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Why Was Brazil Different? The Contexts of Independence

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Over recent decades surprisingly little scholarly work has been done on the achievement of Brazilian independence. Even less attention has been devoted to the impact of the decolonization of Portugal's vast South American empire during the 1820s on Portugal itself. Portuguese historians still sometimes write as if Brazil never existed—the most recent and most prestigious history of Portugal in the 18th century, for example, barely mentions Brazil, even though for most of that century sixty percent of the state's revenues derived from Brazil—and Brazilian historians often ignore the important transatlantic dimensions of Brazil's domestic political conflicts and economic constraints.¹ The period that runs from late 1807—when the invasion of Portugal by General Junot forced the Portuguese court to take refuge in Brazil, up to 1825, when Portugal and the major European powers recognized Brazil's independence—lacks even the most rudimentary interpretative outline. Yet events on each side of the Atlantic were intimately linked and cannot be explained without an understanding of their connectedness. Indeed, between 1815 and 1821 Portugal and Brazil were formally and institutionally part of a “United Kingdom.” The interpenetration of Brazilian and Portuguese politics and economy was extensive, and remained so well into the mid-nineteenth century.

My objective here is in a very preliminary way to take a fresh look at what happened during these critical years in a comparative Atlantic context, to suggest some of the theoretical and practical problems concerning the study of the independence of Brazil, and to delineate some key aspects of the international context of Brazilian independence. Finally, I will touch on the social and economic history of this period where the greatest continuities between the colonial

¹ See Antonio Manuel Hespanha, ed., *O Antigo Regime*, vol. 4, *História de Portugal* (8 vols.), ed. José Mattoso. (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1997).

and national periods are claimed in the current literature for Brazil, and the greatest discontinuities seen for Portugal.

I

We come to the study of the establishment of new nations out of old Empires with certain expectations and preconceptions. Primarily we are thinking of political emancipation from colonial status; involved also are assumptions about the democratization of internal politics, or at least their liberalization; thus we expect a defeat of despotism and the emergence of some sort of institutional formula to express the popular will, essential for the legitimacy of any new state. Legitimacy, however, does not depend on internal or domestic factors alone: foreign recognition of the new national status is essential; as is, eventually, reconciliation with the former colonial master (or at least a formal acceptance of separation), usually by means an international treaty. Geopolitical questions, are, therefore, inevitably involved as well as great power politics. The constellation of external forces, their willingness to intervene—or not intervene as the case may be—is perhaps more important than at any other time in a nation’s history. The new nation must also satisfy obligations internationally: contract loans, engage in and finance trade; organize its economic and financial life; sometimes pay indemnities or assume obligations to pay off colonial debts.

Thus, as at few other times in a nation’s history, at the moment of independence fundamental decisions of a *founding* nature are needed. These can involve profound questions about the organization of the social and economic sphere; continuity of property rights and claims; perhaps decisions over the relationship between church and state; as well as institutional decisions over constitutional structures, law courts and public administration; organizational questions over how to set up banks and credit institutions; questions as to how to impose tariffs or negotiate commercial treaties, and how to create a credible currency.

It is the *explicit* nature of these challenges which make such moments a fascinating topic for historical investigations; for once we are not speculating about the connections between perceptions, ideas and actions, but watching the translation of ideas into institutional or social arrangements, and constitutional frameworks. And in all this, as we look back from the vantage point of a century and three quarters, we need to penetrate also the thicket of “invented” national tradition, which is an inevitable component of any national consciousness.

We tend to assume that all these changes are for the better. I mention this only to indicate how subjective our view of national independence and decolonization can be. Rarely, for example, do we see independence as a “bad thing,” as a regression, a triumph of “despotism” over “liberty,” of “slavery” over “freedom,” of an “imposed” regime over a “representative” one, of oligarchy over democracy, of reaction over liberalism. Yet the truth is, that in the case of

Brazil's independence, almost all these charges against the new regime can be made, and indeed they were made at the time.

Brazil, of course, was not alone in confronting such dilemmas. As independent nations emerged in Latin America after three centuries of Iberian domination, the persistence of their colonial heritage was a preeminent issue. Brazil, for example, was at the time of its independence from Portugal already 322 years old; and in the year 2000 its experience as a nation free from formal European domination will still be far shorter than was its colonial life. Yet in Latin America this "colonial persistence" was unlike that inherited by many of the post colonial states that emerged out of the European empires in Asia and Africa during the mid twentieth century. The impact of Spain and Portugal within the Americas had been more disruptive, and hence more permanent than was the impact of the Europeans who imposed themselves, temporarily as it turned out to be, over other ancient societies from the Middle East to China, where populations, religions, social structures, and behavior patterns were never uprooted and destroyed as catastrophically as were those of the ancient civilizations of pre-Colombian America. After the Second World War, particularly where there were no large scale white settler populations to complicate the transition, Africans and Asians achieved independence by negotiating the removal, or by forcibly expelling, a handful of white soldiers, overseers and administrators. In Latin America, it was *precisely* the white soldiers, overseers and administrators who expelled the representatives of the Spanish or Portuguese crowns, while continuing or usurping the overlordship of large non-white, or indigenous populations, or African slaves.

