

Chano

If I have life and luck enough, come next year, I'll join you, and we'll go together to the May fest.

*Contreras stayed at his friend's house that night, and the next day he saddled up early and headed back to his own.*

## 21. Diplomatic Reports from Rio de Janeiro

### *The Austrian Ambassador Writes to Metternich*

*These diplomatic reports were written in Rio de Janeiro as ripples of Portugal's 1820 liberal revolution washed over Brazil, eventually precipitating the breakup of João's United Kingdom of Portugal and Brazil. That train of events was set in motion by the creation in Lisbon of a new national assembly—called the Cortes as in Spain. The Cortes of Lisbon invited each Brazilian captaincy to send delegates to a constituent assembly that would write a constitution for the United Kingdom, very much as the Cortes of Cádiz had done a decade earlier in Spanish America. Not content to see the king continue to make his court in Rio, the Cortes recalled João to Portugal in 1821. Meanwhile, João's eldest son Prince Pedro remained to govern the Brazilian half of the United Kingdom in his father's absence under the watchful eye of the Austrian ambassador, Baron Mareschal. Some of Mareschal's comments on Pedro and the events leading to Brazil's break from Portugal are paraphrased in the following excerpts from the diplomat's letters to his superiors in Vienna. Two special considerations should be noted. First, Austrian Prince Metternich, to whom the ambassador's letters were directed, was the mastermind of an international reaction against liberalism, the so-called Holy Alliance that espoused a restoration of old-style "divine right" absolutism in post-Napoleonic Europe. Second, Leopoldina, Pedro's wife, was an Austrian princess. Finally, note the great significance of public "acclamations," when a particular title was recognized and "acclaimed" with "vivas" by assembled dignitaries and people in the street.<sup>37</sup>*

37. "A correspondência do Barão Wensel de Marchall (Agente diplomático da Austria no Brasil de 1821–1831)," *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* 77, Part 1 (1914): 195–96, 220, 233–36; 80 (1916): 15, 43–45, 63–65, 92–93, 101–102, 111–13, 132–33.

July 12, 1821—*In a report written shortly after João's return to Portugal, Mareschal reported on Prince Pedro's distressing taste for modern political ideas. On one occasion Pedro had mediated between constitutionalist protesters and his father. The ambassador begins with an observation that many European observers made about the prince:*

Prince Pedro has in fact received hardly any education at all. He has neither read much nor lived ever in the company of educated people. But he is naturally smart and has good common sense, with a great desire for activity and movement. His wife, Princess Leopoldina, with whom he has gotten along quite well, and to whom he is truly attached despite being a bit brusque with her at times, shares the prince's tastes and diversions. The prince's respect for King João has always been great, and it still is, but he detests the ministers and favorites who remain from his departed father's court and does not like to follow orders of any kind. Hence his inclination toward the liberal revolution in Portugal, which from the beginning courted his favor and encountered a receptive audience in a young man of such ardent temperament, who resented his exclusion from affairs of state and desired nothing more than to be in the thick of things.

October 1, 1821—*Pedro got his wish as prince regent. Contending forces soon swirled around him as the liberal Cortes of Lisbon systematically undercut his authority, intending to both bring the monarchy to heel and recover pride of place for Portugal within the United Kingdom. Mareschal reports:*

In recent days, an incident in the theater came close to provoking an insurrection in Rio. On the night of September 18, an unknown person stepped into the box reserved for the officers of the general staff and, leaning out so that everyone in the theater could hear, he twice shouted: "Long Live the Prince Regent, Our Master!" Because the Cortes of Lisbon disapproves of the word *Master* in reference to the monarch, some liberal in the theater quickly improvised a response, and soon many were shouting: "Long Live the Constitutional Prince!" It was an unpredictable moment. Fortunately, His Royal Highness was present in the theater, and when he showed himself, order was restored. I do believe that if the Portuguese residents of Rio continue to follow in the liberal footsteps of Lisbon with all this constitutionalism and disrespect for legitimate monarchy, it will lead to the loss of Brazil. Indeed, printed broadsides are appearing daily in the street, accusing the prince of wanting to make Brazil independent and calling the resident Portuguese of the city to arms

to prevent that. As for the Brazilians, they are ever more emboldened. Recently, a monk preached independence from the pulpit, where these days one seems to hear more about George Washington than about the gospel.

