

14. "Congresso legislativo," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 20, 1917, 4; "Notas e informações," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 16, 1916, 5.

15. "Projecto e discurso do Dr. Abelardo de Cerqueira Cesar no Congresso Paulista," reprinted in Partido Democratico, *O voto secreto*, 172–182.

16. "Noticias diversas," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 21, 1917, 7; "O voto secreto," *O Combate*, October 20, 1917, 1.

17. "O voto secreto," *O Combate*, October 20, 1917, 1; "A politica paulista não quer saber disso," *O Combate*, October 1, 1920, 1; Oscar Rodrigues Alves, quoted in Antonio dos Santos Figueiredo, *1924: episodios da revolução de S. Paulo* (Porto: n.p., 1925), 176.

18. "Noticias diversas," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 13, 1923, 4.

lecture that made special mention of “the Argentine example” and “its work of regeneration of the vote.”<sup>19</sup>

In 1923, the Nationalist League sponsored a lecture by the Spanish-born Platine intellectual Julio Navarro Monzó on “The Secret Ballot in Argentina.”<sup>20</sup> League member and educational reformer Antônio de Sampaio Dória referred to Navarro Monzó’s talk in a lecture of his own a few days later, noting that “the political vices that, there as here, predominated, were transformed as if by magic in the definitive admittance of a people into civilization without objection.” The Sáenz Peña law, having ended oligarchy, put a stop to *pronunciamentos*, and condemned caudillismo to death, was, as far as Sampaio Dória was concerned, “the gold standard of democracy in the Latin American republics.” The law was, this lifelong educator averred, nothing less than “Argentina’s lesson.”<sup>21</sup> Among the pamphlets published by the Nationalist League that same year was one titled *The Argentine Example*.<sup>22</sup>

By that point, the Nationalist League, which had at times counted on support from the state government, had become a nuisance to authorities. In August 1924, president Arthur Bernardes banned the league, using as his excuse an unrelated military rebellion that had thrown São Paulo into a state of chaos lasting much of the previous month. If anything, however, the events of mid 1924 increased support for Argentine-style electoral reform among Paulista intellectuals. Perhaps the greatest example of this support came in the form of an open letter to São Paulo state president Carlos de Campos. Drafted by the writer and publishing impresario José Bento Monteiro Lobato, it was signed by a who’s who of the Paulista intelligentsia, and was published for a broader public in pamphlet form in at least two editions.

In the pamphlet, Monteiro Lobato asserted, “All of the countries that have adopted the secret ballot, including Argentina and Uruguay, fell into an

19. João Sampaio, *O voto secreto: conferencia realizada no Theatro Boa Vista, em S. Paulo, sob os auspícios da Liga Nacionalista* (São Paulo: n.p., 1922), 44–47.

20. Navarro Monzó’s lecture was reprinted in the *Revista do Brasil*, January 1925: 49–59, and Partido Democrático, *O voto secreto*, 28–44. Though born in Spain, Navarro Monzó settled in Argentina as a young man after studying in Lisbon, where he would have learned Portuguese. In his adoptive home, Navarro Monzó became thoroughly integrated into Argentine and Uruguayan intellectual and political life, including serving as secretary to the Argentine statesman Indalecio Gómez when Gómez served as minister of the interior under Sáenz Peña. He served in similar posts down to 1922, while increasingly dedicating his time to moral-religious philosophizing. According to Manuel Gálvez (of whom more below), Navarro Monzó was the author or co-author of the Sáenz Peña law, drawing it up on behalf of Gómez, “who must have been its true author.” See Gálvez, *Recuerdos de la vida literaria*, 4 vols. (Buenos Aires: Librería Hachette, 1961–65), 3:268.

21. The speech is reprinted in his *O espírito das democracias* (São Paulo: Monteiro Lobato, 1924), 65–99 (quotes on 91–92).

22. “Noticias diversas,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 13, 1923, 4.

admirable political equilibrium, ending the phase of revolutions.”<sup>23</sup> It fell to São Paulo to introduce the reform, and to Carlos de Campos to “take charge of the great legal revolution.” Monteiro Lobato pressed further: “The path is clear as day: anticipate the movement, prevent it from coming later by force, with blood, pain, misery, what has come evolutionarily to all cultured countries, by the insight of statesmen like Sáenz Peña.” “Uruguay was like this,” Lobato added, “It lived in perpetual revolution . . . But . . . since the introduction of the secret ballot, twenty-some years ago, not even the slightest revolutionary explosion has registered there!” Appealing to his fellow Paulistas, he extended the hope “that our turn come, that the great example come from us.”<sup>24</sup>

Carlos de Campos did not institute the desired reform—there is no indication that he even read Lobato’s appeal—but the matter hardly rested there. The reform effort was adopted by various civic associations and corporate groups, and the cause was taken up by several opposition factions, including the Party of Youth (1925), the Democratic Party (1926), and, somewhat less enthusiastically, the Communist-led Worker-Peasant Bloc (1927), at a time when the Argentine example still appeared, to Brazilian observers at least, to be in full bloom. In 1929–30, the national opposition Liberal Alliance and its presidential candidate took it up as well. From November 1930 and into 1933, by which time the bloom was off the Argentine rose, the secret ballot was still deemed important and useful enough to find its way into the programs of dozens of parties and other political grouplets founded throughout the country (albeit now without reference to Argentina).<sup>25</sup>

Beyond the secret ballot, enthusiasm for other aspects of Argentine, Uruguayan, and Chilean public life ran high in the same corners that had thrilled to the Sáenz Peña reforms through the 1910s and 1920s. Much was made of advances in education, of evidence of greater governmental honesty and austerity, of consumer protections, and of conciliatory policies toward labor. Even women’s advances and the right of resident foreigners to vote in local elections were noted approvingly by an all-male and avowedly “nationalist” cohort of opposition intellectuals, for these were the marks of “more advanced civilizations.”

23. *O voto secreto: carta aberta ao exmo. sr. dr. Carlos de Campos* (São Paulo: n.p., 1924); Marcia Mascarenhas Camargos and Vladimir Sacchetta, “Procura-se Peter Pan . . .,” in *Minorias silenciadas: história da censura no Brasil*, Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, ed. (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial, 2002), 212–215. Before 1930, Brazil’s state executives (that is, its governors) bore the title “president.”

24. Lobato et al., *O voto secreto*.

25. In the five-volume *Dicionário histórico-biográfico brasileiro*, Alzira Alves de Abreu, et al., eds. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 2001) [hereafter *DHBB*], one need only scan vol. 4 from the entry on the Partido da Lavoura to that on the Partido Socialista de Pernambuco to confirm this fact.

Commenting on news from Buenos Aires of an appropriation for new expenditures on school construction, *O Combate* asked, “Who in hamble-shanked Brazil would have the courage to spend that sum on schools to enlighten the people?” Answering his own question, the anonymous author declared, “Evidently Argentina is not the land of Jéca Tatú,” referring to the archetypal Brazilian country bumpkin as depicted in works by Monteiro Lobato.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, Mario Pinto Serva, after citing the example of the US Bureau of Education, wrote: “The action of the Federal Government of Argentina is much more intense and direct in combating illiteracy throughout the country. The Union of the neighboring country sustains more than 500,000 students in federal primary schools, with which it lends decisive cooperation in the struggle against illiteracy in Argentina. The Argentine Federal Government spends fabulous sums every year on primary schools.” Serva went on to quote Yrigoyen’s July 1922 message to the Argentine legislature on the “primary school [as] the principal foundation of democracies and the very essence of republican life.”<sup>27</sup>

The reputed personal and public austerity of Brazil’s neighbors was likewise lauded. In Argentina, beginning with the “profoundly moralizing action of Dr. Sáenz Peña . . . politics there ceased to be a simple and profitable way of life. Every day, demonstrating the intense work of the remarkable statesmen, there emerge new facts, which demonstrate that there already exists a noble conception of public life there.” By way of example, there was the fact that “the representative of the nation who maintains relations of dependence with powerful firms, subject to the State’s oversight, is obliged to resign his legislative mandate.” This was a marked contrast to the situation in São Paulo, as was Yrigoyen’s pledge that if elected president he would donate his honorarium to a public charity.<sup>28</sup>

More than ten years later, a similar set of comparisons was made by another opponent of São Paulo’s ruling clique, this time with Uruguay, whose territory was once claimed by Brazil, as the example: “In Uruguay, our little Cis-Platine province, able today to teach us everything, whose money is worth the same as the dollar, more than the pound; in Uruguay, the president lives in his own private house. Here [in São Paulo] there is a luxurious and ample residence in a chic neighborhood, there is an unnecessary palace in the city center, and there are plans for a new palace, a luxurious palace, with paintings, bronzes, ivories,

26. “Ilustrando o povo,” *O Combate*, September 11, 1919, 1.