Latin America is thus not fully comprehensible—it seems to me—if seen only within the "Third World" context of the new nations which came into existence as the French, British, and Dutch empires collapsed between 1945 and 1965. In this sense Brazil was indeed a "New World in the tropics," as Gilberto Freyre once put it, a settler society that had become rooted in the New World and where the population—whether of European, African, or indigenous origin—was sufficiently intertwined to be not easily re-segregated. The extraordinary depth of the impact of Spanish and Portuguese colonization in the Western Hemisphere was such that post colonial nation building became intrinsically an incestuous affair.

II

In effect Brazil in the 1820s was negotiating its relationship to the outside world within the heavy constraints imposed on it by history, geography and its colonial experience. Until recently, the interpretation of this critical period has been strongly influenced by dependency theory. But dependency theory tended to homogenize the Latin American experience into a worldwide explanatory model. Strongly influenced by the African and Asian decolonization movements of the twentieth century, this approach often denied autonomy to the social, political and economic forces at play in the so-called "peripheral" regions. Above all, it discouraged an investigation of the process, causes, and dynamics of change, and it gave short shrift to institutional innovations or ideas. This created an enormous impediment in understanding the

case of colonial Latin America, the control of which had been an essential component of the building of European world domination in the first place, something John H. Parry, in his marvelous book on *The establishment of the European hegemony, 1415-1715*, demonstrated so skillful and succinctly.² Dependency theory, on the other hand, tended to sublimate any investigation of how European preeminence was achieved, and confined explanations of major systemic changes (the ending of feudalism, the rise of capitalism, and so on) to the *internal* dynamics of European societies, an unconscious Eurocentrism which I must say in my view still seems to dominate much economic history writing to this day.

Brazilian scholars were much enamored of this theoretical construct, and played an important role in its evolution. Emília Viotti da Costa and Fernando Novais, for example, both placed the emergence of Brazil as an independent nation within the context of the shift from mercantile to industrial capitalism in Europe, and the consequent changes this provoked in the international economic system. Historians who were not part of a Marxist tradition also took a similar view: Robinson and Gallagher, for instance, saw the independence of the Latin American nations as the classic example of the shift from formal to informal imperialism.³

Yet British interests in Portugal and Brazil were not monolithic. Two distinct lobbies in Britain had been engaged in the economic relations with Portugal in the century prior to Brazilian independence: the wine import merchants and the woolen textile exporters, both of which had a very strong interest in *sustaining* the old favorable tariff regimes and privileged extraterritorial rights in Portugal which aided their enterprises and which dated back to the mid seventeenth century. On the other hand, the new and aggressively expansionist Lancashire cotton textile manufacturers were interested in free trade, and until 1818 drew a large percentage of their raw material from Northeast Brazil, Pernambuco in particular. They had no interest whatsoever in perpetuating Portugal's political and economic dominion over Brazil, especially since Portugal had developed its own cotton textile mills and retained Brazil as a privileged and closed market.

It is important, therefore, not to overemphasize the power of purely economic forces, or to assume the inevitability of these broader shifts. The cotton textile interest in Britain and their lobbyists in Parliament certainly believed that their comparative advantage would allow their products to break through the old mercantilist tariff barriers of the Iberian powers, but they were also keen to see these barriers removed by government intervention. In this respect the continuity is notable in the mutually supporting strands of commercial, military, and diplomatic pressure the British exercised over Portugal and its overseas possessions. In the mid seventeenth century, the new Bragança monarch had been extremely reluctant to agree to the Cromwellian treaty in the 1640s which provided British recognition for a country recently

² John H. Parry, *The Establishment of the European Hegemony, 1415-1715; Trade and Exploration in the Age of the Renaissance*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1961).

