

The Political Economy of the Colombian Presidential Election of 1897

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THE potential contribution of the study of political economy to an understanding of nineteenth-century Spanish American politics is not widely recognized. The most influential contemporary work on the subject argues that Spanish American politics are personalist and clientelistic. Clientelists are of two main schools. One school, which might be called economic clientelists, conceives of Spanish American politics as a battle for spoils in closed, stratified societies where extra-political opportunities for economic and social mobility are severely circumscribed.¹ The quest-for-spoils thesis of the economic clientelists proves most telling in explaining the motivations of middle and lower class participants in Spanish American politics. Placed in a conceptual framework sensitive to the long-term economic trends resulting from Latin America's integration into the world economy, the quest-for-spoils thesis complements the analysis of elite political economy as developed in this essay and forms an important component in any comprehensive explanation of nineteenth-century Spanish American instability.

The other school of clientelists rejects socio-economic variables

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1. Fine examples of the interpretive insights to be gained from this approach are Merle Kling's "Toward a Theory of Power and Political Instability in Latin America," *Western Political Quarterly* 9 (March, 1956), 21-35 and Eric Wolf and Edward Hansen's "Caudillo Politics: A Structural Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9 (Jan., 1967), 168-179. The Colombian sociologist Camilo Torres applied a similar analysis to Colombian politics in his "La violencia y los cambios socio-culturales en las áreas rurales colombianas" in *Memoria del Primer Congreso Nacional de Sociología 8, 9 y 10 de Marzo de 1963* (Bogotá, 1963), 95-152. For a critical review of recent literature on clientelist politics see Robert R. Kaufman, "The Patron-Client Concept in Macro-Politics: Prospects and Problems," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16 (June, 1974), 285-308.

and relies primarily on cultural explanations of Spanish American politics. Recalling traditional explanations of Spanish American political instability long current in the literature,² cultural clientelists view Spanish American politics as an unmitigated quest by opportunistic politicians and hangers-on for the honor, prestige and perquisites of political office. Fernando Guillén, the Colombian historian, has written the most persuasive study of Colombian politics from this point of view, while United States political scientist James Payne has provided Guillén's thesis with all the trappings of contemporary United States political science.³

This case study of the Colombian presidential election of 1897 seeks to demonstrate that a major drawback of clientelist theories is their inability to account adequately for the elaborate, profoundly different ideologies and programs that articulate elite interests. While clientelist theories offer a ready explanation of the opportunism of some political figures they are at a loss to explain the consistency with which elite political factions pursued their interests. Implicitly or explicitly clientelists deny the importance of the ideological and programmatic concerns of political factions and their leaders. While economic clientelists tend to ignore ideology and political platforms, cultural clientelists view these expressions of divergent elite interests as hypocritical or subconscious smokescreens, and in their most extreme arguments, products of cultural deficiency (Payne) and psychological disease (Guillén). Moreover, because the cultural clientelists explain the violent contention for power in terms of cultural constants, they find it difficult to explain change. Their theories cannot account adequately for the timing of political conflict, nor can they explain the long periods of relative political stability which characterize some Spanish American countries during the last half of the nineteenth

2. According to the traditional view nineteenth-century Spanish American political instability was the result of the retrograde influence of Spanish culture and institutions which had poorly prepared Spanish Americans for self-government. "Personalism" and "caudillism" were the result. Following independence two additional disruptive ingredients combined with this unstable institutional and cultural mix. The long-fought independence wars and Spanish America's formidable geography intensified tendencies in Spanish political culture toward "militarism" and "regionalism." Finally, climate and race influenced politics. The Spaniard degenerated in tropical America while populations largely composed of Indians, Blacks and mixed bloods made poor material for the building of stable democracies. An excellent example of the traditional view is Charles A. Chapman's well-known article "The Age of the Caudillos: A Chapter in Hispanic American History," *HAHR* 12 (Aug., 1932), 281-300.

3. *Raíz y futuro de la revolución* (Bogotá, 1963); *Patterns of Conflict in Colombia* (New Haven, 1968).

century and others (such as Colombia) during the first decades of the twentieth century.

The study of political economy, pursued within a conceptual framework sensitive to the expanding ties between Spanish America and the developing nations of the North Atlantic Basin, and focused on the sociology, ideology, and programmatic concerns of elite political factions, calls into question traditional and clientelist explanations of Spanish American politics. By elucidating the economic and ideological interests of contending elites, analysis of political economy provides a clearer understanding of nineteenth-century Spanish American political instability, a problem traditionally obscured by cultural arguments with normative implications. To be sure, the usefulness of such an approach to the study of Latin American politics in general and to nineteenth-century Colombian politics in particular has been questioned by many. Objections raised are both conceptual and methodological; both can be more profitably discussed after an examination of the case study at hand, the Colombian presidential election of 1897.

The presidential election of 1897 was a focal point in an ongoing political struggle between Colombian elite factions which would culminate two years after the election in the outbreak of the longest and bloodiest of Colombia's nineteenth-century civil wars, the War of the Thousand Days.⁴ As part of this broader struggle between elite factions, the election cannot be properly understood out of the context of political and economic forces at work in Colombian society in the last half of the nineteenth century.

The Liberal⁵ party dominated Colombian politics from 1850 to 1885. While few students of Colombian history have stressed the relationships between economic and political trends, it is remarkable that this period of Liberal political hegemony coincides with the first cycle of Colombian export agriculture.⁶ Centered in the tobacco

4. Fuller treatment of the background to the election of 1897 and discussion of the causes of the War of the Thousand Days can be found in Charles W. Bergquist, "Coffee and Conflict in Colombia, 1886-1904," (Ph.D. Diss., Stanford University, 1973). This paper draws freely on parts of that dissertation.

5. Throughout this paper capitalization is used to designate the Colombian Liberal and Conservative parties, their members, and their programs. When a more general meaning of these terms is implied, the lower case form is employed.

6. While detailed work on the political economy of this period of Colombian history is yet to be done, the Colombian historians Luis Eduardo Nieto Arteta and Indalecio Liévano Aguirre have sketched the relationship of the export econ-

economy, but including such exports as cinchona bark (quinine), indigo, and cotton, Colombian export agriculture emerged in the late 1840's and grew to major importance in the decades that followed. The value of tobacco exports climbed from 100,000 to 200,000 pesos in the mid-1840's to more than five million pesos annually in most years between 1850 and 1875. Thereafter tobacco exports began to decline rapidly and by the mid-1880's amounted to less than half a million pesos.⁷ Other export products rose to ephemeral importance during the same period. Most striking of these was quinine which assumed importance in the 1850's averaging about half a million pesos during that decade, declined somewhat in the 1860's, and then rose to a peak of over five million pesos in the year 1880–81.⁸ But the boom in quinine exports came to an abrupt end after that year as world prices plummeted with the advent of plantation production in the East Indies. By 1885 foreign exchange earnings from quinine had declined to virtually nothing.⁹

Liberals were closely identified with the export economy. For reasons that are not yet entirely clear, but undoubtedly resulted from ideological predisposition and economic and social interests inherited from the colonial period, Liberals participated more fully in the opportunities afforded by export agriculture. They not only produced for export but became export-import merchants who thrived with the increase in foreign trade fostered by the export economy.¹⁰ Liberal policies during the third quarter of the nineteenth century consistently favored export agriculture. Abolition of fiscal monopolies (the most

omy and Liberal political success. Their pioneering studies, based on published materials, have strongly influenced the interpretation offered in the following paragraphs. See Nieto Arteta, *Economía y cultura en la historia de Colombia* (Bogotá, 1942) and Liévano Aguirre, *Rafael Núñez* (Lima, [1944]).

7. William Paul McGreevey, *An Economic History of Colombia, 1845–1930* (Cambridge, England, 1971), p. 98.

8. Nieto Arteta, *Economía*, pp. 300–01.

9. Carlos Calderón, *La cuestión monetaria en Colombia* (Madrid, 1905), p. 8. Minor export items included indigo which peaked at 182,000 pesos in the year 1870–71 and declined to negligible amounts by the late 1870's, and cotton which enjoyed a brief boom as a result of civil war in the United States. Nieto Arteta, *Economía*, pp. 306–09.