27. Serva, “A decifração da enigma da nossa historia,” in his *O enigma brasileiro*, 9–15 (quotes on 14).

28. “Na Argentina,” *O Combate*, March 30, 1916, 1.

gold, while the city complains of the drought, [and] is asphyxiated by dust and by bad odors, persecuted by mosquitos, by flies, and by rats of every kind.”<sup>29</sup>

References to the scarcity of water and to unhygienic conditions echoed earlier comparisons regarding the state’s protection of consumers. “If only our official hygienists were to read about what is done in Argentina, in Uruguay, in Chile,” one writer asserted, “and then see that in Brazil, in S. Paulo, there is not a single law authorizing the beneficial activity of sanitary authorities.”<sup>30</sup> Likewise, amid wartime profiteering on basic foodstuffs, “the examples of the continent’s two great democracies [Argentina and the United States], where governments defend the people’s interests,” were contrasted with São Paulo, where “our politicians are no more than the sales clerks or partners of grand speculators” and “Brazilians are left with no other relief than waiting patiently for starvation in this dreadful crisis.”<sup>31</sup>

What went for urban consumers, went doubly for workers. In 1917, a wave of repression followed São Paulo’s first general strike. The strike had enjoyed the sympathy of the liberal and antigovernment press, and *O Combate* published a series of articles by the labor lawyer Evaristo de Moraes that included “The Right to Strike (In the Argentine Republic and in Brazil),” in which the author compared conditions “in the flourishing republic of the [Río de la] Plata” and conditions in Brazil. In the latter, he wrote, “News of the outrages committed in S. Paulo and of which workers were victims, . . . running parallel with news of the freedom to strike guaranteed in the Argentine Republic, will contribute, without a doubt, to our discredit.” Moraes concluded: “And tomorrow, when a sincere writer, without the restraint of payoffs from the Ministry of Agriculture or the corresponding secretariat of S. Paulo, compares Brazilian civilization with the Argentine, and places us in an inferior position, patriots should complain of the current autocracy that dominates S. Paulo and plans to dominate Brazil.”<sup>32</sup>

Consideration of the relative treatment of laboring men by the two countries was not limited to activists like Evaristo de Moraes and his allies at *O Combate*. The Nationalist League leader Frederico Vergueiro Steidel, a self-made man of sorts but not a radical by any stretch, was not alone among moderate liberals in noting the difference between Argentine incorporation and Brazilian exclusion:

29. Aureliano Leite, “Discurso feito em Campinas,” [February?] 1927, Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo, Arquivo Aureliano Leite, pacote 6.

30. “O estabelecimento De Vecchi em Jundiahy,” *O Combate*, June 17, 1918, 3.

31. “Ecos & factos,” *O Combate*, May 18, 1917, 1.

32. Evaristo de Moraes, “O direito da greve (Na Republica Argentina e no Brasil),” *O Combate*, October 19, 1917, 1. On the importance placed on the opinions of (foreign) travel writers (a hypothetical one, in Moraes’s article), see below.

“This has occurred in countries that adopt the secret ballot, it being enough to turn our eyes to our neighbor, the Argentine Republic, where workers even have seats in parliament representing socialist ideas.”<sup>33</sup>

Less attention was given to Argentine legislation giving the vote to resident aliens, though it was taken up in some corners. Mario Pinto Serva expressed his admiration for the Argentine innovation “that confers to foreigners, under certain legal requirements, the right to vote in municipal elections. Since these do not involve any interests except urban, local ones, in which foreigners also have a stake, it is natural that they have the participation that by right belongs to them, to defend the interests that they have in common.”<sup>34</sup>

Advocates for voting rights for women were rare in São Paulo during these years. But women’s advances in other fields could be cited and, once again, compared with the situation of women in Brazil. When an Argentine women’s group petitioned Yrigoyen, shortly after his election, to grant a woman a seat on the National Council of Education, this wry reaction was published in *O Combate*: “It seems that their ambition is excessive. Here, in S. Paulo, a women does not even have the right to run a primary school. She must always be directed by some brute, or a boy, despite her having more advanced education.”<sup>35</sup>

While Argentine women petitioned to be represented on a council of state, their Brazilian counterparts were overseen by placemen in what were no doubt sops to influential relatives. In Argentina, resident foreigners voted in local elections, while in Brazil only bums and scoundrels came out to the polls. Workers had the right to strike and to representation in congress in Argentina; in Brazil they were jailed, deported, or worse. Workers in Chile even had the eight-hour day!<sup>36</sup> In Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, national leaders who were neither spendthrift with the public treasury nor after wealth for themselves looked out for the interests of urban consumers and school-age children. In short, these were model democracies, or rather were seen as such by interested parties in São Paulo.

Election results from points south were printed under headlines such as “Where Oppositions Win” and “Where the Will of the People is Respected.”<sup>37</sup> Reprinting a report that contrasted Argentine political development with the political chaos

33. Vergueiro Steidel, “O voto secreto” (newspaper clipping labeled *O Jornal* [Santa Cruz do Rio Pardo], June 28, 1928), Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo, Arquivo Partido Democrático, album XI. By way of a punch line, the law professor added, “and discussing them with men of letters, often to their own advantage.”

34. Serva, *O voto secreto*, 106.

35. “Ecos & factos,” *O Combate*, November 7, 1916, 1.

36. “No Chile,” *O Combate*, January 14, 1918, 1.

37. “Onde as oposições vencem,” *O Combate*, February 11, 1925, 1; “Onde a vontade do povo é respeitada,” *O Combate*, December 10, 1925, 4.

evident in much of the rest of the Americas, a writer for *O Combate* asked: “But how did the land of Sarmiento achieve this enviable position? . . . It is certain . . . that just like Uruguay, that country has enjoyed such a state of things only since the day when rigorous respect for the truthfulness of the ballot was established, which, in the one and the other nation, has guaranteed the victory of the opposition.”<sup>38</sup>

A few years earlier, the visit of an official delegation representing Chile’s new-look president, Arturo Alessandri, had occasioned a similar, if somewhat more prolix set of assertions:

Chile was, until very recently, governed by one of the most typical and solid Latin-American oligarchies. It did not live by fraud and rapacity, like almost all of the others. Intelligence, virtue, fortune, family background—such were the columns on which was based the Chilean ruling class, esteemed for all those attributes and for incalculable services rendered to the nation. Yet, however great were their titles of merit, they could not resist the democratic truth, defended by paladins of the valor of sr. Arthur Alessandri and his fellow crusaders. This is because, as an opposition candidate, the current president of the Andean nation won the majority of the electoral colleges and there was no way to keep him from the supreme leadership of his fatherland, to which he was carried by the most noble popular aspirations.

Today’s Chile is thus an exemplum, like Argentina and Uruguay, that the era of usurping autocrats has passed and that the republican comedy is tolerated only by peoples who don’t know how to make their will felt.<sup>39</sup>

## SOURCES AND CIRCUITS

Of course, anxious comparisons with Argentina were no novelty. Brazilian men of affairs had long fretted that Argentina was attracting greater numbers of European immigrants, a comparison enabled by the facts and figures that boosterish national governments began compiling and distributing in the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> The idea that Argentine politics and society were qualitatively better demanded different kinds of information and exchange between São Paulo and the Spanish-speaking Southern Cone, in which Brazil’s national capital of Rio de Janeiro was no longer central.<sup>41</sup> Statistical comparisons between the

38. “‘El continente enfermo’ . . .” *O Combate*, June 8, 1925, 1.

