

# Brazil, the Original Leader of the Americas – Part I

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In November 1807, when Napoleon's army invaded Portugal, the day before the French forces reached Lisbon, on November 30, 1807, the Portuguese royal family and most of the Portuguese court (around 4,000 people) left Portugal, and moved to Brazil. Most of these people stayed in Brazil until April 1821.

During the period February 1808 when the Portuguese family arrived in Brazil, until April 1821 when the Portuguese royal family and most of the Portuguese court left Brazil to return to Portugal for all practical purposes the Portuguese empire had been run from Brazil. This is the only example that we have in history of the government of a European country running its affairs from a country in the Americas.

In 1821, Brazil was already a very large country, and its land area covered about the same area that Brazil covers today. The fact that Brazil was the center of the Portuguese empire during this period projected Brazil in the early decades of the 1800's to a very special position; the position of leading country of the Americas.

King Dom João VI enjoyed his life in Brazil, and he loved Rio de Janeiro. But European events finally forced the monarchs' return to Portugal. In the year 1820 there was a rash of rebellions against absolute monarchies in Europe.

Inspired by these revolts, Portuguese liberals rebelled in Oporto late in 1820 and demanded a constitution. The movement spread to Lisbon, and Dom João VI was faced with the choice of returning to Portugal to fight for his crown or of losing it. Reluctantly he chose to return.

When the Portuguese royal family left Portugal in November of 1807, Maria I (1777-1816) was the queen in Portugal, and after his mother's death in 1816 Prince Dom João had his coronation in Rio de Janeiro as King João VI (1816-1826.) In November 1807 when he went to Brazil, Prince Dom Pedro who was born on October 12, 1798, was a child of only 9 years old.

Andrada e Silva

José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva who was born on June 13, 1763 in Brazil, was 44 years old when the royal family left Portugal to go to Brazil in 1807. At that time he was already considered the most famous and important scientist in Portugal, and since the late 1790's he had enjoyed major prestige in the most important scientific research centers of Europe.

When he returned to Portugal at the end of 1800, he was a famous European scientist, and between 1801 and 1807 he accumulated responsibility after responsibility in Portugal.

Even though Portugal is a small country, it would be hard for anyone to be a professor at Coimbra University, a Superintendent of Mines and Metals, an administrator of the coal mines and foundry, a director of the royal Laboratory, responsible for the mint and forests of the Portuguese empire, a judge at Casa do Pôrto, and a Superintendent of Public Works in Coimbra, all at the same time.

When the Portuguese royal family went to Brazil, José Bonifácio was asked to go with them. He decided to stay in Portugal because he knew that they would need his expertise in metallurgy and chemistry in the war effort against the French forces.

José Bonifácio requested permission first from queen Maria I and later from her son King Dom João VI a number of times between 1810 and 1818 to return to Brazil, but he was too valuable in Portugal. King Dom João VI gave authorization for his return only on October 29, 1818.

José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva arrived in Brazil before the end of 1819 after being away for thirty-six years, of which he lived at least twenty-five years in Portugal.

When he arrived in Brazil in early November 1819, he was a respected and well-known scientist in the top scientific research centers of Europe of his day. He was fifty-six years old, which was considered old for that time.

He came back to Brazil to retire and to enjoy his remaining days doing scientific research and writing, hardly knowing that the biggest accomplishments of his life and what would immortalize him in world history were still ahead of him.

### Provisory Government

On April 23, 1821, before the king had left Brazil, when the people were meeting in São Paulo they decided to have elections and form a provisory government in São Paulo. They chose José Bonifácio to be the speaker.

José Bonifácio told them that it was an honor for him to preside over the elections of the provisory government. He told them that for the happiness of his motherland he would make any sacrifice, and he would even spill the last drop of his blood.

When José Bonifácio participated in the provisory government of São Paulo, he prepared a document that was signed by the members of the provisory government on October 9, 1821 called "Lembranças e Apontamentos".

This document might be the most important document in the history of reforms in Brazil. The document provided a complete master plan for the new nation and covered in detail all the necessary building blocks of social, political and economic life.

In a letter dated July 17, 1821 from the Prince Dom Pedro to his father the king, he mentioned the elections in São Paulo, and he told his father they owed to José Bonifácio the fact that they had tranquility in the province of São Paulo.

### King João VI Returns

On April 26, 1821, King João VI, the royal family, and most of the Portuguese court left Brazil to return to Portugal, but the king left his oldest son Prince Dom Pedro as the regent in Brazil.

The prince was only 22 years old and lacked any formal education. He always disliked studying, and since he arrived in Brazil in 1808, he spent most of his time riding horses and playing with his bulls.