³ Robinson R. H. and J. Gallagher, "The Imperialism of Free Trade." *Economic History Review*, Vol I, second series (1953): 1-15.

emancipated from Spanish domination in return for major commercial concessions. It was the threat of Admiral Blake's guns in the Tagus estuary that finally persuaded the king of Portugal to ratify the accord on May 1, 1656. The British fleet which escorted the Prince Regent Dom João, his mad mother, Queen Maria, and the court to Brazil in 1807 was also riding at anchor off the Lisbon waterfront to intimidate as well as to offer assistance. Had the Portuguese court *not* left for Brazil as planned, and instead succumbed to French demands that the royal family remain in Lisbon, there was no doubt that the British would have bombarded Lisbon, as they had only recently bombarded Copenhagen, and destroyed or seized the Portuguese ships in the harbor. Admiral Sir Sidney Smith had clear instructions from London that on *no* account was the Portuguese fleet to be allowed to fall to the French.

The precociousness of these unequal treaties between Britain and Portugal recalled for C. R. Boxer, that rare historian who knew both Portugal and China intimately, the later unequal treaties of Nanking of the late 1840s, the heyday, it should be remembered, of the so-called age of "free trade imperialism" and "informal" empire. Portugal had in this respect been a forerunner of a relationship which imposed severe conditionalities over another nation's sovereignty without the direct exercise of sovereign power. As with China at mid-century, the British did not always produce what overseas customers wanted, and in these circumstances the British rarely hesitated to impose trade by military and political power, or to seek special concessions, even if this made them, as in the China trade, purveyors of narcotics.

The opening of the ports of Brazil in 1808 to the trade of "all friendly nations" was the first action taken by the newly arrived Portuguese Court after its escape from Lisbon. It was an action that ended over three centuries of mercantilistic practice where Lisbon had been the obligatory entrepôt for Brazilian colonial products. While this action had ideological motivations to be sure, that is it was justified in terms of the superiority of free trade over protectionism, it was also an entirely pragmatic measure, made inevitable by the French determination to incorporate Portugal's ports within the continental blockade against Britain. And as far as the British traders in Brazil were concerned, many potential European competitors, not the least of which, the French, were temporarily out of the picture. In these favorable circumstances, the British merchants quickly saturated the consumer market in Brazil, where the majority of the population was composed of slaves, not a free population of middle class consumers.

Only two years later, not surprisingly, the British were agitating again for special privileges. The Anglo-Brazilian Treaty of 1810 imposed on the Portuguese higher tariffs in Brazil than it did on the British, an imposition that dealt a severe blow to the already fragile chances of reconciling Portugal to Brazil's new status as center of the monarchy. It is ironic to note that the first and second partial editions of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* published in Brazil appeared in 1811 and 1812 in Rio de Janeiro and Bahia respectively, as if to remind the British (and certainly to remind the Brazilians) that hegemonic powers do not always practice what they preach. In effect, as in the mid seventeenth century, Portugal and later Brazil were

obliged to balance the need for autonomy against the need for political and military support, especially in their relations with Great Britain, the dominant naval and economic power.

But how far did these circumstances lead Brazil to sacrifice its own economic prospects, and fall into a neo colonial relationship as the *dependentists* argue? Or were those who had promoted the transfer of the seat of the Portuguese government to Brazil in 1807, on the grounds that it would make the Bragança regime less susceptible to European pressure, right or wrong in the light of subsequent experience?

Commercial pressure from the British was certainly counterproductive at times as far as Britain's broader political interests were concerned, especially if these ran headlong into powerful vested interests combined with strong nationalist sentiments. The British found this out the hard way in Buenos Aires in 1806 when their intervention force had been ignominiously defeated. This *should* also have been the lesson of the American Revolution. And it was a lesson Napoleonic France discovered with catastrophic consequences as a result of intervention in Haiti. In Brazil this was especially the case in the matter of the slave trade. Despite treaty commitments between Brazil and Britain to abolish the slave trade dating from the 1810 treaty, the influence of landed and slave trading interests in Brazil was strong enough to counteract over forty years of British gunboat diplomacy during the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴

Here again the economic influence of Britain was often at cross purposes with Britain's political, diplomatic, and philanthropic initiatives. As Sidney Mintz has argued, the industrial revolution in Britain (and in the northern states of North America, for that matter) helped revive slavery throughout the Americas by creating a vast new urban consumer market for products such as coffee and sugar, as well as by creating the enormous demand for raw cotton to supply the textile mills of both old and new England. And it was not only merchants in Rio de Janeiro or Bahia who were financing the illegal slave trade or the legal commerce in cotton, coffee, and sugar that depended on slave labor. It was also the merchants of New York and Baltimore, and London and Liverpool. And it was ships of the North Americans that carried a large percentage of the slaves that were imported illegally into the Brazilian empire as late as the 1850s.⁵ Henry Wise, U.S. Minister to Brazil, told Secretary John C. Calhoun in 1843: "without the aid of our citizens and our flag, the African slave trade could not be carried out [in Brazil] with success at all."⁶

⁴ "Treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation, between His Britannic Majesty and His Royal Highness the Prince Regent of Portugal; signed at Rio de Janeiro, the 19th of February, 1810," in A. R. Walford, *The British Factory in Lisbon & its Closing Stages Ensuing Upon the Treaty of 1810*, (Lisbon: Instituto Britânico em Portugal, 1940), 163-184.