November 16, 1821—*Recently arrived news of San Martín's capture of Lima alarmed the ambassador. Although a monarchist, San Martín championed popular sovereignty and constitutionalism. The extension of that principle to the United Kingdom of Portugal and Brazil would, Mareschal believed, lead to its breakup:*

More than once I've had occasion to express to Your Highness my lack of confidence in the measures taken by the *Cortes* of Lisbon, encouraging the autonomy of the various Brazilian captaincies vis-à-vis Rio, for example, and repeatedly sanctioning the occasions when insubordinate troops have forced oaths of allegiance to the constitution from their superiors. Fortunately, Prince Pedro has lost the blind confidence in the *Cortes* that he professed. This change in his attitude is of crucial importance, because I believe that the only measure capable of holding Portugal and Brazil together, in the long run, is to establish the seat of the monarchy in Brazil. Of course, the current *Cortes* opposes that idea at all cost, preferring that not even a Prince Regent remain in Brazil. Who knows what may happen. Currently, it seems that the election of delegates to the constituent assembly to be convened in Lisbon for the United Kingdom as a whole will produce almost as many delegates from Brazilian captaincies as from Portugal because, apparently, slaves have been included in the population to be represented, even though they cannot vote.

Attached to the present communication, I have the honor to send to Your Highness an interesting document written by José Bonifácio de Andrada, a Brazilian of talent who lived for many years in Europe. Monsieur Andrada is a member of the provincial government of São Paulo, a southern captaincy of modest importance, and he has drafted for the São Paulo delegates to the constituent assembly a letter containing carefully considered instructions regarding the needs of Brazil. Andrada presents his ideas, some of which are hopelessly optimistic, in what we might call *national* terms, and therefore, his formulations may be influential among delegates from many captaincies.

January 9, 1821—*As Pedro became a rallying point for an independence-minded "Brazilian party," the Cortes demanded that Pedro leave Rio and rejoin the rest of the royal family in Portugal. José Bonifácio de Andrada wrote*

*to Pedro advising him to refuse. The ambassador describes Pedro's formal public defiance of the Cortes:*

An official deputation of the city government was called to the palace to hear the prince's response to their request that he stay in Brazil. It processed on foot through streets, which had been decorated as if for a holiday, carrying the banner of the city. Prince Pedro received them at the palace, where he pronounced these words: "Because it is for the good of all, I will stay." Outside the palace, church bells and salvos of artillery began to publicize the news at that moment. The city government had prohibited the shouting of "*vivas*," but when a crowd gathered outside the palace and the prince went onto the balcony, it happened anyway. Satisfaction seems universal, with local Portuguese residents finding it prudent to say nothing negative. The Portuguese troops here have protested, however, not against the actions of the prince, but against Andrada's instructions to the São Paulo delegates and other writings lately published in this city, that they deem (not without reason) insulting to the *Cortes*.

March 5, 1822—*Pedro called José Bonifácio de Andrada to Rio and made him chief minister. The alarmed Austrian ambassador found an opportunity to lecture the young prince concerning the virtues of "legitimism." He reports his little lecture to Vienna:*

I told the prince that Portugal's liberal revolution was nothing more than an offshoot of Spain's, that it would probably take the same course, and that, once the *Cortes* had toppled the throne, the *Cortes* in turn would be toppled by another, even worse, government. I explained that revolutions disrupt social bonds and plunge entire nations into chaos, a chaos from which they emerge only after overwhelming misfortune drives them back to the stability of legitimate monarchies. Because it now appears that some Brazilian delegates to Lisbon will not be recognized, I warned him against the foolish idea of having an assembly here in Rio, which he would assuredly find even more troublesome than one in Lisbon. And the prince said: "What would you have me do? Assemblies are all anyone dreams of these days." So I explained that it is unwise to improvise new governments and much safer to conserve traditional forms that have been tested by long experience. I pointed out that assemblies make things inherently unstable, even in a monarchy, and that a government hardly deserves the name monarchy if the crown does not maintain an absolute veto and the right to dissolve the assembly whenever it deems necessary. It is more than enough for assemblies to control the purse strings of



the state. To give them more power is to invite chaos. When the prince criticized the behavior of the titled nobility, *going so far as to doubt the superiority of one class of men over others*,<sup>38</sup> I insisted that perfect social equality is impossible and that a nobility is an indispensable support to a monarch. I further explained that while the assembly may represent the nation by election, the monarch also represents the nation and directly embodies its sovereignty.