39. “Chile-Brasil,” *O Combate*, May 16, 1921, 1.

40. Skidmore, *Black into White*, 126, 140–143, 194.

41. On those earlier exchanges, emphasizing Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, see esp. Preuss, *Bridging the Island and Transnational South America*. João Paulo Coelho de Souza Rodrigues provides complementary views of exchanges between the two national capitals, including some information on meetings of subsequent decades, in “Da revolução à regeneração: crônicas de Machado de Assis e de Olavo Bilac sobre a Argentina,” *Antíteses* 11 (January–June 2013): 127–148; “Embaixadas originais: diplomacia, jornalismo e as relações Argentina-Brasil (1888–1935),” *Topoi: Revista de História* 36 (September–December 2017): 537–562; and “Diplomacia cultural y circulación literaria: dos escritores brasileños en Buenos Aires entre los centenarios,” *Catedral Tomada* 11 (2018): 74–101. In *Overlapping Geographies of*

province of Buenos Aires and the state of São Paulo—"the first Brazilian state"—on the basis of figures compiled by the two sub-national governments were complemented by more varied intellectual fare: European reminiscences of not-so-grand tours of South America, the surprisingly impolitic reflections of Brazilian diplomatic and consular officials, and exchanges between São Paulo-based intellectuals and their counterparts in Buenos Aires.<sup>42</sup>

Of the foreign travel writers, perhaps the most important for the purposes of Paulistas' comparisons with Brazil's neighbors to the south was James Bryce, the Belfast-born, race-obsessed British Liberal who in late 1910 toured coastal South America and recorded his findings in *South America: Observations and Impressions*.<sup>43</sup> In Chile and Argentina (Bryce was in Buenos Aires just a few weeks after Sáenz Peña's inauguration), he found a good deal to be hopeful about: white, or mostly white, populations, prospering in "bona fide republics."<sup>44</sup> Uruguay would have no doubt made the cut as well ("The people are of pure European stock," he wrote, "and have many of the qualities—frankness and energy, courage, and a high sense of honour—which make for political progress"), but his 48 hours in Montevideo coincided with the last of the traditional uprisings by back-country devotees of the opposition National Party.<sup>45</sup> As far as Brazil was concerned, Bryce found that "democratic principles have been proclaimed in the broadest terms, but thinking men see, and even unthinking men cannot but dimly feel, that no government, however good its intentions, can apply such principles in a country where seven-eighths of the people are ignorant, and half of them belong to backward races, unfit to exercise political rights."<sup>46</sup> Paulistas could take some consolation, however, that they, together with their countrymen in the three southernmost states, were characterized as "whiter" and

---

*Belonging: Migrations, Regions, and Nations in the Western South Atlantic* (Washington DC: American Historical Association, 2013), Michael Goebel essays an examination of different kinds of "region" in the area encompassing southern Brazil and the River Plate. For the long-standing foreign view that southern Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile constituted a single "Temperate South," see J. Valerie Fifer, *United States Perceptions of Latin America, 1850–1930: A "New West" South of Capricorn?* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1991).

42. P. P. "Estudos economicos," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 30, 1912, 5.

43. James Bryce, *South America: Observations and Impressions* (New York: Macmillan, 1912); H. A. L. Fisher, *James Bryce*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1927), chapt. 11 (2:44–61). On the influence generally of travel writers the likes of Bryce on Brazilian intellectuals, see for example Thomas E. Skidmore, "Racial Ideas and Social Policy in Brazil, 1870–1940," in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940*, Richard Graham, ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 11; and Roberto Ventura, *Estilo tropical: história cultural e polémicas literárias no Brasil, 1870–1914* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1991), 41. For an expanded exegesis on the genre, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

44. Bryce, *South America*, 543 (original emphasis); Fisher, *James Bryce*, 2:53–54.

45. Bryce, *South America*, chapt. 10 (quote on 364); Fisher, *James Bryce*, 56. That the uprising of November 1910 was the last is based on my reading of Roque Faraone, Blanca Paris, and Juan Oddone, *Cronología comparada de la historia del Uruguay, 1830–1985*, 2nd ed. (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 1997 [1966]). For an English-language introduction to the tradition of back-country revolt, see John Charles Chasteen, *Heros on Horseback: A Life and Times of the Last Gaucho Caudillos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

46. Bryce, *South America*, 414.

more progressive, and, in some of the book's concluding passages, grouped with the Argentines and Uruguayans in continent-wide comparisons.<sup>47</sup>

Bryce's treatise on US history and government, the two-volume *The American Commonwealth*, was already known in Brazil and his *South America* made a strong impression.<sup>48</sup> Paulo Prado, who as the editor of *Revista do Brasil* in the early 1920s published many of São Paulo's leading writers, including Mario Pinto Serva, cited Bryce in his *Retrato do Brasil*:

If this land was Anglo-Saxon, in thirty years it would have 50 million inhabitants, Bryce affirmed with his British disdain. On the contrary, there are spread throughout our territory uncertain human groups, humble ones, save for one or another focal point of nativist expression, smothered and paralyzed in general by a nature stunning in its exuberance, or terribly implacable. There they live unfettered in a common land. The population increases through a proliferation encouraged by the climate: we were 3 million as the nineteenth century began; we have now reached 35 million or more, with an annual increase in recent times, of nearly a million.<sup>49</sup>

In one sense, the joke was on Bryce—at this rate, Brazilian population growth would indeed match his seemingly bold hypothetical—but Prado was not laughing, nor did he acknowledge the various points of convergence between Bryce's assessments of Brazilian politics and society and his own. In any case, Bryce's *South America* would have been available to the writers, artists, and hangers-on who frequented Prado's library, one of São Paulo's key salons.<sup>50</sup>

Literate Paulistas who did not rate an invitation to Prado's manse or otherwise have access to Bryce's *South America* (or who did not care to wade all the way through it) would have been able to read about it in *O Estado de S. Paulo*. In a front-page review, Manoel de Oliveira Lima praised Bryce's "fluent and agreeable style," which allowed the book to be read with "great pleasure." He went on to note that Bryce was most taken by Chile and concluded, "Following him in the order of his reflections and reading between the lines, one easily reaches the conclusion that it was Brazil, on the contrary, the Latin-American society that least favorably impressed him" due to the

47. Bryce, *South America*, 375–377, 401, 403, 405–408, 566.

48. J. C. [José Custódio] Alves de Lima, *Recordações de homens e cousas do meu tempo* (Rio de Janeiro: Leite Ribeiro, Freitas Bastos, Spicer & Cia., 1926), 98; Oliveira Lima, "O sr. James Bryce e o Brasil," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 29, 1912, 1; Partido Republicano de S. Paulo, *A scisão, 1901* (São Paulo: Typographia da Industrial de S. Paulo, 1901), 45, 55–56, 96; Skidmore, *Black into White*, 259 n7; "Ecos & factos," *O Combate*, April 25, 1917, 1.

49. Paulo Prado, *Retrato do Brasil: ensaio sobre a tristeza brasileira* (São Paulo: Duprat-Mayença, 1928), 200–201.

50. *Catálogo da biblioteca "Paulo Prado" doado em 1944 à Biblioteca Municipal de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Departamento de Cultura, 1945), 32.