10. It is important to point out that many of the characteristics and values attributed to members of the Liberal party in this and the following paragraphs would also apply to a fraction of the Conservative party, especially Conservatives from the region of Antioquia where the export mineral and agricultural economy was relatively well developed in the nineteenth century. These economically liberal Conservatives did not share the mainstream Liberals' view of the Church as a primary obstacle to economic and political progress, however.

important of which was tobacco) and the lowering of tariff duties formed cornerstones of Liberal fiscal and economic policy beginning in the late 1840's. Liberal-sponsored abolition of slavery and division of Indian communal lands in the 1850's and disamortization of church holdings (1861) served humanitarian interests and were consistent with liberal social and political theory; theoretically, they also worked to free land, capital and labor for productive use in the export economy.¹¹

Like their economic reforms, Liberal social and political policies sought to dismantle institutions inherited from the colonial past. Scandalized by the ignorance and lack of material progress of their own society, Colombian Liberals modeled their reforms on the institutions of the leading liberal nations of the North Atlantic. They sharply reduced the role and power of the Catholic Church in Colombian society, secularizing many of its civil and educational functions. Strong believers in the benefits of political democracy, early in their tenure Liberals temporarily abolished literacy and property requirements for suffrage and greatly expanded the range of civil liberties. Fearful of the abuse of political authority, they argued that government functions should be limited to the essential protection of property and the facilitation of commerce. The Liberal Constitution of 1863 limited the power of the central government and the chief executive, and decentralized administration in an effort to make government more sensitive to local demands.

The Liberal economic, social and political reforms were an expression of an integral world view which conceived of society as the sum of individual, rational, juridically equal men. Colombian Liberals, like their counterparts in other areas of the West, believed that the individual, left alone to pursue his intellectual and material interests, would contribute to the progress of civilization and the well-being of society in general. Man, they affirmed, was basically good and perfectable; he was corrupted by retrograde institutions.¹²

11. For an excellent analysis of Liberal economic policies during this period see McGreevey, *An Economic History*, Chapters 4-7.

12. Several scholars have explored the ways in which liberals were forced to compromise their orthodox philosophy in order to deal with obstacles and resistance to their reforms in Spanish American societies. See Myron Burgin, *Economic Aspects of Argentine Federalism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1946) and especially, Charles A. Hale, *José María Luis Mora and the Structure of Mexican Liberalism* (New Haven, 1968). The experience of Colombian Liberals was similar. That faction of the party headed by Rafael Núñez was especially cognizant of the failure of orthodox liberal policies in Colombia. But the mainstream of the party leadership, although they revised some of their political policies and com-

As long as Liberal political strength was buttressed by a viable export economy, Liberal ideological and political hegemony seemed assured,¹³ but beginning in the late 1870's, primarily as a result of Colombia's inability to compete successfully with other tropical producers, the nation's export agriculture entered into a period of crisis which seriously affected Liberal political fortunes. Weakened materially and shaken ideologically, in the late 1870's Liberals saw their policies subjected to telling criticism by a small group of party dissidents and leading figures of the Conservative opposition. According to these bipartisan critics, who found in the person of Rafael Núñez a consummate political leader and an effective polemicist,¹⁴ Liberal social and economic policies, particularly those dealing with Indian and Church lands, had been disastrous for Colombia. Far from establishing a nation of small independent farmers, the critics argued, Liberal land reforms had served to further concentrate land ownership in Colombia. Moreover, Liberal hostility toward the Church had alienated much of the traditionally Catholic Colombian lower class. Liberal unpopularity increased after 1850 as artisans, initially attracted to the party by demagogic Liberal political reforms, began to realize that Liberal tariff policies threatened their livelihood by encouraging the importation of cheap foreign manufactures. As their popular support eroded Liberal political policies became more arbitrary and repressive and the party was forced to compromise its democratic principles. Still, the critics concluded, the Liberal political institutions embodied in the Constitution of 1863 precluded effective government in Colombia. Unregulated freedom of the press and the right to traffic in arms undermined the stability of society while the limited power of the national government rendered it incapable of maintaining internal political order.

As critics raised serious doubts concerning the effectiveness and

promised others in practice, remained essentially "unreconstructed" in their economic policies. This was especially true after the resurgence of export agriculture in Colombia at the end of the century, the period analyzed in detail in this paper.

13. The concept of ideological hegemony, developed by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, seems particularly applicable here. As long as the export economy flourished, Liberal ideology succeeded in convincing, neutralizing, or forcing onto the defensive, many whose interests were not directly benefited (and may have been hurt) by Liberal policies.

14. Núñez' celebrated critique of orthodox Liberal policies is collected in *La reforma política*, 2nd ed. (Bogotá, 1886). A useful overview of the failings of the Liberal reforms is J. León Helguera, "The problem of Liberalism Versus Conservatism in Colombia: 1845-85" in Fredrick B. Pike, *Latin American History: Select Problems* (New York, 1969), pp. 223-58.

appropriateness of the Liberal reforms, the deepening crisis in the export economy began to threaten the fiscal and economic foundations of the Liberal governments. Customs receipts, the main source of government revenues, dwindled with the decline in foreign trade. Always solicitous of foreign investment, Liberals were forced to swallow their principles in 1880 and default on the recently renegotiated foreign debt.¹⁵ As trade imbalances increased and specie drained out of the country, Liberals found themselves impaled on the horns of a dilemma. Doctrinaire believers in the principle of private, unregulated banking and firm supporters of the gold standard, they considered economic heresy proposals for a national bank and the printing of unbacked paper currency. Yet how was business and commerce to function in the absence of a sufficient medium of exchange? How could government effectively perform its functions and meet its obligations if it lacked sufficient revenue?

The Liberals' critics were not constrained by laissez-faire economic orthodoxy in formulating and implementing solutions to the economic and fiscal crisis. By the late 1870's Núñez and his supporters were advocating higher tariff walls to produce more government revenue and protect domestic industry. As a solution to specie drain, they called for the establishment of a national bank with power to issue paper currency not fully backed by metallic reserves. Elected to a second presidential term with Conservative support in 1884, Núñez' policies finally precipitated a Liberal revolt in 1885. With the wholehearted backing of the Conservative party, Núñez' government emerged victorious in the civil war; thereafter, deprived of the support of the bulk of the Liberal party, Núñez' coalition (after 1886 organized as the Nationalist party) took an increasingly Conservative cast.

The constitution promulgated in 1886, in large part written by the doctrinaire Conservative ideologue, Miguel Antonio Caro, was centralist, authoritarian, pro-Catholic and statist in principle. The constitution and subsequent laws consolidated the National Bank and the regime of paper money, centralized political control and fortified executive power, limited suffrage and direct elections, sharply curtailed civil liberties, restored state support of the Church, and regularized relations with the Vatican.

The Conservatives in control of government in Colombia after

15. David Bushnell, "Two Stages in Colombian Tariff Policy: The Radical Era and the Return to Protection (1861-1885)," *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, 9 (Spring, 1956), 8; José María Quijano Wallis, *Memorias* (Rome, 1919), pp. 287-88.

1886 shared with Liberals a commitment to republican political institutions, but based their economic, social and political policies on a conception of man and society fundamentally at odds with the Liberal world view. Lacking strong ties with the liberal community of the West, these Conservatives found their intellectual nourishment in Catholic and Spanish thought. Nationalist Conservatives viewed society as a hierarchy of men with different capabilities and functions. Because men were susceptible to evil passions and anti-social behavior, strong institutions such as the family, the Church and the State were needed to control them and instill in them a moral code capable of uniting men on a spiritual level. Satisfied with their position in life and aloof from foreign critics, Nationalist Conservatives felt no shame over the “backwardness” of their country. Unlike their Liberal opponents they found virtue in its Spanish heritage, its Catholic purity, and the intellectual achievements of its elite.