May 17, 1822—*Advised by José Bonifácio, Pedro continued to resist pressure from the Cortes to return to Portugal. Then the Rio city council took the initiative, inviting Pedro to assume the title of "Perpetual Defender of Brazil," a phrase in which the first word was the most important. Mareschal reports:*

Since last October there have on occasion been rumors in Rio de Janeiro saying that the prince would be acclaimed king or emperor. Following his visit to Minas Gerais, hand-written notices appeared here in the streets of Rio calling for that sort of thing, and earlier this month there were more of them, small and again hand-written, saying that patriots and friends of Brazil should shout the following *viva*: "Long live the Prince Regent, Perpetual and Constitutional Defender of the United Kingdom of Brazil!" The title sounds worrisomely like the United States of North America or the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata. Four days ago I arrived at court too late to hear the troops acclaim Pedro Perpetual Defender, but I saw them march, about four thousand in new and different uniforms. They had mixed the five-hundred-or-so Portuguese soldiers in with the rest. The prince seemed inclined not to accept the title, fearing it might seem an insult to his father, but José Bonifácio convinced him to do so. "I accept, then," said the prince, "at the request of the People and in the name of the King."

The idea of *América* is ascendant. There is open talk now of convening an assembly here in Rio. Monsieur Andrada goes further yet, speaking, as I have heard him do at court in the presence of perhaps twenty people, all of them foreigners, of a great alliance or federation to include all of *América*, enjoying completely free trade. He is full of grand talk, and believes that if Europe does not cooperate *América* can adopt China's approach, close all its ports, and thrive without European trade. If Europe attacks, he says, *América's* great forests and mountains will protect it, and so on. He claims that an enlightened government can transform

38. The ambassador underlined this phrase for emphasis.

the continent, building roads and canals, ending the importation of slaves, administering impartial justice, and establishing schools and gymnastic activities to develop the natural abilities of the population.

August 10, 1822—*According to the Austrian ambassador, José Bonifácio had infected the prince with Americanism, which was at least preferable to republicanism. He wrote to Metternich with grudging respect for Pedro's powerful chief minister.*

Despite using those too-frequent, needlessly-repeated phrases—Liberty, the rights of nations, and the sovereignty of the people—Monsieur Andrada is not what people commonly call a liberal, and fortunately he does not believe in democracy. But he is adept at channeling revolutionary energies to achieve his own goals. Why else does he agitate for independence in a country that, juridically, has not been a colony of Portugal since King João made Brazil officially a kingdom in 1815? It is because, by doing so, he puts the government itself at the head of the movement. He thus makes *América* the cause, and Brazilian independence, the goal, thereby averting a republican revolution. Let the Brazilians be *americanos*, in other words, rather than revolutionaries. This may not be the ideal way to stop republicanism, but one must admire its effectiveness in a country where the government has few resources with which to oppose changes that have, in effect, already begun. What one can reproach in Monsieur Andrada's behavior, however, is his enthusiastic vision of *América*, the supposed patriotism which he carries to an extreme and which has affected the language of the prince, as well. Such attitudes may be inevitable, however, in a prince destined to reign in *América*.

September 25, 1822—*Pedro finally declared an open break with Portugal on September 7, while traveling in São Paulo. In Rio, the Austrian ambassador informed his government of this unwelcome blow to the glory and dignity of Portugal's legitimate monarchy.*

It is with true sorrow that I write to Your Highness about an event that, unfortunately, will almost certainly take place on the prince's next birthday, October 12, 1822.