“enormousness of our country with its resources more unexploited than exploited and the magnitude of social and political problems without solutions in sight,” to say nothing of Bryce’s calculation that the Brazilian population “of color” outnumbered the white population. Returning to Bryce’s musings on Spanish South America, Oliveira Lima noted that the “white population and other circumstances” inspired him to have greater confidence in Argentina’s future. However, “of the Brazilian people he does not say the same precisely, though always in some way excepting the Paulista.”<sup>51</sup>

Oliveira Lima was at that point still in the employ of the Brazilian foreign service. Retired by the late 1910s, he wrote one of the most important Portuguese-language travelogues of Argentina, *Na Argentina: impressões, 1918–1919*, published in São Paulo in 1920 and still advertised for sale as late as 1927.<sup>52</sup> Following chapters on geography, politics, education, and the Argentine “race,” among other subjects, Oliveira Lima concluded:

Argentina, without yesteryear’s heroisms, without the epic tones of the great creative epochs, offers a panorama that is more than attractive, seductive in its extraordinary activity and in its virtues of tenacity, of foresight, and of altruism, which impose their imprint upon a society that is growing, but that does not reject its traditions, but rather treasures them, and that above all seeks to envelop itself in an aura of intense intellectual culture.

Disposing of the secret ballot, a weapon that an eminent Argentine statesman pointed out to me as more formidable than the sword or the rifle, Argentine democracy took its place among the most advanced and the most solid [democracies], because it already possesses the strength to resist official influence, that which there is called the moral gravitation of the government, and even the threat of material pressure, and also because it possesses sufficient discernment to find its way amid the confusion that currently prevails in the world. If President Yrigoyen, obeying on the one hand his instincts of justice and humanity and on the other his responsibilities as ruler, put himself practically at the head of Argentine socialism, supporting the demands of those who protest, and thus carrying out a peaceful maximalist revolution in a moment of political and social convulsion . . . the opposition are establishing

51. Oliveira Lima, “O sr. James Bryce e o Brasil.” Oliveira Lima also introduced readers of *O Estado de S. Paulo* to the work of Francisco García Calderon, a Peruvian counterpart to Bryce, whose work could likewise be read as excepting São Paulo from the racially imposed “decadence” to which much of the rest of Brazil was fated. See Oliveira Lima, “Cousas estrangeiras: as democracias latinas da America (I),” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 14, 1912, 3; Oliveira Lima, “Cousas estrangeiras: as democracias latinas da America (II),” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 17, 1912, 3; and F. García Calderon, *Latin America: Its Rise and Progress*, Bernard Miall, trans. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1913), 358–359, 361–362, 372, 392, with “decadence” on 351.

52. Oliveira Lima, *Na Argentina: impressões, 1918–1919* (São Paulo: Weiszflog [ & ] Irmãos, 1920); Luiz Amaral, *A mais linda viagem* (São Paulo: Companhia Melhoramentos, 1927).

through the vote the indispensable and efficacious counterweight such that this evolution occurs within reasonable limits.<sup>53</sup>

Brazil's ambassador to Argentina, Pedro de Toledo, a correspondent of Oliveira Lima, was still more taken by developments there, and his efforts on behalf of Argentine-Brazilian friendship were noted by *O Combate* along the way. In his enthusiasm for his host country, Toledo went so far as to call for the introduction of Sáenz Peña-style reforms in Brazil. For his outspokenness, and for his cordiality toward the exiled military rebels of the 1920s, he was driven from his post, and he returned to his home state of São Paulo in 1926, after six and a half years' service in Argentina. Early in his ambassadorship, he had been visited in Buenos Aires by his son-in-law, Lino Moreira, an old friend and correspondent of Monteiro Lobato.<sup>54</sup>

Another Brazilian diplomat, Helio Lobo, recorded his impressions of Uruguay in 1927. Published the following year as *A democracia uruguaya*, the book lauded Uruguay's educational system, its social policies, and—at greatest length—its “Road to Democracy,” via direct elections, secret and compulsory voting, municipal autonomy, well-formed political parties, and freedom of conscience.<sup>55</sup> This volume too found its way into Paulista libraries and into the hands of self-styled progressives.<sup>56</sup> Indiana University's copy once belonged to the radical republican Clovis Botelho Vieira (he signed and dated the half-title page “August 1928”), who was also a correspondent of Oliveira Lima, inscribing a copy of his *A grande guerra e as tradições liberais do Brasil* to the “notable Brazilian historian and publicist” in 1918.<sup>57</sup> In September 1928, Botelho Vieira would address a meeting in the interior of São Paulo in which he evoked Brazil's nineteenth century, when the country seemed to be progressing while its neighbors were embroiled in chaos, and compared it with the present, in which Argentina and Uruguay were “liberal” and peaceful as Brazil regressed under the rule of “republican despots.” Once again, foremost

53. Oliveira Lima, *Na Argentina*, 185–186. This passage concluded Oliveira Lima's travelogue. Transcriptions of the lectures he gave while in Argentina rounded out the volume.

54. “A list of the names of correspondents,” Oliveira Lima Family Papers, Oliveira Lima Library, Catholic University of America; Raul Tieté (pseud., Renato Alves Guimarães), “Às quintas-feiras,” *O Combate*, September 21, 1922, 1; Antônio Barreto do Amaral, *Pedro do Toledo: ensaio biográfico* (São Paulo: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo, 1969), 122–123; Alair Barbosa, *Um cenáculo na Paulicéia: um estudo sobre Monteiro Lobato, Godofredo Rangel, José Antônio Nogueira, Ricardo Gonçalves, Raul de Freitas e Albino de Camargo* (Brasília: Projecto Editorial, 2002), 137.

55. Helio Lobo, *A democracia uruguaya* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1928), 158–159, 160, 165.

56. For an example of the former, see *Catálogo da Biblioteca “Paulo Prado,”* 110.

57. The signed copy of *A grande guerra* forms part of the pamphlet collection of the Oliveira Lima Library, Catholic University of America.

among the prescribed remedies was Sáenz-Peña-style secret balloting, “which alleviated the political atmosphere of the Hispanic-American republics.”<sup>58</sup>

Even more important than the circulation of travel writings were direct exchanges between Argentina and São Paulo during these years, in the form of the comings-and-goings of travelers the likes of Navarro Monzó and Lino Moreira, and in international correspondence and other forms of exchange. This correspondence has only begun to be explored (and only in its aesthetic contexts). Insofar as commercial exchanges have been examined, the reigning historical wisdom continues to be that these years were marked by “open competition in the commercial sphere and military outfitting” between the two countries.<sup>59</sup> During the 1910s, there was a coordinated attempt on the part of São Paulo manufacturers and the federal government to boost textile exports to Argentina. Among the key figures in this effort was the industrialist Bento Pires de Campos, who after some study had been the first Brazilian to sell textiles in Argentina and who led São Paulo’s participation in a set of wartime industrial expositions held in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Coincidence or not, he was also a member of the Nationalist League’s first Deliberative Council (his younger brother Ovídio was a league founder) and a leader of the short-lived Municipal Party of São Paulo, which sought to represent commerce and industry and advocated the introduction of secret balloting on the Argentine model.<sup>60</sup>

Press connections abounded. Within a month of *O Combate*’s founding, its editors announced the names of its first out-of-state correspondents, one in Rio de Janeiro and the other in Montevideo, who promised “interesting and frequent updates on the life of the peoples of the Río de la Plata.” That is, the newspaper contracted correspondents in the national capital and the capital of Uruguay simultaneously, the latter to provide reporting on Argentina as well. Early 1917 found Rangel Pestana’s close colleague Benedicto de Andrade—publisher of the rabble-rousing magazine *O Parafuso*—in Buenos Aires, from which he sent, “Congratulations for the most brilliant campaign unmasking the crapulent gang perched in power.” Among the writers and staffers grouped around *O Combate*, Renato

58. His address was published in the *Diário Nacional* (September 12–13, 1928), at a time in which the opposition newspaper was one of the state capital’s most widely read, in pamphlet form as *Os grandes ideais do Partido Democrático* (São Paulo: Rossetti, 1928), and as a chapter in his collection *Na imprensa* (São Paulo: Irmãos Ferraz, 1931), 20–39.

59. Patrícia Artundo, *Mário de Andrade e a Argentina: um país e sua produção cultural como espaço de reflexão*, Gênesis Andrade, trans. (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2004); Boris Fausto, *História do Brasil*, 10th ed. (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2002 [1994]), 248 (quoted).