⁵ See Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).

⁶ Robert H. Holden and Eric Zolov, ed., *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 30.

Ironically, the resistance to anti-slavery and abolitionist arguments in Brazil was probably weakest in the independence period than at any time before or after. In the south of the country, especially in São Paulo, a critical region in terms of organized political opposition to Lisbon in the 1820s. Large scale coffee production only developed after national independence was achieved; in the decade 1821-30 coffee accounted for a mere 19% of total exports for Brazil, but over the next two decades this share had risen to well over sixty percent. The expansion of the coffee market in Europe, and most especially in North America, led to a massive renewal in slave imports into Rio de Janeiro, and the expansion of slavery into the Paraíba valley and beyond into São Paulo. Economic historians have argued that the main reason for Brazil's slow overall economic development in the nineteenth-century lay precisely in the country's agricultural sector, where low income and inelastic supply, intrinsic to slavery, constrained the pace of development in the rest of the economy.⁷

This was precisely what José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, who more than any individual helped shape the newly independent Brazilian state in the 1820s, had foreseen when warning his contemporaries about the long term negative effects, for Brazil's future well-being, of the failure to deal with the question of slavery or to promote agrarian reform or to integrate the Indian population at the onset of national independence, and which led to his courageous but in the end hopeless appeals to his fellow Brazilians in his manifesto in favor of abolition of slavery, his proposals for agrarian reform, and his plan for the "civilization of the wild Indians of Brazil" as he put it, all written during 1822: "Experience and reason demonstrate that richness rules where there is liberty and justice, and not where lives captivity and corruption," José Bonifácio argued, "If this evil persists we will not grow. Gentlemen, continually our domestic enemies grow; and they have nothing to lose; except above all to hope for a revolution such as that of Santo Domingo." In other words, to hope for a new Haitian revolution in Brazil.⁸

III

The ambiguity of Brazil's passage from colony to imperial center to independent nation is best exemplified on the one hand by the aborted plans for reform put forward by José Bonifácio, and on other in the enigmatic Dom Pedro, first emperor of Brazil after the break from

⁷ Leff, Nathaniel H., *Underdevelopment and Development in Brazil*, 2 vols., (London and Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1982), and Stephen Haber and Herbert S. Klein, "The Economic Consequences of Brazilian Independence," in *How Latin America Fell Behind: Essays in the Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico, 1800-1914*, ed. Stephen Haber. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 243-259.

⁸ "Apontamentos sôbre as sesmarias do Brasil," in *Obras científicas, políticas e sociais de José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, coligidas e reproduzidas por Edgard de Cerqueira Falção*, vol. 2, 20-21. (Santos: 1965); "Representação à Assembléia Geral Constituinte e Legislativa do Império do Brasil sobre a Escravatura por José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva. Typographie de Firmin Didot, 1825, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, 115-158; "Apontamentos para a Civilização do Indios Bravos do Império do Brasil, *ibid.*, vol. 3, 103-114. See also *Projetos para o Brasil*, org. Miriam Dolhnikoff. (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998) and the commentary by Carlos Guilherme Mota in *Introdução ao Brasil*, ed. Lourenço Dantas Mota. (São Paulo: SENAC, 1999), 77-95.

Portugal. Bonifácio was one of the most remarkable figures in any of the independence movements in the Americas—a man in scientific achievement who matched and in some cases surpassed the remarkable generation of leaders who had made the American revolution. Closer in personality and fame to a Franklin than to a provincial landlord like Thomas Jefferson, Bonifácio was born and raised in Santos. He had been a brilliant student at the reformed University of Coimbra in Portugal and arrived in Paris in 1790 as a post-graduate student supported by a grant from the Portuguese government brokered by the Secretary of the new Lisbon Academy of Sciences, the Abbé Corrêa da Serra. He had witnessed the most turbulent stages of the French Revolution in person and then continued his studies in Germany and Scandinavia. During the French invasion of Portugal he had led the students of Coimbra in guerrilla warfare behind the enemies lines. He had been a high government functionary, intendent of mines and metals; his scientific papers had appeared in the most prestigious journals; he was a corresponding member of Europe's great scientific bodies; and he went on to succeed Corrêa da Serra as Secretary of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences. He was very much part of the remarkable late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century circum Atlantic community of scholars and political reformers. But his experience made him a firm believer in the role of the state in the tradition of enlightened reformers in Southern and Eastern Europe; he saw order as the handmaiden of progress. He was a constitutionalist, but not a democrat; more Burkian than Jeffersonian.