If the decline of Liberal political fortunes paralleled the failure of export agriculture, the political victories of Núñez and his followers reflected the resurgence of Conservative forces in a society still overwhelmingly characterized by traditional agriculture for domestic consumption. Ironically, however, the consolidation of the Conservative regime, called the Regeneration in Colombian history, coincided with the beginning of a new export cycle as Colombians responded to the spectacular rise in world coffee prices which occurred in the late 1880’s and early 1890’s (see Figure 1). By the mid-1890’s coffee accounted for well over half of Colombia’s total exports, and for the peak years 1895 and 1896 constituted about 70 per cent of the value of those exports.¹⁶ The phenomenal growth of the coffee industry during the decade after 1886 revitalized the shattered, demoralized Liberal party and undermined the confidence, unity, and ability to govern of the Nationalist party.¹⁷ Closely identified with the Liberal party and,

16. Beyer, “Coffee Industry,” Appendix Table II, p. 361, gives coffee as a percentage of total exports using a three-year running average. Diego Monsalve, *Colombia cafetera* (Barcelona, 1927), p. 650, graphs data for individual years.

17. This generalization holds despite the workings of some forces in the opposite direction. Nationalists claimed credit for the resurgence of export agriculture and certainly used increased government revenues to tighten their physical hold on political power (to give but one example, they strengthened the military). But, as will be shown, these benefits were more than offset by the growth of bi-partisan opposition to government policies in the press and congress. True to their laissez-faire principles, export-import interests believed that the negative impact of government monetary policies, by destroying the institution of private credit and frightening away foreign and domestic capital, outweighed the alleged benefits of cheap money.

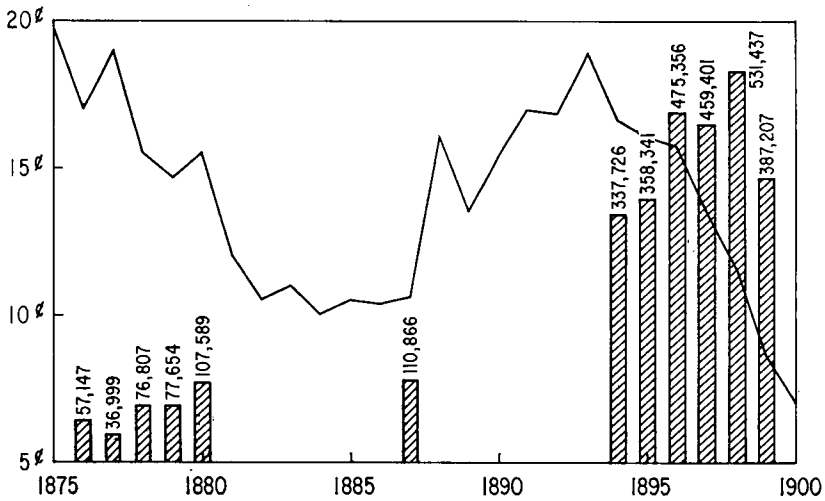


FIGURE 1. "World Coffee Prices (in U.S. cents per pound) and Colombian Coffee Exports (in bags of 60 kilos), 1875-1900."

Source: Adapted from Robert Carlyle Beyer, "The Colombian Coffee Industry: Origins and Major Trends, 1740-1940," (Ph.D. Diss. University of Minnesota, 1947), Appendix Tables I and IV, pp. 335-38 and 368-71. Beyer's tables do not provide data on the volume of coffee exports for the years 1881-1886, 1888-1893.

as the decade wore on, with a dissident wing of the Conservative party called Historical Conservatives, resurgent export-import interests mounted a concerted campaign against the Nationalist governments' economic, fiscal and political policies in an effort to gain power and secure policies favorable to their interests.

Throughout the 1890's economic liberals protested the Nationalist governments' tariff hikes and fiscal monopolies, criticized the Nationalists' failure to service the national debt, and lamented the government's ineffective railroad policies. But their greatest concern centered on the Nationalists' monetary policies, particularly the issue of unbacked paper money. In the decade following 1886 the National Bank steadily increased the volume of paper money in circulation, stimulating a moderate inflation and incurring the wrath of doctrinaire economic liberals such as Liberal party leader Santiago Pérez.

As early as 1893, in a celebrated editorial, Pérez called for restoration of property rights "at present annulled by fiscal monopolies, by the use of paper money as legal tender, by the prohibition on the stipulation of [gold] currency in contracts, by the repudiation, in practice,

of the foreign debt, and by the failure to carry out the terms of the law pertaining to the internal debt.²¹⁸ Pérez was exiled and Liberal party funds confiscated soon after the publication of that editorial (he was accused of promoting a conspiracy against the government), but his exile, far from silencing the liberal opposition to the Nationalist regime, only heightened the opposition's determination to reform the government's political and economic policies. Although throughout the 1890's a majority of Liberal leaders and virtually all Historical Conservative leaders favored peaceful means to achieve their political and economic ends, a Liberal minority chose to revolt in 1895. The Nationalist government easily crushed the movement and thereafter Liberal moderates and Historical Conservatives concentrated all their political energies on winning the presidential election of 1897.

Analysis of the presidential electoral campaign of 1897 reveals the ideological and programmatic differences dividing Colombian elite factions at the end of the nineteenth century. Whether one examines the public pronouncements or the private correspondence of party leaders, analyzes official party platforms, or probes the sociology of elite factions, one is struck by the divergence of elite ideological and economic interests. Moreover, despite the potential for opportunistic political maneuverings during the campaign and the inevitable compromises with political realities, elite political factions pursued their ideological and economic interests with remarkable consistency. Nowhere is this consistency of interest and political action more impressively revealed than in each faction's choice of its presidential standardbearer. Although for political reasons both the Nationalists and the Historical Conservatives had to abandon their first choice for president, each faction's initial candidate as well as its final nominee were men whose career patterns and public statements admirably qualified them to represent their faction's interests.

Initially, many incumbent Nationalists leaned toward the nomination of Miguel Antonio Caro. Caro had governed the nation for the Nationalists since his election as vice-president on the Núñez presidential ticket in 1892, and had become undisputed leader of the party after the death of the titular president in 1894. In many ways Caro was an ideal Nationalist candidate. A powerful, combative thinker, Caro had provided much of the theoretical and practical justification of Regeneration political and economic policies. As author of the Constitution of 1886, Caro wrote the Nationalists' statist, authori-

18. Antonio José Rivadeneira Vargas, *Don Santiago Pérez* (Bogotá, 1966), p. 159.

tarian, pro-Catholic principles into the fundamental law of the land. During his tenure as acting president and head of the Nationalist party he proved to be an effective administrator and a resourceful, iron-willed politician. Caro's entire background conformed to the highest ideals of orthodox Colombian conservatism. Born into a family of the highest social status,¹⁹ and orphaned at the age of ten, Caro received his formal education at the Colegio de San Bartolomé in Bogotá, at that time a Jesuit institution. As a young man he embarked on a literary career which would place him in the forefront of Colombian men of letters. Although Caro's literary activities would earn for him a distinguished reputation in intellectual circles of the Spanish-speaking world, he never ventured beyond the highlands surrounding Bogotá. Caro's translations of Virgil, apologies for the Spanish legacy in America, studies in philology and literary criticism, polemics in support of the Catholic Church, and essays in political and economic philosophy reveal the organic unity of his thought. Whatever his subject, Caro reasoned deductively from a set of basic Catholic, conservative values: order, hierarchy, cultural unity.²⁰

At the height of his intellectual powers during his tenure as chief executive of the nation, 1892–1898, Caro bent his powerful mind and prodigious energies to a spirited defense of Regeneration economic policies. His support of these policies ranged from the theoretical to the practical, but underlying all his economic thinking was an ideological commitment to statist principles and an abhorrence of what he termed "individualistic liberalism." A month after taking office Caro responded to Liberal and dissident Conservative opposition to Regeneration economic policies in an extensive message to Congress. In six years of operation, he argued, the regime of paper money had stimulated impressive economic growth in manufactures, mining, and agriculture. Calling for an elastic monetary system capable of meeting the needs of an expanding economy, he rejected the Liberal demand for free stipulation of gold-based currencies in contracts. Such a measure, he contended, would introduce anarchy into the nation's monetary system and constitute *de facto* circumvention of the paper money regime established by law. Moreover, argued Caro, free stipulation favored a privileged few, such as import merchants: it was

19. Guillermo Torres García, *Miguel Antonio Caro, su personalidad política* (Madrid, 1956), pp. 21–25.

20. The official edition of Caro's works is Víctor E. Caro and Antonio Gómez Restrepo, eds., *Obras completas de Don Miguel Antonio Caro*, 8 vols. (Bogotá, 1918–45).