60. Isaltino Costa, *Expansão comercial brasileira: a indústria têxtil brasileira e os mercados sul-americanos* (São Paulo: Seção de Obras do Estado de S. Paulo, 1920), esp. 8–14, 131–132; Liga Nacionalista, *Discursos proferidos*, 6; “Notas e informações,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, December 16, 1916, 5; Partido Municipal de São Paulo manifesto, November 29, 1919, reprinted in Partido Democrático, *O voto secreto*, 95–96.

Alves Guimarães noted the warm reception that he received in Buenos Aires as a “simple journalist” at some point before September 1922. By that point, Nestor Pestana—the longtime head of the editorial staff at *O Estado de S. Paulo*—was also the São Paulo representative of Buenos Aires’s *La Nación*.<sup>61</sup>

Monteiro Lobato, despite his enthusiasm for Sáenz Peña’s remaking of Argentine politics, did not travel to Argentina until shortly before his death in 1948. He did, however, carry on a vigorous correspondence with Argentine intellectuals, welcomed them as visitors to São Paulo, and, as editor of the *Revista do Brasil* and proprietor of an eponymously named publishing house, regularly published their work. Lobato also took part in a series of joint ventures with Manuel Gálvez, a figure of at least equal importance in Argentine intellectual life as a writer, publisher, and nationalist spokesman.<sup>62</sup> Gálvez also provided Lobato with a translator, in the person of his former secretary, Benjamin Garay, who Lobato would summon to São Paulo. Resident in the Paulista capital from then onward, Garay established close relationships among the local intelligentsia while working “to establish sounder cultural relations between Brazil and the South American intelligentsia on the basis of efficient exchange.” During this period, he also served as an interlocutor between the Party of Youth founder Paulo Gonçalves and Henrique Maximiano Coelho Neto, a Rio-based intellectual of the first tier (and another correspondent of both Oliveira Lima and Gálvez).<sup>63</sup> Along the way, he introduced the Nationalist League founder Clovis Ribeiro to Argentina’s fiction-for-the-masses serial, *La novela semanal*, which Ribeiro attempted to recreate in São Paulo.<sup>64</sup>

The modernist critic Mário de Andrade was another prominent São Paulo intellectual with ties to Buenos Aires, corresponding with Argentine intellectuals and introducing his compatriots to their work through his column in the opposition *Diário Nacional*. In the mid 1920s, Andrade—alongside his fellow modernists Sergio Milliet, Tácito de Almeida, and Rubens Borba de Moraes—rubbed shoulders with several outspoken proponents of electoral reform along

61. “Nossos correspondentes no Rio e na Prata,” *O Combate*, May 27, 1915, 4; “Benedicto de Andrade embarca no ‘Frísia,’” *O Combate*, February 7, 1917, 1; Raul Tieté (pseud., Renato Alves Guimarães), “Às quintas-feiras,” *O Combate*, September 21, 1922, 1; “O centenário da independência,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 20, 1922, 1; Melo, *Dicionário*, 271, 470.

62. Edgard Cavalheiro, *Monteiro Lobato: vida e obra*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1962 [1955]), 1:217, 238, 2:85; Gálvez, *Recuerdos de la vida literaria*, 2:131, 272, 292–293, 3:257; José Ingenieros, “Significação histórica do maximalismo,” *Revista do Brasil*, December 1919: 486–491; Ingenieros, “A democracia funcional na Rússia,” *Revista do Brasil*, May 1920: 7–27; “Resenha do Mez,” *Revista do Brasil*, May 1920: 84; unsigned review of Sarmiento’s *Facundo* (São Paulo: Monteiro Lobato, 1923), *Revista do Brasil*, January 1924: 58; Artundo, *Mário de Andrade*, chapt. 2.

63. Gálvez, *Recuerdos de la vida literaria*, 2:270–272, 292; Juarez Bahia, *Um homem de trinta anos: vida e poesia de Paulo Gonçalves* (São Paulo: Martins 1964), 53, 90.

64. Artundo, *Mário de Andrade*, 44–45; Melo, *Dicionário*, 523.

Argentine lines, including Clovis Ribeiro, who had been profoundly impressed by Argentine news clippings on the subject lent him by Mario Pinto Serva.<sup>65</sup>

Paulo Nogueira Filho was still more prominent in these reformist circles. As a signatory of Monteiro Lobato's open letter to Carlos de Campos, his support for Sáenz Peña-style reform was well established. In 1928, Nogueira Filho traveled to Argentina, witnessing its presidential election in April; on his return, he used the opportunity to once again tout the efficacy of secret balloting.<sup>66</sup>

In Argentina, Nogueira Filho served as a liaison between São Paulo's would-be reformers and exiled veterans of the military revolt of 1924, who in their own right provided a link between Brazil and developments in Argentina through their correspondence. Among the exiles was the lawyer Pedro Alcântara Tocci, who had joined the military rebels during their occupation of São Paulo and attempted to rally working-class support with appeals to "better harmonizing labor and capital, . . . the victory of laborism, . . . the evening of the social classes, in France, in England, in Italy, in Uruguay and in Argentina, summoning the working classes to political and social representative bodies." In Buenos Aires, Tocci cultivated ties with Argentine intellectuals; in 1925, he delivered a eulogy at the funeral of José Ingenieros, the racist social scientist who had published in the *Revista do Brasil* and influenced Monteiro Lobato, among many other Paulistas, and whose passing was a major news item in São Paulo.<sup>67</sup>

In 1926, the veteran São Paulo newspaperman José Vieira Couto de Magalhães Sobrinho spent eight days in Buenos Aires. While there, he not only found much to admire; he also met with Pedro de Toledo, who had already been forced to resign as ambassador but had not yet returned to Brazil. Back in São Paulo, Couto de Magalhães published an account of his sojourn over several issues of the journal *O Commentario*, including the usual references to the secret ballot, "thanks to which the popular will expresses itself freely at the polls," and the need for its adoption "if we want in Brazil as well that elections cease to be,

65. Artundo, *Mário de Andrade*; Mario de Andrade to Sergio Milliet, São Paulo, August 11, 1924, in *Mário de Andrade por ele mesmo*, 2nd ed., Paulo Duarte, ed. (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1977); Paulo Nogueira Filho, *Ideais e lutas de um burguês progressista: o Partido Democrático e a Revolução de 1930*, 2 vols. (São Paulo: Anhambi, 1958), 1:140; Mario Pinto Serva to Julio de Mesquita Filho, quoted in "Clovis Ribeiro," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 29, 1946, 4. See also Sergio Milliet's fictionalized treatment in *Roberto* (São Paulo: L. Niccolini & Cia., 1935), 141–151.

66. Nogueira Filho, *Ideais e lutas*, 1:140, 239–240; Lobato et al., *O voto secreto*; "O pleito argentino visto pelo dr. Paulo Nogueira," *Diário da Noite*, April 9, 1928, 1.

67. "Manifesto aos operários do Partido do Trabalho," São Paulo, July 23, 1924, Arquivo do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo, Arquivo Revolução de 1924, caixa 7; José Ingenieros, "Significação histórica do maximalismo"; Ingenieros, "A democracia funcional na Rússia," *Revista do Brasil*, May 1920: 7–27; "Resenha do mez," *Revista do Brasil*, May 1920: 84; Monteiro Lobato, "A Evolução das idéas argentinas" de J. Ingenieros," *Revista do Brasil*, April 1922: 289–294; "José Ingenieros," *O Combate*, November 3, 1925, 1; "Morrer antes de envelhecer" . . . " *O Combate*, November 20, 1925, 1, 4; "José Ingenieros," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 1, 1925, 4; Benjamin de Garay, "José Ingenieros," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 30, 1925, 2; Vieira, *Os grandes ideais*, 24–26.

as they have been, the indecorous staging of a farce.” While Couto de Magalhães admitted that eight days was not a very long time, he argued that “they were enough to show us the existence of a beautiful, advanced and progressive country, wherein lives a civilized, hard-working and enterprising people, to whom we should link ourselves as brothers of the same continent and who—woe is us—can give us many lessons in civic culture and democracy.”<sup>68</sup>

Paulista pilgrimages to Buenos Aires were complemented by the visits to São Paulo of Spanish American notables. Indeed, Navarro Monzó’s visit of 1923 was only the tip of the iceberg. The frequency of these visits would have been evident to even the most casual reader of São Paulo’s daily press, though only a few of the most important visits can be described here. The longest and most involved Platine visit during these years was one leg of a larger university mission that also visited Rio de Janeiro, stopping at São Paulo en route to the national capital and again on the return to Argentina. On the latter occasion, the five-member group, headed by the law professor and would-be social reformer José León Suárez, spent nearly two weeks among the Paulistas—apparently very gladly, Suárez claiming that “upon arriving in S. Paulo it seemed to him, as if in a pleasant dream, that he found himself in Buenos Aires. Because it is difficult to find two regions of different countries that resemble one another as much as S. Paulo and Buenos Aires, whether by the elements that make up their people, by the activity of their inhabitants, . . . the appearance of their houses, the movement in their streets and . . . the love of work one observes everywhere.”