First, however, let me summarize what has occurred since my last communication. After declaring independence on the bank of the Ipiranga River in São Paulo, the prince made a forced march of five days in the middle of tropical rains and arrived in Rio on the evening of September 14. When he walked into the São Cristóvão palace outside town,

immediately one saw that he had removed from his hat the cockade that the *Cortes* instituted eight months ago as a sign of adhesion to Portugal's liberal revolution. On his arm, though, the prince wore something new: a green and gold band with the words "Independence or Death," his new rallying cry. The color green signifies the prince's family, the Braganza dynasty, but not Portugal per se. The next day was the anniversary of the liberal revolution in Lisbon, which was not celebrated this year. Instead, the troops, public employees, everyone wearing the *Cortes* cockade, took it off and put on a green armband, instead. Even the republican radicals on the city council support the direction that things have taken. The Portuguese national colors, wherever they were displayed, are being replaced by new Brazilian ones, green and yellow, although there has, as yet, been no written government order or announcement to that effect. Meanwhile, handbills have begun to circulate exhorting people in verse and prose to acclaim Pedro emperor of Brazil, and arrangements are being made to construct triumphal arches in the streets of Rio to celebrate the upcoming acclamation on October 12.

October 19, 1822—*Some wanted Pedro's acclamation as emperor to include a specific commitment to constitutionalism, but José Bonifácio refused to allow any such proviso in the official ceremony. Mareschal describes the scene on the prince's birthday:*

The Rio city council, the assembled troops, and then the people at large shouted their approval, formally acclaiming Pedro their emperor as the ships in the harbor thundered a 101-gun salute. Pedro and Leopoldina went onto the palace balcony with their daughter and showed themselves to the crowd. Then Pedro walked under a canopy, along with various members of the city government, to the Royal Chapel, where they heard a celebratory mass, after which the troops paraded and people assembled to kiss the hand of their new emperor. For three nights the royal family attended the theater, where they were warmly received, and for six nights the people of the city placed lights in their windows in celebration. Despite torrential downpours on three of these nights, the general enthusiasm has been great, and promoting that spirit was clearly the goal of the celebration. The opposition is determined to topple Monsieur Andrada, but, for the time being, he retains his influence, which is much to be desired because, despite all his faults, he is both effective and sincerely devoted to maintaining a monarchy in Brazil.

*December 3, 1822—Pedro's acclamation was followed on December 1 by another spectacle, a coronation ceremony with all the panoply of traditional monarchy that nevertheless did include reference to the constitution:*

His Royal Highness was dressed in a green silk tunic and wore on his shoulders an imperial cloak of green velvet lined with yellow, spangled with stars and gold embroidery. On his feet, he wore high riding boots and spurs, around his neck, a shoulder cape of Toucan feathers that hung down to his waist, and on his head, a diamond-studded crown. During the coronation, the Emperor swore on the book of the Holy Gospel, next to the altar, to maintain the Roman Catholic and Apostolic religion as the official creed of this realm, to defend the rights of the Brazilian nation, and to uphold the constitution that will be written by the constituent assembly that he has called to meet next year in Rio de Janeiro—provided that he deems the constitution to be worthy. When the ceremony in the church was concluded, the Emperor returned to the palace in a procession replete with imperial symbols. Once there, he ascended his throne and signed a written copy of the oath. Attendant upon his coronation, the Pedro created a new order of nobility for the Brazilian Empire, to be called the Order of the Southern Cross.

## 22. A Vote against Ratification

### *Brother Caneca Criticizes Brazil's Proposed Constitution*

*In Recife, capital of Pernambuco, on June 6, 1824, the rebel journalist Friar Joaquim do Amor Divino Caneca, known as Brother or Frei Caneca, advised the government of this Brazilian province not to accept the draft constitution proposed by the newly enthroned emperor of independent Brazil. Caneca cited various constitutional defects that he predicted would lead to the abuse of power by the emperor. Most importantly, he blasted the origin of the document. In 1823, Pedro had dismissed the national assembly that he himself had called to write a constitution and, instead, wrote it himself with the aid of a few advisors. Declaring repeatedly that "sovereignty resides in the nation and not in the emperor," Brother Caneca insisted that only the nation's freely elected representatives could create a valid constitution. The rebellious government of Pernambuco accepted his arguments,*