“liberty extended to some at the expense of the rights of the greatest number.” Free stipulation granted those who found themselves in privileged commercial positions the power, with the blessing of the state, “to impose onerous conditions on their debtors.”²¹ Caro believed that behind the demand for free stipulation lay the desire to dismantle the entire regime of paper money that the Regeneration had constructed. Opponents of paper money proceeded from the false assumption that money must have intrinsic worth. According to Caro that was an anachronistic and limiting belief.

As the Liberal and dissident Conservative campaign against Regeneration fiscal and monetary policies gathered momentum, Caro was forced to modify some of his positions in support of paper money and the National Bank, but he continued to reaffirm the principles of Regeneration economic and monetary theory. In his message to the opening session of Congress on July 20, 1894, Caro indicated that the fate of the Bank was not necessarily tied to the regime of paper money. The Bank could be abolished, although he favored its continued existence and emphasized the historical importance of the Bank’s establishment in Colombia at a time when “dissociative ideas, individualistic liberalism” had grown such deep roots that the power to issue money was considered an individual right not a privilege of the state.²²

During the rest of 1894 Caro lost ground to his Liberal and Conservative critics. The Conservative opposition in congress investigated alleged illegal, secret emissions of paper money, abolished the National Bank, replacing it with a section of the Ministry of the Treasury charged with the eventual amortization of paper money, and prohibited new emissions of paper money, except in cases of external or internal war.²³

The Revolution of 1895, however, provided Caro with the opportunity to regain the offensive. Taking advantage of the legal opportunity to emit money, the Caro government issued five million pesos for war expenses. The new emissions fueled the debate over Regeneration finance, but an even more explosive issue was Caro’s unilateral imposition of an export tax on coffee during the revolt and his un-

21. Miguel Antonio Caro, “Mensaje al congreso nacional sobre regulación del sistema monetario, 13 de septiembre de 1892” in Caro and Gómez, eds., *Obras completas*, VI, 70–73.

22. Miguel Antonio Caro, “Mensaje dirigido al congreso nacional en la apertura de las sesiones ordinarias de 1894, 20 de julio de 1894” in Caro and Gómez, eds., *Obras completas*, VI, 139.

23. Jorge Franco Holguín, *Evolución de las instituciones financieras en Colombia* (Mexico, 1966), pp. 31–32.

willingness to rescind it when the war ended. The coffee export tax stimulated violent Liberal and Historical Conservative opposition in the press and in congress. Finally, in July, 1897, Caro was forced to bow to the pressure of export-import interests and temporarily suspended the tax.²⁴

Although political considerations could force Caro into strategic retreats in the implementation of Regeneration economic policy, he remained to the very end of his administration a spirited defender of the principles which underlay his policies. Much of his final message to congress justified the concept of government fiscal monopolies as a positive good. No monopoly, Caro contended, whether designed to produce government revenue, organized for the public good (such as the manufacture and sale of arms and munitions), or established for the convenience of the public (such as the telegraph), no matter how poorly organized or administered, is as bad as the immoral and unregulated extremes of free competition. "Individualism is always less noble than collectivism," he went on, "the individual favored by nature or by the state never agrees to [just] compensations, and, unlike governments representative of the general interest, he is unwilling to seek compromise." Industrial monopolies, he added, were an appropriate means to foment manufactures in a young agrarian nation like Colombia.²⁵

Looking back on his six years of executive control, Caro marvelled at the "ingenuity, cunning, tenacity, time, and money" employed by the opposition in an effort to discredit and destroy the system of paper money. Under the "appealing" name of free stipulation, the opposition proposed the repudiation of national currency and the adoption of foreign money (which did not circulate in the country and was replaced by obligatory drafts). The opposition thus sought to perpetuate "the tyranny exercised over domestic commerce by the import houses, which were tributaries of European firms."²⁶

Throughout his tenure in office, Caro was equally adamant in his defense of the political and social principles of the Regeneration. He took advantage of the wide discretionary powers granted the executive in the Constitution of 1886 to limit freedom of the press and repress what he considered potential threats to the established political and social order. He also enthusiastically supported the close asso-

24. Decree #301, July 13, 1897. *Diario Oficial* #10,395.

25. Miguel Antonio Caro, "Mensaje presidencial de Julio 20," in Caro and Gómez, eds., *Obras completas*, VI, 251-263.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 258-60.

ciation between the Regeneration and the Catholic Church outlined in the Constitution of 1886 and fostered by previous Nationalist administrations.

Given Caro's undisputed leadership of the Nationalist party, his lifelong devotion to the principles embodied in the Regeneration, and his enthusiastic commitment to Regeneration economic and political policies, it was not surprising that leading organs of the Nationalist press proclaimed him as their candidate for president in early 1897. But, as the opposition press quickly pointed out, his projected nomination raised serious constitutional questions. The Constitution of 1886 prohibited a president from immediately succeeding himself in office and since Caro had in fact exercised executive power since his election to the vice-presidency in 1892, a decision to stand for reelection would have violated the spirit if not the letter of the constitution Caro himself had written. Although Caro may have considered delegating power in time to meet the letter of the constitutional requirement, in the end he served out his full term and the Nationalists were forced to turn elsewhere in their search for a viable candidate. Some Nationalists pinned their hopes on Rafael Reyes, a popular general-politician serving as minister to France in 1897, but Caro suspected Reyes' loyalty to Regeneration principles and when the dissident Historical Conservatives succeeded in binding Reyes to their platform and nominated him for president, the Nationalists settled on two seemingly unlikely candidates to head their ticket.

Chosen as Nationalist candidate for president was Manuel Antonio Sanclemente, an eighty-three year old Conservative politician from the department of Cauca who had not been active in politics for many years. Old and infirm (critics said he was senile) it was generally assumed that Sanclemente would not exercise power in the event he were elected. The selection of this venerated Conservative patriarch, a man far removed from the heat of contemporary political debate, was widely viewed as an effort by the Nationalists to appeal to the entire Conservative party and undercut the efforts of the Historical Conservatives to appeal to the same constituency. These same considerations help to explain the Nationalist choice for their vice-presidential candidate, the slightly younger and more vigorous José Manuel Marroquín, the man who would actually exercise power were the Nationalist ticket victorious.

As the de facto Nationalist candidate for president, Marroquín promised to insure the continuity of Regeneration policies. Marroquín's life and thought reveal the same philosophic harmony that char-

acterized the political activities and intellectual endeavors of Miguel Antonio Caro. Like Caro, Marroquín was a confirmed paternalist, a deeply religious man, and a lover of things Colombian. Born an only child into a family of high social distinction, Marroquín early lost his parents and was raised by relatives in the solitary, aristocratic surroundings of one of the most distinguished houses in the capital. Educated exclusively in Bogotá, Marroquín never expressed a desire to visit Europe and his longest trip from the Sabana de Bogotá was to nearby highland Boyacá.²⁷

Most of Marroquín's public life was devoted to furthering his ideal of Catholic education for Colombian youth. In 1865 he co-founded the Sociedad de Estudios Religiosos to combat the anticlerical ideas circulating in Colombia with the advent of Liberal political hegemony. A decade later he joined others in an attempt to found a Catholic University. Although that effort failed, the University was later established and Marroquín served as its rector for a few months in 1883. During Núñez' first administration, Marroquín served as a member of the Concejo Académico charged with restoring religious principles to the educational system, and in 1887 he was named rector of the Colegio del Rosario where he worked to transform that previously Liberal institution into a training ground for the Conservative elite.

In 1892 Marroquín retired to "Yerbabuena," the hacienda on the Sabana de Bogotá near Chía which had been part of his family's patrimony for generations. There he devoted himself to the pleasures of gentleman farming and the writing of costumbrista novels in which he elegantly portrayed the life he observed around him. Years later a Conservative admirer described the impression Marroquín made on him when he chanced to meet the "country hidalgo" near his hacienda one morning in the early 1890's. Dressed as a rich hacendado with "a blue woolen cape, a high Panama hat of the best quality, lion skin chaps, and suede gloves," mounted on a flawlessly outfitted chestnut horse, and followed by a servant boy on a mare, Marroquín seemed to symbolize "a culture of inestimable value and . . . an era glorious for Colombia."²⁸

27. See José Manuel Marroquín Osorio, *Don José Manuel Marroquín íntimo* (Bogotá, 1915). This book, written by one of Marroquín's sons, draws heavily on Marroquín's unpublished "Apuntes autobiográficos" which cover the period up to 1881. Another rich source of biographical data on Marroquín is Jorge Roa's insightful prologue to a collection of Marroquín's stories published in 1893. The prologue is reprinted in Luis Martínez Delgado, *Historia de un cambio de gobierno* (Bogotá, 1958), pp. 245–51.