Overrepresented among the mission’s interlocutors in São Paulo were men who traveled in the reformist circles out of which emerged the Nationalist League and other civic groups, as well as founding members of the Municipal Party and the Democratic Party—the names of more than a dozen of which are recorded in newspaper accounts—including two signatories of Monteiro Lobato’s open letter to Carlos de Campos.<sup>69</sup> Among the most attentive were Arthur Neiva and Octaviano Alves de Lima. Neiva, a close friend and correspondent of Monteiro Lobato, had lived in Argentina in the mid 1910s, precisely at the moment the Sáenz Peña Law had enabled Yrigoyen’s election. A native of the state of Bahia, Neiva was nevertheless very much taken with São Paulo, coining the phrase depicting it as a locomotive pulling 20 empty boxcars (the latter representing Brazil’s other states) and comparing its most

68. “Oito dias em Buenos-Aires,” *O Commentario*, October 31, 1926, 121–128 (quoted); “Folhetos e revistas,” *Correio Paulistano*, May 29, 1926, 3; “O Commentario,” *O Combate*, July 14, 1926, 1.

69. From the “Noticias diversas” column in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, August 16, 1918, 6; September 8, 1918, 7; September 9, 1918, 6; September 10, 1918, 6. From the series “A missão universitaria argentina” in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 11, 1918, 5; September 12, 1918, 5 (quoted); September 13, 1918, 5; September 14, 1918, 5; September 15, 1918, 4; September 16, 1918, 5; September 17, 1918, 4; September 18, 1918, 2; and September 19, 1918, 6.

recently opened agricultural zone to the Argentine region of Tucumán, much as Suárez had paired the city of São Paulo with Buenos Aires.<sup>70</sup> Alves de Lima had lived in Argentina for longer, from 1902 into the 1910s; in Buenos Aires his family founded a café and coffee-retailing business that laid the base for a major exporting firm based in Santos. While there, Alves de Lima became a committed Georgist (a supporter of a single tax on land as a means of promoting economic progress and social justice, as espoused by the North American journalist Henry George in his *Progress and Poverty*), a position endorsed, at least formally, by Platine statesmen the likes of Sáenz Peña and José Batlle y Ordóñez. Once back in São Paulo, he would go on to participate in the founding of the pro-secret ballot Democratic Party.<sup>71</sup>

In early January 1919, it was the turn of the Argentine congressman Juan Justo—a founder of his country’s Socialist party and another advocate of social reform—to visit São Paulo, where he spoke at a union hall following an introduction by *O Combate*’s Nereu Rangel Pestana: “He warmly praised the Sáenz Peña law. Thanks to it, anarchism is disappearing from Argentina, because the worker, having efficacious means to make his rights count, abandons that theory, which is almost always the fruit of popular despair.”<sup>72</sup> Justo was not the only representative of Argentine socialism—moderate, reformist, and committed to working within the electoral realm—to visit São Paulo during these years. In September 1922, an Argentine delegation that traveled to Rio de Janeiro to commemorate the centennial of Brazilian independence extended its visit to include São Paulo. There, the delegation member Alfredo Palacios, a university professor and former Socialist congressman, was hailed by both *O Estado de S. Paulo* and *O Combate* for his work on social reform and feted at local institutions of higher learning. At the traditional São Paulo Law School, Palacios was greeted by Vergueiro Steidel and his fellow Nationalist League founder Júlio Maia, as well as by professors Spencer Vampré, Reynaldo

70. “Noticias diversas,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 10, 1918, 6; “A missão universitária argentina,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 18, 1918, 2; Amélia Coutinho, “Artur Neiva,” in *DHBB*, 4: 4047; Cassiano Nunes, ed., *O patriotismo difícil: a correspondência entre Monteiro Lobato e Artur Neiva* (São Paulo: n.p., 1981); Arthur Neiva, *Daqui e de longe . . . crônicas nacionais e de viagem* (São Paulo: Companhia Melhoramentos, 1927), 111, 131–132.

71. “Noticias diversas,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 9, 1918, 6; “A missão universitária argentina,” *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 19, 1918, 6; Melo, *Dicionário*, 310; Octaviano Alves de Lima, *Revolução econômico-social*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1947 [1931]), esp. 136, 281–282; British Chamber of Commerce of São Paulo & Southern Brazil, *Personalidades no Brasil/Men of Affairs in Brazil* (São Paulo: n.p., n.d.), 44; Lima, *Recordações*, 7, 42, 72; O. Alves de Lima Junior, *Consideraciones sobre el impuesto único territorial: combatiendo prejuicios, disipando errores y venciendo obstáculos* (Buenos Aires: n.p., 1919); Juan B. Bellagamba, *El impuesto único y el progreso agrícola de la pampa: trabajo presentado al primer Congreso Agrícola de La Pampa* (Buenos Aires: Sordi y Vallarino, 1918); José E. Menchaca, *El impuesto único al alcance de todos* (Buenos Aires: Est. Graf. Franco, 1920), 67, 70; Nogueira Filho, *Ideias e lutas*, 2:642; Nazareth Prado, ed., *Antonio Prado no império e na república* (Rio de Janeiro: E. Brigue, 1929), 404. It seems likely that Alves de Lima and José León Suárez were acquainted with one another in Buenos Aires. At the very least, their ideas were in circulation in the same Argentine intellectual journal, the *Revista de Ciencias Económicas*. See vol. 8:79–82 (January–April 1920): 445–449; and vol. 9: 84–85 (June–July 1920): 764–765.

72. “O que foi a palestra do deputado Justo,” *O Combate*, January 2, 1919, 1.

Porchat, and Francisco Morato. Of the three last named, the first would go on to sign Monteiro Lobato's open letter to Carlos de Campos, while the other two would help to found the pro-secret ballot Democratic Party. While in São Paulo, Palacios also visited the offices of *O Estado de S. Paulo*, accompanied by Argentine students and a journalist from Buenos Aires.<sup>73</sup>

Probably even more important in the diffusion of the Argentine example in São Paulo was a more general expansion of print culture, beyond travel books and the works of such luminaries as the "American master" Alfredo Palacios.<sup>74</sup> This expansion is typified by the multiplicity of periodicals serving ever-greater amounts of news to ever-growing audiences, including South American news from foreign news services and Brazil's own Agência Americana. News trafficked over telegraph lines made São Paulo as close to Montevideo and Buenos Aires as to Rio de Janeiro. Important too, but nearly impossible to measure, was the local consumption of newspapers and magazines published in Argentina, which anecdotal evidence indicates was greater than many might expect.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, such was the intensity of exchange with the Southern Cone, compared with a relative paucity of news from certain points within the Brazilian republic itself, that a Paulista journalist, occupied in lauding the work of reform in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, could excuse himself from commenting on the oligarchies of Brazil's northern states, for lack of knowledge.<sup>76</sup>

## THE ALLUSION EXPLAINED

Turning from circuits and sources to motives and meanings, the Argentine allusion conveyed something of how Paulista intellectuals were thinking about their own society. The sense that their home state, in particular, might be "ready" for reform tending toward democratization, like that which had taken place in Argentina,

73. "A sua chegada em São Paulo," *O Combate*, September 16, 1922, 1; "As visitas do illustre professor argentino," *O Combate*, September 19, 1922, 1; "Notas e informações," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 19, 1922, 4; "O centenário da independência," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 20, 1922, 1; "O centenário da independência," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 21, 1922, 2.