Dom Pedro was a populist, a classic man on horseback, the handsome son of grotesquely ugly and dysfunctional parents, and heir to a dynasty so inbred as to verge at times on lunacy. He was a temporary ruler who within a decade had abdicated in order to return to Europe to fight a civil war in Portugal against his brother to insure that his daughter become Queen of Portugal. Loyal father and chronic philanderer; savant and ignoramus; courageous soldier and clumsy politician; Brazilian and Portuguese; heir and usurper; he was a monarch too “liberal” for the Holy Alliance in Europe, but too “despotic” for many Brazilians, not least the would-be republicans of Pernambuco who rose up twice in a decade to repudiate him. His role as portrayed in Portuguese history is that of the upholder of “constitutionalism,” an image totally incompatible with his image in Brazilian history, where he was the ruler who rejected Brazil's first constitution as too liberal and exiled José Bonifácio and his brothers, the leaders of the small minority of Brazilians who wanted fundamental reform and who had provided the direction during the most critical moments of the transition to independence

It is therefore vital to recognize that on 7th September 1822, when Dom Pedro stopped at the banks of the Ipiranga river near São Paulo, suffering from a bout of diarrhea, and cried out it was to be “Independence or Death”; the young prince and heir apparent to the Portuguese throne was exaggerating. The problem in September 1822 was certainly not “death,” and only indirectly “independence.” His pithy declaration was, and soon became, very much part of a spurious myth of the origins of Brazilian nationality. Yet the reality was that Brazil had been independent for all intents and purposes since 1808; since December 16, 1815, Brazil had been a kingdom coequal with Portugal. But John Quincy Adams, the U.S. Secretary of State, was not

alone in quite misunderstanding the occasion and its significance when he told Ceasar Rodney on his appointment as U.S. Minister to Buenos Aires that “in Brazil ... an empire probably as ephemeral as that of Mexico at our door has taken the place of Portugal.” What was really at stake in 1822 was a question of monarchy, stability, continuity, and territorial integrity. It was in *these* interests that Dom Pedro was preempting revolution in 1822 at Ipiranga, not promoting it.

The avoidance of revolution in Brazil in fact was also a paramount concern in Europe. Henry Chamberlain, British minister in Rio de Janeiro in 1824, was ever concerned that the social turmoil under the surface in Brazil and evident on the streets and in the constituent assembly in Rio would, as he put it:

excite ... such a flame ... as it might not be possible to control, and would perhaps end in the destruction of the imperial government and the division of the country into a variety of small independent republican states, wretched in themselves and the cause of wretchedness amongst their neighbours, such as we have witnessed in the Spanish American colonies in our neighbourhood.⁹

Portugal’s major European allies—both Britain as well as the members of the Holy Alliance—were quite clear on this point, as George Canning, the British Foreign Secretary who had previously served as British envoy in Lisbon, wrote very succinctly in 1824:

The only question is whether Brazil, independent of Portugal, shall be a monarchy or a Republic. ... The conservation of monarchy in one part of America is an object of vital importance to the Old World.¹⁰

The government in London, since the establishment of the Portuguese Court in Rio in 1808, in fact had always made a clear distinction between the circumstances of Brazil and Spanish America. Canning emphasized the contrast between the Brazilian situation and that of Spanish America writing to Sir Charles Stuart in 1825:

Let it be recollected that the difference between the relation of Portugal to Brazil and that of Spain to her Americas is in nothing more than this—that all the Spanish colonies have gained in despite of the mother country, but that Brazil has been raised to the state of a sister kingdom, instead of colonial dependency, by the repeated and advised acts of policy of the common sovereign of Portugal and Brazil. Up to the period of the emigration of the Royal Family to Brazil, Brazil was as strictly a colony as Mexico or Peru or Buenos Aires. From that period began a series of relaxations first, and afterwards of concessions of privileges, which gradually exalted the condition of Brazil and almost inverted its relations with Portugal so as to make, during the residence of His Most Faithful Majesty in Brazil, the mother country in fact a Dependency.¹¹

⁹ Henry Chamberlain to George Canning (secret), Rio de Janeiro, May 15, 1824, in Charles K. Webster, ed., *Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812-1830: Select Documents from the Foreign Office Archives*, vol. 1, 240-241. (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1938).

¹⁰ George Canning to Henry Chamberlain (secret and confidential), London, January 9, 1824, in Webster, vol. 1, 236.

