

Washington Luís Pereira de Sousa



Biography

He was born in Macaé, Rio de Janeiro on October 26, 1869. He graduated from the Law School of São Paulo (1891). He was nominated as Prosecuting Attorney in Barra Mansa-RJ (1892), but resigned the position to dedicate to law in Batatais-SP, where he began his political career. He was elected city councilman in Batatais-SP for the Federal Republican Party - PRF and president of the City Council (1897). He was mayor of Batatais in (1898-1899). He was elected to Congress by the Agricultural Party (1900), not taking office due to his diploma not being recognized by Congress' Verification of Powers Committee. He was elected to the state legislature from the Republican Party of São Paulo - PRP (1904-1906), as a constituent participating in the review of the state constitution (1905); he left office to occupy the state's department of Justice and Public Security (1906-1912). He was the leader of the majority caucus and elected to the state legislature (1912 -1913), interrupting his term to become the mayor of São Paulo-SP (1914 - 1919), when he faced the general strike of 1917. He was state president of São Paulo (1920 - 1924). He headed the 3rd Battalion in order to fight the São Paulo rebels (1924), which would form, in 1925, the Miguel Costa-Prestes Column. He was elected senator for the Republican Party of São Paulo (1925 -1926). He was elected by means of direct election and was inaugurated as President of the Republic on November 15, 1926. He was deposed by the Revolution of 1930, on October 24 and he went into exile in Europe and the United States, returning to Brazil in 1947. After returning from exile, he lived in São Paulo and became dedicated to history studies. He was meritorious member of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia Hospital of São Paulo; honorary president of the Brazilian Red Cross; member of the History and Geographical Institutes of São Paulo, Bahia and Ceará; member of the São Paulo Literary Academy; member of the Brazilian Historic and Geographical Institute. He died in São Paulo, on August 4, 1957.

Presidential Period

During the entire 1920's, the Old Republic suffered with the opposition manifestations of the urban middle class, the Lieutenant and Labor Movement and of the dissident oligarchies. Early in his administration, the Prestes Column came to an end, entered into Bolivia with 620 men, and was dissolved. Washington Luís' administration was no longer threatened by the Lieutenant Movement and by the advance of the labor movement; however, in order to prevent any new oppositional movements, created the Celerada Law in 1927, which imposed censorship to the press and restricted the right to assemble, forcing the Brazilian Communist Party into clandestinity, which had been recognized by the government the year before.

The global economic crisis of 1929, which erupted with the crash of the New York Stock Market, on October 24, was the largest in the history of capitalism, affecting several countries and paralyzing their economic activities. Its effects in Brazil toppled the coffee valuation policy, which was initiated in 1906 with the signature of the Taubaté Agreement. Coffee, which was responsible for 70% of the Brazilian exports, had its price reduced on the international market. The crises of the product threatened the stability of the Washington Luís administration, which did not permit a new monetary devaluation, requested by the coffee producers due to the disaster of the New York Stock Exchange.

The victory of Júlio Prestes from São Paulo, supported by Washington Luís, during the presidential elections of March 1, 1930, was challenged due to suspicion of fraud. The assassination of João Pessoa, President of Paraíba and running mate of Getúlio Vargas for the presidential succession, on July 26 of 1930, was a decisive fact for the escalation of the movements opposing Washington Luís' administration, already strained from the coffee crisis. Reassuming the government of Rio Grande do Sul, Getúlio Vargas and other politicians such as Oswaldo Aranha began the political conspiracy that led to the movement of October 3 of 1930, the Revolution of 1930, as the episode became known. President Washington Luís was deposed on October 24 by the Armed Forces and a provisory Governmental Junta took power, composed by Generals Tasso Fragoso and Mena Barreto and by Admiral Isaías de Noronha.

Source: National Archive – Information Center of Presidential Collections

Summary

Tenth Period of the Republican Government - 15.11.1926 a 24.10.1930

- ‡ Born: Macaé - RJ, on 26.10.1869
- ‡ Died: São Paulo - SP, on 04.08.1957
- ‡ Profession: Lawyer
- ‡ In office: 15.11.1926 to 24.10.1930 (03y11m14d)
- ‡ Age when taking office: 57 years old
- ‡ Type of election: direct
- ‡ Votes received: 688.528
- ‡ Inauguration: on 15.11.1926, during solemn session of Congress, presided by Senator Antônio Francisco de Azeredo

! Observation: He was removed from power on 24.10.1930 by the revolutionary movement. The Governing Junta, composed by Generals Tasso Fragoso and Menna Barreto and by Admiral Isaías de Noronha, takes power.