74. For the rapid assimilation and diffusion of Palacios's work on university education, see for example Braz de Souza Arruda, "Universidades," *Diário Nacional*, January 13, 1928, 3; Arruda, "A universidade de S. Paulo," *Diário Nacional*, January 20, 1928, 3 (quoted).

75. Lila Caimari, "News from Around the World: The Newspapers of Buenos Aires in the Age of the Submarine Cable, 1866–1900," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 96:4 (November 2016): 607–640; Dwayne R. Winseck and Robert M. Pike, *Communication and Empire: Media, Markets, and Globalization, 1860–1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), esp. chaps. 6, 9. "A simple reading of the telegrams that provide us an account of the political situation of the world every day," the Communist journalist Affonso Schmidt wrote in 1923, provided proof of Brazilian backwardness and Platine progress, gained through the use of the secret ballot: "Quem tiver um ideal venha conosco," *O Combate*, October 19, 1923, 1. For Paulista consumption of Platine periodicals, see "El Mundo Argentino," *O Combate*, February 10, 1917, 1; Tito Batini, *Memórias de um socialista congênito* (Campinas: Editora da Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1991), 133.

76. "As oligarchias sul-americanas," *Folha da Noite*, September 14, 1922, 1.

Uruguay, and Chile, was accompanied by a belief in São Paulo's difference from Brazil's other provincial units. This sense of difference could be expressed through affinities with climactically temperate and racially "white" Spanish America.

A racialized sense of difference is easiest to show in the case of Monteiro Lobato. Around the same time that he was gathering signatures for his open letter petitioning Carlos de Campos to make himself the Paulista Sáenz Peña, Lobato authored a little-remembered science fiction novel titled *O choque das raças*.<sup>77</sup> The story is told by a Paulista everyman who meets a young woman whose father had invented a machine that could see into the future. The heart of the novel is the woman telling this man about the racial conflict that emerges in the year 2228 between whites and blacks in the United States, but along the way there is a small dalliance concerning South America's future. In that future, "the old Brazil split into two countries, one bringing together all South American greatness, child as it was of the immense industrial area that emerged on the banks of the Paraná river," envisioned as the merger of "temperate Brazil" with Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay in the "republic of the Paraná."

Meanwhile, "the other [region], a tropical republic, still agitated itself in the old political and philological convulsions. . . . Sociologists saw in this the reflection of the disequilibrium of the blood, consequent to the fusion of four distinct races, the white, the black, the red, and the yellow," the inevitable result of the "initial error of the mixture of the races" suffered by Brazil's "hot part." By contrast the "temperate part"—the Paraná basin, of which São Paulo state was the most important part—had "saved itself" so that it "could follow the *right* path," with even old Luso-Hispanic rivalries disappearing in the face of common economic interests and mass immigration on the part of white Europeans. These developments would make the Republic of the Paraná one of the world's largest and most prosperous countries.<sup>78</sup>

77. Lobato et al., *O voto secreto*; Lobato, *O choque das raças, ou o presidente negro: romance americano do anno de 2228* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1926); Nunes, *O patriotismo difícil*, 33. Arthur Neiva shared the dedication page of *O choque das raças* with Coelho Neto.

78. Lobato, *O choque das raças*, 125–127 (original emphasis). Lobato's experiment in science fiction, such as it was, drew—consciously or not—on his reading of Ingenieros, whose racial and climactic pessimism regarding most of Brazil was just as marked, but who also made an exception for a southern Brazil centered on São Paulo, grouping it with the Southern Cone. See *Sociología argentina*, 7th ed. (Buenos Aires: Rosso, 1918 [1913]) esp. 74, 78, 441, 444. That said, Lobato hardly acquired his anti-black Paulista racism from the Argentine *pensador*, having written almost 20 years earlier, after visiting Rio de Janeiro: "What terrible problems the poor Negro from Africa created for us here, in his unintentional revenge! . . . Perhaps our salvation will come from S. Paulo and other zones that injected themselves intensely with European blood. The Americans saved themselves from miscegenation with the barrier of racial prejudice. We have that barrier here as well, but only in certain classes and in certain zones. In Rio it does not exist." Lobato to Rangel, Arcias, February 3, 1908, in *A barca de Gleyre: quarenta anos de correspondência literária entre Monteiro Lobato e Godofredo Rangel* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1944), 133.

Another relevant novel of the time, this one a thinly veiled autobiography, records Sergio Milliet's return to Brazil in 1925 or early 1926 after a long absence in Europe. On the deck of a steamship, sailing into Guanabara Bay, Milliet's double, named Roberto, "proud of the spectacle of his land," points out the sights to a fellow traveler, a Frenchman. When the Frenchman comments that the view is "Magnificent. Better than Constantinople!," Roberto takes it as a personal compliment. As they continue to chat, the Frenchman asks:

"And that very long line of white buildings?"

"It's the Avenida Rio Branco. Yes, it does look like a boulevard in Paris. . . . What? One million, eight hundred thousand inhabitants. Yes, fewer than Buenos Aires but its population growth is much greater. Within ten years it will be the principal city in South America."

"And the first civilization in the tropics!" the Frenchman, who was well read, added.

"Good man." Robert felt like hugging him.<sup>79</sup>

The idyll is broken, however, as they near the docks and a group of Roberto's countrymen come into view, "a gang of mulattos of every color, weak, toothless, stuck in splendid uniforms with gilded galloons, talking loud and sing-song, gesticulating, showing off, a happy display of a race that [Arthur de] Gobineau despaired of. "Oh! Fatherland! A sick race, a terrible government," Roberto thinks to himself, in anguish. "But S. Paulo wasn't like that. And if it was? All the better. One more reason to dedicate himself to his land."<sup>80</sup>

In São Paulo, Roberto is more at ease:

Despite everything, S. Paulo did not disappoint. Certain details shocked him. The entire complex, however, held up to criticism. The organism in formation only lacked a more solid consciousness of its racial and geographic being. That brilliant youth, however confused in its bookish orientation, aspired to an ideal that would guide it. In this, at least, they were like brothers. The fatherland was too large and too unknown to be the emblem of their ambitions. The eight million square kilometers lacked unity. Everything separated the north from the south and the south from the far south. Culture. Race. All that remained was the family tie of language, a link as tenuous as that which had tied the country to Portugal. But the very pronunciation was already different. The north pronounced vowels openly in an excessive lyricism. In São Paulo

79. Milliet, *Roberto*, 133–134.

80. Milliet, *Roberto*, 134–135. On Arthur de Gobineau and Brazil, see Skidmore, *Black into White*, 29–31. Gobineau, the French diplomat and author of *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853–55), had served as minister at Rio de Janeiro in 1869–70, long enough for his views on the degeneracy of Brazil's miscegenated population to make him unwelcome.

one limited strong sonorities, with the modesty of peoples with more interior life. They were not brothers. From Amazonas to the Plata had evolved beings unknown unto one another, isolated tribes that do not understand one another.

São Paulo's climate was mild, subtropical. It was the climate of the great civilizations. To the north, the motionless, stunning sun. In the shade of the mango trees that feed him without great effort, the northerner sings to the moon and the elements. He lives in contemplation of the chirping bird life that warbles in the palm trees. He lives without thinking about tomorrow, idly, without ambitions or needs.

In S. Paulo, Brazilian literarism lost its roughest edges. It became subdued. Still too much eloquence, principally in the academic class anchored in nineteenth-century sociology and in the bourgeois ruling class, reared within the provincial patriciate.