28. José Joaquín Casas, *Semblanzas (Diego Fallón y José Manuel Marroquín)* (Bogotá, 1936), pp. 157–59.

The novels written by Marroquín reveal as much about their author as they do about the late nineteenth-century highland Colombian society he cherished and described so carefully.²⁹ An excellent example is *Entre primos* (1897), the romantic story of a childhood love between cousins threatened by a suitor outside the family. In the novel, Marroquín ridicules the effete, myopic son of an English merchant whose absurd mimicking of foreign ways and consumption patterns, and shallow, fickle attraction to his fiancée, contrasts sharply with the true love of the girl's solidly Colombian cousin whose courage, intelligence and hard work make him an ideal mate. *Blas Gil* (1896) is a devastating satire of Colombian political culture written, ironically, just a year before Marroquín would find himself thrust into the maelstrom of the politics of the election of 1897. As in *Entre primos*, Marroquín's deep religiosity is apparent in *Blas Gil*. The epitome of the unscrupulous politician who has chosen his career as a way of pursuing material gain and at the same time avoiding honest work, Blas is finally rescued from his cynicism through a renewal of his Catholic faith and the pure love of a virtuous girl. As a statement of the need for politicians to sacrifice personal material rewards and work disinterestedly for higher moral and religious ideals, *Blas Gil* could be viewed as an indirect endorsement of the political career of Miguel Antonio Caro. Caro had long recognized Marroquín as a faithful collaborator and gave his candidacy full support in 1897.

The unity of the life, thought and political action of Nationalist presidential candidates Caro and Marroquín was no less characteristic of leaders of the Liberal opposition.³⁰ Chosen to head the Liberal party ticket in 1897 was Miguel Samper, a man identified more than any other with the Liberal critique of Regeneration economic philosophy, fiscal practice and monetary policy.³¹ Samper's career was arche-

29. Marroquín wrote four novels during this period, *Blas Gil* (1896), *Entre primos* (1897), *Amores y leyes* (1898), and *El Moro* (1899).

30. Study of the biographies of Liberal party leaders like Santiago Pérez (head of the Liberal party at the time of his exile by Caro in 1893), Aquileo Parra (head of the Liberal party in 1897) and Miguel Samper (chosen as Liberal presidential candidate in 1897) reveals a similarity of career pattern and a commonality of ties to the capitalist economy of the West. All three men had relatively modest provincial beginnings, achieved social mobility through success in the export-import trade, and maintained close ties through trade and travel with the countries of the North Atlantic. Parra's life to 1875 is covered in his *Memorias* (Bogotá, 1912). On Pérez see the previously cited biography by Rivadeneira Vargas, and Eduardo Rodríguez Piñeres, et al., *Don Santiago Pérez y su tiempo* (Bogotá, 1952). The life of Samper is discussed in detail below.

31. Defending Samper's nomination in a letter to an influential Liberal, party leader Aquileo Parra affirmed this point, stressing the fact that Samper had "the

typical of the Liberal exporters and importers who led the opposition to Regeneration governments. Born of relatively modest but respectable parentage in Guaduas, Cundinamarca in 1825, Samper was trained as a lawyer but devoted his life to agriculture and commerce. At an early age he managed sugar cane production for export on his uncle's lands in Guaduas and Chaguaní in western Cundinamarca. Upon the death of his uncle Samper moved to the Magdalena river port of Honda and established an export-import business. In 1851 he shifted his base of operations to Bogotá where he established an important commercial house. In the same year he married María Teresa Brush, the daughter of an Englishman who had settled in Colombia. With the boom in tobacco in the 1850's, Samper joined his brothers in opening up lands to tobacco production in the upper Magdalena valley. He played an important role in the tariff reform accomplished during President Tomás Cipriano Mosquera's second administration and served as Minister of Finance in the cabinets of Liberal Presidents Santos Gutiérrez and Francisco Javier Zaldúa. During the 1860's and 1870's Samper spent considerable time in Europe, attending to business interests and educating himself and his children.³² From the dawn of the Regeneration until his death in 1899, Miguel Samper used orthodox laissez-faire and free trade arguments to mount a reasoned but implacable campaign against the economic policies of the Nationalist governments.

From the beginning, Samper argued, Regeneration thought had contained within it the "virus of state socialism." Regeneration economic and fiscal policies had led to increasing government control of the economy, a fatal tendency whose disastrous implications were evident in the results of the protective tariff, the National Bank, and the system of paper money. Writing in 1892 Samper noted that protectionism had created artificial and inefficient industries to manufacture matches, cigarettes, candles, paper and cotton cloth.³³ The National Bank had become a creature of government and had failed to redeem paper money as originally stipulated. Samper's greatest

great merit of having mounted the most notable campaign against Regeneration finance." Aquileo Parra to José Joaquín Vargas, Bogotá, November 30, 1897, published in José María Samper Brush and Luis Samper Sordo, eds., *Escritos político-económicos de Miguel Samper*, 4 vols. (Bogotá, 1925-27), I, xiv.

32. The foregoing is a composite of biographical information drawn from Salvador Camacho Roldán, "Miguel Samper" and Carlos Martínez Silva, "El gran ciudadano" found in Samper Brush and Samper Sordo, eds., *Escritos*, I, xix-xxxii and xxv-lxxxix, respectively. See also Samper's own description of his family's economic interests and activities in the same collection, III, 93-96.

33. Miguel Samper, "La crisis monetaria" in Samper Brush and Samper Sordo, eds., *Escritos*, III, 180, 182-85.

energies and sharpest criticisms were directed against the system of non-redeemable paper money. According to his orthodox view, paper money was intrinsically worthless and therefore violated the cardinal principle of all media of exchange. Moreover, paper money constituted a forced loan extracted from individuals in an arbitrary, tyrannical manner by government. Unredeemable paper had caused much capital to flee the country, destroyed the habit of saving, and forced capital into unproductive investment. The result was a shortage of capital to develop agriculture and industry.³⁴

The year before his nomination as Liberal presidential candidate for the election of 1897 Samper had labeled the Regeneration “state socialism” since it attempted to make government the “motor and regulator of industrial activity.” In founding the National Bank, Samper argued at that time, the government had obtained a source of credit and a monopoly on money but had caused national and foreign capital to flee, and almost destroyed the great “industrial lever which is private credit.” Samper called emphatically for a return to the gold standard through amortization of one million paper pesos a year. Such a plan could be implemented, he insisted, by curtailing government expenditures, eliminating government contracts, expanding the amortization fund, and resuming payment of the foreign debt. These measures would attract both foreign and domestic capital back into the country and assure the progress of the nation.³⁵

Another of Samper’s themes in 1896 was the failure of Regeneration railroad policy. Under the Regeneration railroads had not progressed beyond the flatlands to conquer the primary objective of linking the highlands to the Magdalena. The construction of the Cambao Highway (built to haul railroad equipment by ox cart from the Magdalena river near Honda to the Sabana de Bogotá), Samper asserted, had been an expensive absurdity. The Regeneration, at great sacrifice, had built the railroads backwards. Samper’s solution to the problem was to attract foreign capital by ending the system of paper money, resuming service on the foreign debt, and insuring public tranquillity. Once achieved the government would need only to establish its priorities and carefully consider the contracts it signed, a task befitting the congress, not the executive.³⁶

34. Miguel Samper, “Nuestra circulación monetaria” in Samper Brush and Samper Sordo, eds., *Escritos*, III, 97–159.

35. Miguel Samper, “Retrospecto” in Samper Brush and Samper Sordo, eds., *Escritos*, I, 143, 144, 152–53, 176–77.

36. Miguel Samper, “Los ferrocarriles en Colombia,” Samper Brush and Samper Sordo, eds., *Escritos*, II, 231–55.

In accepting the nomination, Samper vowed to work to implement his party's official electoral platform. That platform had been hammered out by the delegates to the party's national convention which met in Bogotá from August 15 to September 20, 1897. Summarizing the Liberals' orthodox political and economic positions, the platform called for expansion of civil liberties (absolute freedom of the press, abolition of the death penalty, effective suffrage) and curtailment of executive power (reduction of the president's term of office to four years, repeal of the extraordinary powers, prohibition of the re-election of either the president or the vice-president, reestablishment of the legal responsibility of the chief executive, restoration of judicial inviolability, and decentralization of administration and power).