In a decree of October 1, 1821 the Portuguese Cortes (Portuguese Assembly or Parliament) requested the immediate return of the prince to Portugal, and they ordered the Captaincies (provinces or states) to report directly to Lisbon instead of Rio de Janeiro.

On December 9, 1821 an order from the Portuguese Cortes was received in Rio de Janeiro to elect a government junta and to accelerate the return of the prince to Portugal.

The prince wrote back to his father on the same day saying; "as soon they elect the new junta I will turn over the government and will return immediately to Portugal as per your decree. I will take even the Fragata União, because from this day on I don't want to have any influence in the Brazilian affairs."

The Captaincy of Pará and Maranhão in the north of Brazil answered directly to Lisbon and not to Rio de Janeiro. After the radical changes made by the Portuguese Cortes, cutting completely Dom Pedro's authority, Brazil was without an

effective central government. Not the regent, or a new junta, or anyone had real authority in Brazil.

When the order of the Portuguese Cortes arrived saying that Bahia, Pará, Maranhão, Pernambuco, and Minas Gerais should communicate directly with Lisbon, Dom Pedro wrote to his father saying that he was happy to be the governor of only Rio de Janeiro.

Prince Dom Pedro's "FICO"

José Bonifácio did not waste any time when he was elected to the provisory government of São Paulo. He sent people from São Paulo to agitate the people in Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul, Goiás, and Mato Grosso. He found out that the people from these provinces were also loyal Brazilians.

On December 24, 1821 José Bonifácio wrote a very nasty and violent letter to Prince Dom Pedro describing his thoughts regarding the actions taken by the Portuguese Cortes. He listed the Cortes' actions item by item and told Dom Pedro "you stay on our side, or do not doubt for a second we will get the arms to fight for our independence from Portugal."

He also wrote: "If you accept the Cortes decrees of September 29, 1821, you will lose not only your dignity as a man, but also as a prince. You will turn yourself into a slave of the Cortes, and you will be responsible under heaven for the river of blood which will run in Brazil."

The letter was delivered to Prince Dom Pedro in Rio de Janeiro on January 1, 1822 at 8:00 PM. The letter made Dom Pedro very happy, because that was the first sign that he was wanted in Brazil, and the possibility that if he stayed in Brazil he might be their new king.

Dom Pedro called a trusted friend and gave him a copy of this letter from José Bonifácio. He asked this friend to show the letter around to all trusted Brazilian patriots. It was a mission well done.

José Bonifácio sent a letter to the government in Minas Gerais asking them to join São Paulo in the coming fight for independence. They received the letter on January 8, 1822 and on the same day they sent the answer that they would stand by José Bonifácio when the fighting began.

Prince Dom Pedro wrote to his father to inform him that São Paulo had rejected all orders from the Cortes and that they had Minas Gerais on their side. He also wrote "José Bonifácio is writing to all the provinces. What I am supposed to do? The opinion is all against the Cortes everywhere."

Pressed to stay in Brazil by José Bonifácio, on January 9, 1822 Prince Dom Pedro declared: "Fico" – "I Will Remain." José Bonifácio arrived in Rio de Janeiro on January 17, 1822 and on the same day Dom Pedro asked him to be his Prime Minister. Never before had there been a Brazilian Minister. José Bonifácio was the first Brazilian to rise to the position of Minister.

José Bonifácio created the situation that ended with the "FICO." Before the "FICO" Prince Dom Pedro always had good relations with the Andrada family, and he had great admiration and respect for José Bonifácio.

Dona Leopoldina, wife of Prince Dom Pedro also admired José Bonifácio and she was his very good friend. Dona Leopoldina was Archduchess Leopoldina Josepha Carolina of Hapsburg, daughter of the Austrian Emperor, sister of Marie Louise Bonaparte, and niece of Marie Antoinette. She was kind hearted, intelligent and the Brazilians loved her.

I also want to mention that there was a common family ancestry between Prince Dom Pedro and José Bonifácio, since both of them were descendants of the 7th Duke of Bragança, they also had other ancestors in common. Here is some information about their common family background:

José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva was a great-great-grandson of the 7th Duke of Bragança, and his great-grandfather was a younger brother of the 8th Duke of Bragança who became in 1640, Dom João IV, king of Portugal.

José Bonifácio's great-grandfather also was a great-grandson of Dom João III (1521-1557), a Portuguese king from the Aviz dynasty. Dom João III ruled Portugal at the height of Portuguese power.

#### Noble Ancestry

Prince Dom Pedro was a son of King Dom João VI of Portugal, and they were descendants of the 8th Duke of Bragança who became in 1640, Dom João IV - king of Portugal. They belonged to the Bragança Dynasty.

Source: "José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva - The Greatest Man in Brazilian History" by Ricardo C. Amaral

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