¹¹ George Canning to Sir Charles Stuart, London, March 14, 1825, in Webster, vol. 1, 262-272, citation from

Dom João, the prince regent, soon to be Dom João VI on the death of his demented mother in 1816, had said as much to Thomas Sumpter Jr., the U.S. envoy in Rio de Janeiro in 1815, “The times have been difficult but now the independence of Brazil is fixed.”¹²

The important point about Brazil, therefore, is that it became economically and politically emancipated between 1808 and 1820 while acting as the center of the Luso-Brazilian Empire. It became “independent” in 1822 only *after* the experience as an “imperial center”—to which subjects of the Portuguese monarchy in Europe, Africa, and Asia looked for leadership—had failed. This unusual circumstance explains why in 1820 it was Portugal that declared “independence” *from* Brazil, and only afterwards, in 1822, that Brazil declared its “independence” from Portugal. The “Manifesto of the Portuguese Nation to the sovereigns and peoples of Europe,” which was issued by the rebels in Oporto in 1820, reads very much like other such declarations of independence from colonial status and contained the same complaints; the only difference was this manifesto came from rebels in a European city, not rebels across the Atlantic in a colonial port city. It declared,

The Portuguese are beginning to lose the hope of the unique resource and the only means of salvation that remains to them in midst of ruin which has almost consumed their dear homeland. The idea of *the status of a colony to which Portugal in effect is reduced*, afflicts deeply all those citizens who still conserve a sentiment of national dignity. Justice is administered from Brazil to the loyal people in Europe, that is to say at a vast distance ... with excessive expense and delay... [italics added]¹³

IV

But if the “anti-colonial” revolution occurred in Oporto not in Rio de Janeiro, the interesting questions from the Brazilian perspective are: Was the will for independence in Brazil sufficiently strong to have achieved this outcome if the liberal revolution had not occurred in Oporto in 1820, if the Portuguese Cortes once convened had not forced the king to return to Europe; was the anti-monarchist sentiment within Brazil strong enough to have provoked a republican movement, such as those in North America and in much of Spanish America which rejected both monarchy and European rule?

These questions were not only theoretical—republicanism after all had been the central ideological strand in the thinking of the Minas conspirators in 1788-89; the Bahian plotters in

265-266.

¹² Thomas Sumpter Jr., U.S. Minister to the Portuguese Court in Brazil, to James Monroe, Secretary of State, Rio de Janeiro, 29 December, 1815, in William R. Manning, ed., *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin American Nations*, 3 Vols., (New York: Oxford University Press; 1925-[1926]), II, 696-700.

¹³ *Manifeste de la Nation Portugaise aux Souverains e aux Peuples de l'Europe*. (Porto: 1820); author's personal collection.

1798, and in 1817 in Pernambuco as well as again in the 1820s. The problem for Brazil was that all these republican movements were, or at least could be interpreted as, regionalist revolts against centralized authority and as a threat to the territorial integrity of Portuguese-speaking America. The centralized monarchical system had established a very strong institutional presence in Brazil since 1808. In fact, it had instituted in Rio de Janeiro almost all of the founding institutions, usually the task of a post colonial government: a centralized administration and bureaucracy; superior law courts; a public library and an academy of fine arts; a school of medicine and law; a national press and national bank; and a military academy. This government had negotiated international treaties, sent envoys abroad and received envoys in return, had married the heir presumptive of the head of state to an Austrian princess, and had defeated a regionalist revolt and conducted an expansionist war on the northern and southern frontiers. There was never a question therefore of legitimacy. As George Canning told the British Cabinet in November 1822:

to refuse to recognize Brazil would not be, as it has hitherto been in the case of the Spanish colonies, an act merely negative. For we *have* with Brazil established relations, regulated commercial intercourse, and agencies if not actually political, affording channels of political correspondence. We cannot withdraw our consuls from Brazil. It is obvious that we *must* continue to cultivate the commercial relations of that country. [emphasis in original]¹⁴

This would all be a critical heritage for the regime Dom Pedro was to head as first Emperor of Brazil, as well as contributing to his ability to protect his new empire from Republican challenge. So the answer to these questions is probably “no.” In other words, the social base for radical change was stronger and opposition to it weaker in Portugal in 1820, than was the case in Brazil, and the reason for this is that in all ways continuity was greater in Brazil than it was in Portugal during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Since 1808 Portugal had not only lost its role as the seat of the monarchy, but it had been subject to invasion and devastating warfare; it had mobilized a population against a common enemy; it had seen its commerce and industry destroyed and its profitable colonial markets lost; and the British, forgetting the cardinal rule of “informal” empire, had subjected a proud and nationalist population to the direct and insensitive rule by a British general.