Turning to fiscal and economic matters, the platform called for suppression of all export taxes, reduction of taxes on salt, meat and "essential foreign imports," and abolition of all government monopolies (without damage to previously acquired rights). The platform also advocated an absolute ban on increases in the supply of paper money in circulation, gradual amortization of the paper money "debt" owed the public through the channeling of sufficient national income to this purpose, reestablishment of metallic currency and the free stipulation of money in contracts, and finally, the freedom to engage in banking and the consequent right of private banks to issue currency.³⁷

In pledging to work for the implementation of the party's platform, Samper completely endorsed the planks on economic issues, but he registered his disagreement with some aspects of the party's political program, especially the plank calling for unlimited freedom of the press. Following his nomination Samper repeatedly stressed his social conservatism and political moderation. Emphasizing his reputation as a devout Catholic, he termed his nomination a "pledge of political and religious peace" extended to the nation by the once violently anticlerical Liberals.³⁸ Statements like that disgusted some Liberal party faithful,³⁹ but Samper undoubtedly hoped to make his candidacy more attractive to dissident Conservatives who, while shar-

37. *Convención Nacional Eleccionaria del Partido Liberal, 1897* (Bogotá, 1897), pamphlet. Personal Papers of Juan E. Manrique, Colombian Academy of History. The collection consists of two boxes of unbound material.

38. Miguel Samper to Aquileo Parra, et al., Bogotá, November 30, 1897 in Samper Brush and Samper Sordo, eds., *Escritos*, I, ix-xi.

39. In an effort to bring a united Liberal party to the polls, the nomination for vice-president went to Foción Soto, a doctrinaire Liberal and a favorite of those within the party favoring revolt against the Nationalist government. Eduardo Rodríguez Piñeres, *Diez años de política liberal, 1892-1902* (Bogotá, 1945), pp. 51-52.

ing the Liberals' economic views, distrusted the Liberals' past record of political partisanship and anticlericalism.

The other elite political faction participating in the presidential election of 1897 was the Historical Conservatives. Originally supporters of the Regeneration, as the export economy revived under the impetus of coffee production, this faction of the Conservative party, whose strength lay in the major coffee-producing departments of Santander, Cundinamarca and Antioquia, gradually disassociated itself from Regeneration economic and political policies and came to adopt a political platform similar in stress and detail to the Liberal critique of Regeneration policies.

The dissident Conservatives formally disassociated themselves from the Nationalists in January 1896 with the publication of a manifesto entitled the "Motives of Dissidence." Drafted by Carlos Martínez Silva of the department of Santander, the document was signed by twenty-one prominent Conservatives (all former collaborators in the Regeneration), and subsequently endorsed by Marceliano Vélez, leader of the large bloc of Conservative dissidents in the department of Antioquia. The document was at once an indictment of virtually every aspect of the Regeneration and a declaration of the principles of the "historical" Conservative party. The dissidents acknowledged the great achievements of the Regeneration: the establishment of national unity and the settlement of the Church issue. But, they went on to argue, the Constitution of 1886 and the political and economic policies of subsequent governments had been an exaggerated reaction to the extreme federalism and weakness of the national governments under the Constitution of 1863. The Regeneration had become authoritarian, and its fiscal policies had proved disastrous. High tariff rates had retarded agricultural growth. Instead of improving the administration of existing taxes, the Regeneration had erected new, unsuccessful ones such as the tobacco monopoly. Although the Regeneration had signed many railroad contracts, they were carelessly written, and the projects suffered from the lack of an overall plan. The Regeneration had made no attempt to arrange for payment on the foreign debt. Uncritical reliance on emissions of paper money to balance every deficit had made return to a "normal and valid" monetary system impossible. No attempt had been made to begin amortization. The Regeneration, the document concluded, had established the wrong priorities, neglecting education while uselessly overspending on the military.⁴⁰

40. The complete text is reproduced in Luis Martínez Delgado, *A propósito de Carlos Martínez Silva* (Bogotá, 1926), pp. 157–78.

Although the Historical Conservatives considered several presidential candidates, they were most impressed by the vote-getting appeal of the Rafael Reyes, a man who, as noted above, had also figured temporarily in the electoral planning of the Nationalists. A man of action who had made his fortune in commerce, explored the Colombian jungle, and become a hero of the Conservatives during the short-lived Revolution of 1895, Reyes had a foot in each Conservative camp: a proven Nationalist in the past, he was reported to favor reform of the Regeneration in the future. The Historical Conservatives found Reyes' popular appeal attractive, but they were resolved to name him as their official candidate only if they could commit him to their reform platform.

That platform, prepared by Historical Conservative leaders in August, 1897, was designed to serve as a foundation for a union of Conservative elements against the Nationalist regime. Composed of nineteen points and termed a faithful translation of the "main currents of thought within the party" by a newly formed Conservative directorate, the "Bases," as they were called, summarized the Historical Conservative critique of the Regeneration. The first nine points sought to limit executive power, restore civil liberties, and strengthen the separate powers of congress and the courts. Points twelve and thirteen dealt with the requirements for holders of public office and the establishment of an electoral system absolutely free of official interference. The other eight points outlined fiscal and economic reforms demanded by the Historical Conservative opposition. Point ten called for decentralization of government revenues so that departments and municipalities could take exclusive charge of internal development, charity, and public instruction. Point eleven sought controls on government in the opening of supplemental and extraordinary expenditure accounts in order to preserve the letter of the budget approved by congress, while point fourteen stipulated that appointments of officials to the general accounting office should be made by the Chamber of Representatives. Point fifteen called for an "absolute ban" on further emissions of paper money and the adoption of effective measures to begin amortization in order to return to metallic specie and to the "spontaneous workings of private credit." Point sixteen prohibited export taxes. Point seventeen called for the elimination of the recently established national fiscal monopolies but excepted departmental monopolies on the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. Point eighteen advocated reduction of tariff rates. Point nineteen called for increased develop-

ment of public education appropriate to the needs of the nation with special emphasis on that which “tends to train industrial workers.”⁴¹

The issue of Reyes’ commitment to the Historical Conservative “Bases” surfaced immediately upon Reyes’ arrival from Europe in late 1897. Reyes had returned to Colombia to personally direct his bid for a presidential nomination. As soon as he set foot in Colombia the Historical Conservatives began to apply pressure on him to endorse the substance of the “Bases.” Reyes was sympathetic with the economic and political positions of the Historical Conservatives. Throughout his career he demonstrated his deep-felt conviction that the redemption of the nation lay in the development of the export economy. As a youth he had left his native Boyacá for southern Colombia where, along with his brothers, he made a fortune in the export-import trade during the brief but spectacular quinine boom. Not content with that success, Reyes committed his family’s fortune with almost messianic fervor to an ambitious, ill-fated project to develop the Putumayo Basin in Colombia’s southeastern jungles. After exploring the area and linking it to Europe by steam navigation via the Amazon River, Reyes brought hundreds of Colombian colonists into the Putumayo to cultivate and collect tropical products for export. Despite Reyes’ determination, after ten years of struggle that effort ended in failure, but Reyes never abandoned his commitment to develop the nation materially through trade and the importation of foreign capital and technology. These goals preoccupied Reyes during his diplomatic mission to Europe in the late 1890’s and formed cornerstones of his policy when he finally reached the presidency following the War of the Thousand Days.⁴²

Reyes also agreed with the Historical Conservative criticism of the exclusiveness of Nationalist political hegemony. The success of any president, he wrote his nephew in a “strictly confidential” letter before returning to Colombia from Europe in 1897, depended not only on his commitment to the material progress of the nation, but also upon his ability to attract “all men of good will who represent family, wealth, and honor.”⁴³ When he finally reached the presidency in 1904

41. The “Bases” were published in Carlos Martínez Silva’s “Revista política de agosto 31, 1897.”

42. A useful description of Reyes’ commercial activities can be found in Eduardo Lemaitre, *Rafael Reyes: Biografía de un gran colombiano*, 3rd ed. (Bogotá, 1966). See especially pp. 61–104, 184–85.