It was necessary to bring together the energies in a program of action that had as an attainable aim a sufficient political idea, a fatherland that was more circumscribed and thus more in reach of the average mentality.

Brazil was, for almost all of the Brazilians of São Paulo, a terrible abstraction.<sup>81</sup>

It is at this point that Roberto (Milliet) takes part in founding the Partido Social Paulista (the São Paulo Democratic Party) alongside other Paulista youths, including José Joaquim (Paulo Nogueira Filho). For a time, at least, Roberto/Milliet is a true believer in the cause of reform, but then, "Roberto began to doubt. Brazil had failed, as other attempts had failed earlier."<sup>82</sup>

Milliet's anxious autobiographical musings made for a more readable novel than Lobato's eugenicist fantasies. Indeed, even Lobato's most laudatory biographer admits that *O choque das raças* is awful.<sup>83</sup> Quality aside, the two works of fiction are profoundly and directly indicative of the intellectual context in which the Argentine allusion was being formulated by Paulista intellectuals. Julio de Mesquita Filho, who had seen off the Argentine university mission of 1918, offered a vision similar to Lobato's and anticipated Milliet/Roberto's early belief that "S. Paulo wasn't like that." To Mesquita Filho, European immigration had saved southern Brazil from "the African toxin" and stimulated economic prosperity, making São Paulo's rich lands "comparable to the progressive regions of the Universe" and setting the stage for the successful Sáenz Peña-style democratization of São Paulo, "our secular mission. . . popular autonomy, definitively integrating the nationality among the democratic peoples of the Universe," to be followed by other pockets of southern Brazil.<sup>84</sup>

81. Milliet, *Roberto*, 144–145.

82. Milliet, *Roberto*, 147–151 (quote on 151).

83. Cavalheiro, *Monteiro Lobato*, 1:273–276.

84. Mesquita Filho, *A crise nacional: reflexões em torno de uma data* (São Paulo: Secção de Obras d'O Estado de S. Paulo, 1925), quotes on 23, 53, 64; "A missão universitária argentina," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 19, 1918, 6.

Alongside the Argentine allusion were deleterious comparisons drawing similarly on racial hierarchies. If Argentina and its reforms were held out as examples worthy of emulation, other countries and forms of government were brought up to provoke horror in right-thinking Paulistas. *O Combate* thus contrasted Uruguay, which modeled some of its institutions on Switzerland's, with Brazil and its "regime of Paraguay."<sup>85</sup> For the *Revista do Brasil*, Brazil was a "South American Mexico."<sup>86</sup> For Mario Pinto Serva, unreformed Brazil was comparable to "Turkey or Kaffraria" or, worse yet, to "Senegambia, a Zululand," and Brazilians, in political terms, were "Arabs," "Hindus," or Jim-Crowed African Americans, suffering under what he identified as caciquismo, autocracy, oriental satrapy, and other forms of oppression.<sup>87</sup>

Indeed, while Sáenz Peña had helped make Argentina "a democracy that rivals the most advanced," Brazil "is no more than a vast slave-quarters in which, like blacks, we go out to elections to faithfully and servilely obey the orders of our patrons."<sup>88</sup> Serva meant his comparisons to be read ironically—Paulistas, after all, were white: "We who profess to be whites in Brazil do not have representatives of our own in government."<sup>89</sup> Aureliano Leite, who held out Uruguay as an example—and who would be among the rare defenders of Monteiro Lobato's *O choque das raças*—warned that "Africa and Asia have countries that are more independent and more brilliant than Brazil" and that civilizational decline was the alternative facing Brazil in the absence of thoroughgoing reform.<sup>90</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Leite's comparison echoed older tropes involving the possible recolonization of Brazil in the second wave of European expansion and the formation of the United States' early overseas empire, while Serva combined the same elements with unfunny send-ups of his cohort's established wisdom on race, region, nation, and civic capacity. That they did so in the same breath as they called for São Paulo to adopt Southern Cone-style reform suggests some of the larger assumptions surrounding the Argentine allusion as it was elaborated amid the political conflicts and intellectual effervescence of the Brazilian 1910s and 1920s. These assumptions and their accompanying imagery flowed into the racist

85. "Ecos & factos," *O Combate*, July 20, 1916, 1.

86. "O momento," *Revista do Brasil*, January 1920: 3–4.

87. Serva, *O voto secreto*, 180, 189, 222, 253; Serva, *A reforma eleitoral*, 151; Serva, *A lição da revolta*, 9–13, 216; Serva, *O enigma brasileiro*, 133–137.

88. Serva, "Desafio," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 3, 1919, 3.

89. Serva, *A lição da revolta*, 10.

90. Leite, "Discurso feito em Campinas"; Leite, *Retratos a pena: derradeiros da monarchia e primeiros da republica em S. Paulo* (São Paulo: São Paulo Editora Limitada, 1930), 245–246.

regionalism of São Paulo's 1932 revolt against Brazil's national government, masterfully explored by Barbara Weinstein in *The Color of Modernity*, even as the reformist cause itself—up to and including the anxious comparison with Argentina—figured in apparently opposite ideological trajectories.<sup>91</sup>

Temperate and white, civilized in all but matters political, governmental, and administrative, São Paulo was envisioned as possessing affinities with Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. It had, in other words, escaped the traps laid for other Brazilian regions—the north and northeast, to be sure, but also the neighboring state of Rio de Janeiro and the miscegenated, torrid-climed Federal District that stood at its center—by climactic determinism and pseudo-scientific racism: that “modern progress,” in Thomas Skidmore's memorable gloss, “was meant only for white men in temperate zones.”<sup>92</sup> Now it fell to São Paulo to enact the perceived political progress of the Southern Cone and even, perhaps, to emulate some of the seemingly successful social reforms that accompanied it. In such thinking—sometimes implicitly, but often explicitly—São Paulo was understood to be a society and a place apart from and superior to all or most of Brazil's other provincial units. This regionalist imagining would endure long past Argentina's eclipse as a potential model. It was nevertheless nurtured for a time, in part, in calls for Sáenz Peña-style reform in the “leader'-State.” Here, amid overlooked exchanges between Brazil and Spanish America, and under-studied allusions to Argentine success, were lasting legacies of the intellectual ferment of the 1910s and 1920s.

Montclair State University  
Montclair, New Jersey  
[woodardj@montclair.edu](mailto:woodardj@montclair.edu)

JAMES P. WOODARD

91. Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015). In 1929, Waldemar Belfort de Mattos, a member of the pro-secret ballot Democratic Party and an opposition city councilman, despaired that “Argentina was a hundred thousand years ahead of Brazil”; at around the same time, a young Caio Prado Júnior was struck by a similar sense of inferiority on his first visit to Buenos Aires. For Belfort de Mattos and Prado Júnior alike, membership in the Democratic Party was part of a trajectory leading from liberalism to Marxism, and with it to long-term commitments to the Brazilian Communist Party. “‘O Combate’ em Campinas,” *O Combate*, August 26, 1929, 2; Caio Prado Júnior, in *A história vivida*, 3 vols., Lourenço Dantas Mota, ed. (São Paulo: *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 1981–1982), 1:305. Alongside their militance, Prado Júnior became one of Brazil's great twentieth-century historians, while Belfort de Mattos was a pioneering ophthalmologist.

92. Skidmore, *Black into White*, ix. Framings of Brazilian geography were very much in flux during the period considered in this article, the “northeast” then emerging as a new category, freighted with negative connotations, amid conventional divisions of the coastal states between “north” and “south.” See Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, Jerry Dennis Metz, trans. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); and Mario da Veiga Cabral, *Compendio de chorographia do Brasil*, 7th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Jacintho Ribeiro dos Santos, 1922 [1916]), 113–114. For Paulista distinctions between their home state and Rio de Janeiro (state and city), see for example Cássia Chrispiniano Adduci, *A “pátria paulista”: o separatismo como resposta à crise final do império brasileiro* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial, 2000), esp. 116–117; and Clayton Sedgwick Cooper *Understanding South America* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), 291.