In Brazil, moreover, threats to social order since the 1790s had been strongly associated with republicanism and this, in moments of crisis, tended to produce greater coalescence within the elite, especially among property owners whose ownership of human property, moreover, was far more widespread than was the ownership of land. Here the fear of contagion from the Haitian slave revolt was ever present in their minds, and “liberty,” if it also implied “equality,” was bound to raise fundamental questions about a society ordered by racial as much as by social hierarchy. We are, needless to say, talking in this context of “perceptions.” I am not implying that social conflicts can or should only be seen in terms of slavery—obviously social structure

¹⁴ Canning’s memorandum for the Cabinet, November 15, 1822, in Webster, II, 393-398.

and the interaction of class and race was much more complex and multifaceted in Brazil than this. And it should also be emphasized that the slave revolt in Haiti had dramatic impact not only because the balance of social and racial tensions within Brazil and elsewhere in the Americas made its example frightening to whites, but because of its *intrinsic* importance. The Haitian example was *qualitatively* of much greater significance than previous slave rebellions. First, because it was successful, the only successful slave uprising in modern history. Secondly, because Haiti sustained its independence—at vast cost to be sure—but a fact which made Haiti the Western Hemisphere’s second independent nation after the United States.¹⁵

V

Yet again, Brazil presents ambiguities. One possible response to the perceived threat from below was to eliminate slavery, encourage European immigration, and substitute free for slave labor. This is what José Bonifácio wanted. But in Brazil the fear of slave revolt was not a sufficient argument of itself to force the Brazilian power brokers to defy their immediate material interests and embrace the reform of the system of production based on slave labor. In fact, slavery had the opposite effect: it cemented a unity around the defense of the institution. The *paulista* Diogo Antonio Feijó, priest, *fazendeiro*, deputy to the Lisbon Cortes from São Paulo, member of the General Assembly after Independence, Minister of Justice and regent in the 1830s, put the case quite succinctly:

Slavery which certainly brings many ills to civilization, also creates within Brazilians a sense of independence, of sovereignty, that the observer can also see in free men whatever their status, profession or fortune.¹⁶

In this, the parallels with the attitudes towards slavery of the Virginian patriots who had played so large a role in the making of the United States are striking, even if the Brazilians in the 1820s were constructing a new national state, in an international environment where reaction had triumphed in Europe, and the consequences of slave revolution in the Caribbean were more stark and menacing than anything North Americans had to worry about in 1776. Jefferson in particular found much to admire in the Brazilian experience. In 1821 Prince Metternich, much like Dr. Henry Kissinger in the 1970s, believed strongly in the principle of counterrevolutionary interventionism. Kissinger’s predecessors as Secretary of State in the early nineteenth century thought just the opposite, shocked as they had been by the experiences of the War of 1812 and the vulnerability of the young republic to European attack it had revealed. Fearful that Metternich’s Holy Alliance intended to bring Spain’s rebellious colonies in the New World

¹⁵ See the important observations on this point by Eugene D. Genovese in his *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the New World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 92-98. Kenneth Maxwell, “The Generation of the 1790s and the Idea of a Luso-Brazilian Empire,” in *The Colonial Roots of Modern Brazil*, ed. Dauril Alden (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 107-144.

¹⁶ Cited by Miriam Dohlnikoff, “A Civilização Contra a Sociedade,” *Rumos*, Vol 1, no. 3 (São Paulo: May/June 1999): 11-19.

back into the European fold after the Austrian Army had suppressed republican revolutions in Naples and the Piedmont, and France had restored the execrable Bourbon Ferdinand VII to the throne in Madrid, President Monroe in late 1823 announced his famous doctrine in a message to the Congress, and it would be the guiding principle of U.S. policy in the Western Hemisphere for the rest of the century.

But the Monroe Doctrine had been foreshadowed some years before in conversations between Jefferson and the envoy of the court of Rio de Janeiro in Washington, the Abbé Corrêa da Serra, and as originally conceived it joined Brazil and the United States together in an “American system,” where the two nations would act collaboratively to keep Europe at bay. Jefferson had sustained a long interest in Brazil since the time he was U.S. envoy in Paris. In 1786 he had held a secret meeting in Nimes with a young Brazilian revolutionary who went by the pseudonym “Vendek,” a student from Rio de Janeiro who was then studying at the University of Montpellier. Later, he had met the Abbé Corrêa while presiding officer of the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia. Corrêa da Serra, a brilliant Portuguese naturalist and founding Secretary of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences, had come to the United States in 1812 and was perceived as a man of great learning and was avidly sought after by the leaders of the new republic. Francis Gilmore, who traveled with the Abbé Corrêa back to Philadelphia from Monticello in 1813, described him as: “... the most extraordinary man now living. He has read, seen, understands, and remembers everything obtained from books or what he has learned from travel, observation, and the conversations of learned men. He is a member of every philosophical society in the world and he knows every distinguished man living.”¹⁷ Jefferson was equally impressed.