43. Rafael Reyes to Carlos Calderón, Paris, October 25, 1896, Personal Papers of Carlos Calderón, Colombian Academy of History. The collection consists of one box of unbound correspondence. The same letter reveals that by 1896 Reyes

Reyes would implement this political philosophy by calling men of all political factions into his government, but in 1897, Reyes' efforts to avoid close identification with any political faction resulted in failure. Of course Reyes' reluctance to identify himself totally with the Historical Conservatives reflected not only his political beliefs, but practical concerns. Should the incumbent Nationalists oppose him, Reyes knew his chances of electoral success were remote. Consequently, throughout the last months of 1897 he engaged in a series of maneuvers designed to win the support of both Conservative factions.⁴⁴ Officially rebuffed by the Nationalist leadership in Bogotá, Reyes sought to attract provincial Nationalist leaders to his candidacy. That tactic, events were to show, proved disastrous.

Despite Reyes' carefully planned campaign strategy, only three days after his arrival in Bogotá, he was forced to issue a public statement in accordance with the "Bases" promulgated by the Historical Conservatives. In that declaration he paid tribute to the positive aspects of the Regeneration, but stressed the need for legislative reform. He called for repeal of the grant of extraordinary powers to the executive, reform of the press law, and measures to assure honest elections that would permit the peaceful rotation of political parties in power.

Reyes placed great emphasis in his statement on the need for fiscal and economic reforms.

Believing, as I do, that the greatest part of the permanent difficulties that we have are of economic and fiscal origin, more than of a political nature, I will devote preferential attention to the organization and administration of public finance, so that with order, honesty, and economy, and with severe and effective fiscalization, we can establish domestic and international credit on a solid basis, develop [the economy] . . . and return . . . to the gold monetary system to which all civilized nations aspire.⁴⁵

Satisfied, the Historical Conservatives adopted the ticket Rafael Reyes for president, Guillermo Quintero Calderón for vice-president.

Reyes continued to seek Nationalist support in private, however, a tactic exposed on the eve of the election when the Nationalist press published excerpts from a letter written by Reyes to a prominent

was tentatively planting coffee, perhaps on his hacienda "Andorra" in southwestern Cundinamarca.

44. These efforts culminated in a mid-November meeting attended by Conservative leaders of various political persuasions. Caro's delegate did not attend, however, and the meeting ended in failure. A draft of the minutes of the meeting exists in Calderón's papers cited above.

45. Martínez Delgado, *Revistas*, II, 245–46.

Nationalist outside Bogotá. In that letter Reyes claimed he had issued his pro-reform statement to prevent the Historical Conservatives from nominating Marceliano Vélez and Quintero Calderón. That combination, Reyes claimed, would have proved so attractive to Liberals that instead of naming a separate ticket they would have formed a united electoral front with the Historical Conservatives against the Nationalists. The publication of Reyes' letter only two days before the election thoroughly embarrassed the Historical Conservatives and they quickly replaced Reyes' name at the head of their ticket with that of Guillermo Quintero Calderón. Named as vice-presidential candidate was Marceliano Vélez.

Biographical information on Quintero and Vélez is sparse, but both had proven their commitment to Historical Conservative policies in the past. As presidential delegate elected by congress, Quintero, a former governor of Santander, had exercised executive power during a brief period in 1896 when Caro delegated power and retired to a small town near Bogotá. Quintero proceeded to appoint men associated with the Historical Conservatives and critical of Nationalist political and monetary policies to the sensitive ministries of government and the treasury. At that Caro hastily returned to the capital, reassumed power and named a new cabinet of loyal supporters of Nationalist policies. As early as 1891 Vélez, a former governor of Antioquia, began to criticize Regeneration policies and in 1892 with Liberal support he unsuccessfully sought the presidency on a dissident Conservative ticket. Like Quintero, Vélez supported the founding of the Historical Conservative party in 1896. In Quintero and Vélez, the Historical Conservatives found last-minute candidates with long and consistent records of support of party principles.

Judging from this brief description of the issues, political platforms, and candidates in the election of 1897, Colombian political parties divided along the axis of elite ties, or lack of them, to the evolving capitalist system of the North Atlantic. Import-export interests, voicing their demands through the Liberal and Historical Conservative parties, found their inspiration in North Atlantic political liberalism and laissez-faire economics. Involved in international trade and domestic finance they sought a return to the gold standard, lower tariffs, abolition of government monopolies and export taxes, and proper attention to the foreign debt. Such measures, they argued, would attract the foreign and domestic capital necessary to expand the economy and build crucial railroads. Nationalists, on the other hand, appear to have represented traditional agricultural interests,

as well perhaps as manufacturing, bureaucratic and ecclesiastical interests fostered by their statist economic policies, and centralist, pro-Catholic political policies. Nationalists found their inspiration in Spanish and Catholic thought and pursued policies they believed appropriate to national needs, irrespective of the criticism of their international and domestic liberal critics.

There is some evidence to suggest that the contrasting ideological and economic positions so clearly articulated in political platforms and revealed in the career patterns and policy statements of party leaders were consonant with the economic interests of a large group of each party's influential supporters. As a sample of important supporters of each party I analyzed lists of electors designated by each party to cast its votes in the second stage of the indirect presidential election of 1897. For the district of Bogotá, each party named 95 electors and 95 alternates.⁴⁶ Using a city directory for Bogotá published in 1893, I was able to determine the occupations of more than half of the 570 electors and alternates (see Table I).⁴⁷

One must be cautious in the use of these data as they are the product of an imperfect research tool and are geographically limited to the district of Bogotá. Moreover, problems arise in inferring economic interests from those occupational classifications listed in the table. While it is reasonable to assume, and contemporary newspaper advertising confirms, that virtually all "merchants" of the period sold foreign goods, it is not clear what businesses "businessmen" were engaged in. Likewise, although "employee" generally meant government employee, presumably the term could also refer to a position in private enterprise (although the directory uses the additional clas-

46. The list of Nationalist electors was published in *El Nacionalista* (Bogotá), December 4, 1897. The Historical Conservatives published their list of electors in *El Correo Nacional* (Bogotá), November 11, 1897. The Liberal list can be found in *El Sufragio* (Bogotá), November 22, 1897.

47. Two editions of the *Directorio general de Bogotá*, compiled by Jorge Pombo and Carlos Obregón, were found. One, apparently the third annual publication, was issued for the years 1889–1890, and is located in the library of the Colombian Academy of History. The other, published in 1893, was more useful to this study and is located in the library of the Bogotá Municipal Council. The compilers attempted to list all of the city's residents along with their addresses and occupations. While the directory is probably hopelessly incomplete for the lowest strata of the population, it nevertheless includes large numbers of washerwomen, tavern owners, artisans, and owners of small general stores (*pulperías*) along with the ministers of state, lawyers, physicians, and merchants who figure prominently in the list. For a detailed discussion of the limitations of the *Directorio* and the mechanical problems encountered in its use, see Bergquist, "Coffee and Conflict," pp. 122–23.

TABLE I: Occupational Distribution by Party of Presidential Electors and Alternates for the District of Bogotá, 1897.

OCCUPATION (arranged alphabetically in English)	Hist. Conserv.		Nationalists		Liberals	
	Elec- tors	Alter- nates	Elec- tors	Alter- nates	Elec- tors	Alter- nates
accountant (contabilista)					1	2
agriculturalist (agricultor)	3	2				1
bank employee (empleado de banco)						1
blacksmith (herrero)		1			1	
bookseller (librero)		2				2
brazier (latonero)						1
cabinet maker (ebanista)		1		1		
carpenter (carpintero)		1	1			
chemist (químico)					1	
cobbler (zapatero)					1	1
commission agent (comisionista)	4	1	4	1	1	1
consul (consul)						1
dairyman (dueño de lechería)	1					
dependent (dependiente)		1		1		
educator (institutor)		1	2	1	3	
employee (empleado)	8	7	19	14	1	2
engineer (ingeniero)			3		1	1
general store owner (dueño de pulpería)						1
innkeeper (hostelero)		1				
jeweler (joyero)	2	2	3			
journalist (periodista)			1	1		
landowner (hacendado)	5	2	3	5	3	3
lawyer (abogado)	5		6	1	13	7
man of letters (literato)	1				3	
manufacturer (industrialista)				1	4	
mason (albañil)		1	1	1	1	
mechanic (mecánico)						1
merchant (comerciante)	12	18	2	5	21	15
military man (militar)	6	2	2			
musician (músico)	1					
painter (pintor)						1
peddler (buhonero)	1					
physician (médico)	3	1	2	1	6	4
priest (sacerdote)						1
publisher (editor)					1	
saddler (talabartero)				1		
student (estudiante)		2	1	1		2
tailor (sastre)	1	1	1		1	
tapestry maker (tapicero)						1
trader (negociante)	3	9	1	5	1	4
typesetter (tipógrafo)	1	1				
total identified	57	57	52	40	64	53
total electors	95	95	95	95	95	95

sification “bank employee”). Conceivably, men listed as artisans could range from jewelers or tailors with their own prosperous businesses (which even sold imported merchandise) to modest craftsmen—although one assumes that only a well-to-do artisan would be named an elector. Another problem with the breakdown is that members of the upper class were rarely involved in one occupation, but often were landowners, lawyers, merchants, or military men at one and the same time. Since it is not clear how the directory was compiled, the compilers may have noted each resident’s occupation or residents may have been given an opportunity to describe their occupations themselves. Whatever the method, the directory probably reflects the dominant occupation of those having several interests (i.e., the perception of the compilers) or the most coveted occupational self-image of the respondent (which one assumes would have the greatest relationship to his politics). In most cases where I was able to check the directory’s classification with data gathered from other sources, the directory proved reliable. On occasion, however, the classification given in the directory appears to be arbitrary. For example, Francisco Groot was listed as a landowner, but he was also a merchant, newspaper editor, commission agent, and factory owner. Jorge Holguín, to give another example, was listed as a commission agent, but he was also a large landowner and had won the title of general.

Despite all the difficulties involved in evaluating and interpreting the data, some very suggestive trends emerge from the table. The distribution shows “merchant” as the most common occupation among Historical Conservative electors. This tendency is much more pronounced in the breakdown of alternate Historical Conservative electors.

The distribution of occupations among Nationalist electors contrasts sharply with the data presented for Historical Conservatives. A glance at the breakdown reveals the high number of employees and professionals, the insignificant number of merchants and businessmen. While the contrast with the Historical Conservatives is not nearly so sharp in the breakdown of the Nationalist alternate electors, roughly the same trend appears.

Analysis of the occupational distribution of Liberal electors reveals a pattern which, with its high percentage of merchants, diverges markedly from that of the Nationalists and approximates that of the Historical Conservatives.

Thus in a general way the occupational data, despite their obvious shortcomings, appear to support the contention that political parties in late nineteenth-century Colombia represented divergent economic

interests. Clearly, additional research into the regional strengths of the three factions is necessary to test this generalization. But the pattern of socio-economic interests revealed in the data on the electors from the district of Bogotá is consistent with the biographical data presented on leading spokesmen of the parties and the very clear philosophical and programmatic differences between the Nationalists on the one hand, and the Liberals and Historical Conservatives on the other hand.

It is true that the divergent economic and ideological interests separating the Nationalists from their Historical Conservative and Liberal political opponents did not preclude efforts by the two parties out of power to forge pre-election alliances with the incumbents. Liberals and Historical Conservatives were painfully aware of the slim chance of electoral victory given the Nationalists' control of electoral machinery and the customary fraud and violence practiced by political parties in power in Colombia throughout the century. Although both opposition parties engaged in negotiations with the Nationalists, these efforts to effect a political compromise capable of bridging the ideological and programmatic gulf separating the parties culminated in failure and each party presented its own ticket in the popular phase of the election held on December 5, 1897.⁴⁸ Despite the fact that Liberals carried the relatively honest election in the capital, results from the provinces secured an overwhelming victory for the Nationalist cause.⁴⁹

Although the failure of reform forces to gain control of the presidency in 1897 and thus alter the policies of the Regeneration would not terminate the efforts of moderate Liberals and Historical Conservatives to achieve reform through peaceful political means, all such subsequent efforts were to end in failure. In the end, the contention between Colombian political factions, exacerbated by deepening crisis in the coffee economy, would lead to a breakdown of constitu-

48. Some Liberal and Historical Conservative political leaders also considered the possibility of a bipartisan electoral alliance against the Nationalists. However attractive in terms of elite economic interests and world views, such an alliance across traditional party lines was not given serious attention. Given the polarization of Colombian society into rival Liberal and Conservative patron-client groups, realistic politicians recognized the ineffectiveness of bipartisan political coalitions. The limitations on elite political strategy and maneuverability by party rank and file, a complex problem beyond the scope of this paper, are discussed in some detail in Bergquist, "Coffee and Conflict." See especially pp. 224–26, 243–50.

49. Results are reported by Carlos Martínez Silva, "Revista política de julio 10, 1898" in Martínez Delgado, ed., *Revistas*, II, 318–19.

tional political processes and the start of the War of the Thousand Days in October, 1899.

Judging from this analysis of contending political factions in the Colombian presidential election of 1897, interpretations based on cultural legacies and clientelist politics, by ignoring basic ideological and economic interests of contending elites, provide insufficient or misleading explanations of nineteenth-century Spanish American political conflict and instability. The study of political economy, on the other hand, by elucidating ideological and economic differences between elite factions, can account for both the severity and the timing of elite political contention. When trends within the international and domestic economy clearly favored the interests of one elite faction over another, the ideological and political hegemony of the favored group was likely, and relative political stability resulted. Conversely, when the fortunes of the export economy suddenly reversed, as happened first to the Liberals during the crisis of export agriculture in the late 1870's and early 1880's, and then to the Nationalists during the coffee boom of the 1890's, the incumbent party's ideological and political hegemony began to break down and political conflict became likely.

Of course, clientelists are not alone in rejecting or questioning the usefulness of the study of political economy in interpreting Spanish American politics. Other scholars, while not closely identified with the clientelists, question the applicability of "neo-Marxist" assumptions in the analysis of Spanish American politics.⁵⁰ In a thoughtful, provocative recent article Frank Safford reviews leading explanations of Spanish American politics and demonstrates the conceptual problems involved in characterizing nineteenth-century Colombian politics as a classic confrontation between a rural landowning elite and an emergent urban bourgeoisie. In addition, Safford illustrates the methodological difficulties involved in classifying elite contenders along occupational lines, probes the limitations of analyses stressing the importance of regional economic structures in determining elite political allegiance, and stresses the role of the family in determining political affiliation in nineteenth-century Colombia.⁵¹

50. An example of this view is Milton I. Vanger's "Politics and Class in Twentieth-Century Latin America," *HAHR* 49 (Feb., 1969), 80-93.

51. Frank Safford, "Social Aspects of Politics in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America: New Granada, 1825-1850," *Journal of Social History*, 5 (Spring, 1972), 344-70.

Many of Safford's points are well taken. The analysis presented in this paper does not attempt to characterize Colombian political contention in terms of a classic Marxist confrontation between a "feudal" landowning elite and a rising urban bourgeoisie. Rather, I have argued that cleavage within the Colombian upper class must be analyzed along the lines of economic and ideological ties, or lack of them, to the expanding capitalist economy of the West. It is not a question of landed versus urban interests, but one of export-import interests versus groups not involved with the export-import economy. It is these ties which largely explain factionalism within the two major parties, as the division of the Conservative party into Nationalist and Historical Conservative factions attests. Because the development of the export-import economy proceeded unevenly in Colombia in the nineteenth century, affecting groups in some geographic areas while leaving other areas untouched, the concept of regionalism, properly understood, plays an important role in the analysis of Colombian politics. Certainly, as Safford notes, political socialization occurs primarily within the family in nineteenth-century Colombia, but some elite families began to acquire ties to the export-import economy at the same time that the traditional parties crystalized in Colombia in the late 1840's. As the century wore on, elites identified with a party whose ideology or politics were at odds with their interests could either join or organize a dissident faction of that party, or, more rarely, take the momentous step of switching political affiliation.