The Abbé became a regular visitor to Monticello, where to this day his ground floor bedroom is called the “Abbé’s Room”. In their discussions at Monticello, Jefferson and the Abbé Corrêa first traced their “American system.” Jefferson wrote of the Abbé in 1820:

From many conversations with him, I hope he sees and will promote in his new situation [the Abbé had been recalled to Rio de Janeiro and Jefferson assumed he would become the Minister of External Affairs] the advantages of a cordial fraternization among all the American nations, and the importance of their coalescing in an American system of policy, totally independent of and unconnected with that of Europe. The day is not distant, when we may formally require a meridian partition through the ocean which separates the two Hemispheres, on the hither side of which no European gun shall ever be heard, nor an American on the other; and when during the rage of the eternal wars of Europe, the lion and the lamb within our regions, shall lie down together in peace. The excess of the population of Europe and want of room, render war, in their opinion necessary to keep down that excess of numbers. Here room is abundant, population scanty, and peace the necessary means for producing men, to whom the redundant soil is

¹⁷ Richard Beale Davis, *The Abbé Corrêa in America 1812-1820: The Contribution of the Diplomat and the Natural Philosopher to the Foundations of our National Life*, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, Vol. 45, part 2, (1955). Reprinted with introduction by Gordon S. Wood and afterword by León Bourdon, (Providence, R.I.: Gávea Brown, 1993).

offering the means of life and happiness. The principals of society there and here are radically different, and I hope no American patriot will ever lose sight of the essential policy of interdicting in the seas and territories of both Americas, the ferocious and sanguinary contests of Europe. I wish to see this coalition begun. I am earnest for an agreement with the maritime powers of Europe, assigning them the task of keeping down the piracies of their seas and the cannibalisms of the African coasts, and to us, the suppression of the same enormities within our own seas, and for this purpose I should rejoice to see the fleets of Brazil and the United States riding together as brethren of the same family and pursuing the same object.¹⁸

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams was less sympathetic. It was he, of course, not Monroe or Jefferson, who was to have the most influence over U.S. foreign policy toward the newly independent nations of South America, both as Secretary of State between 1817 and 1825 and as President from 1825 to 1829. John Quincy Adams saw the merits of separation from Europe, but he did not think this implied any mutual identity between the United States and the new nations to its South. He saw South Americans as irredeemably corrupted by the Roman Catholic religion, Iberian tradition, and the tropical climate. The U.S. commercial agent in Rio de Janeiro was reporting to him that the Portuguese monarchy in Brazil had “degenerated into complete effeminacy and voluptuousness. Hardly a worse state of society can be supposed to exist anywhere, than this country. Where the climate also excites to every sort of depravation and delinquency.” John Quincy Adams, the dour New Englander from Massachusetts who described himself as a man of “cold and austere” temperament, was not amused by such an untidy and unpromising neighbor. [Such views I notice are still popular in some quarters around Harvard Yard.]¹⁹

Adams reluctantly acquiesced in President Monroe’s desire in mid 1822 to proceed with U.S. recognition of Mexico, Chile, the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata, and the Brazilian Empire. But he wanted as little to do with them as possible. He, like Jefferson, knew the Abbé Corrêa well, and thought him a man of “extensive general literature, of profound science, of brilliant wit, and of inexhaustible powers of conversation.” But Adams also found Corrêa “quick, sensitive, fractious, hasty and when excited obstinate.” He ridiculed the Abbé Corrêa’s [and Thomas Jefferson’s] suggestion that Brazil and the United States create an “American system.” With the disdain and arrogance that was also to characterize U.S. attitudes toward Latin America for the next century, John Quincy Adams wrote: “As to an American system we have it; we constitute the whole of it.”²⁰

VI

¹⁸ Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 4 August 1820, in Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 Vols., (Washington, D.C.: 1903-1904), Vol. 15, 262-264.

¹⁹ See Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 4-9, and *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, comprising portions from his diary from 1795 to 1848*, 12 Vols., ed. Charles Francis Adams. (Philadelphia: 1874-1877).

²⁰ Cited by Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 10-11.

In Brazil, however, the internal threat to stability and territorial integrity was not only a question of unfounded or unrealized fears, such a threat had come to fruition prior to 1822 in one very important test case: Pernambuco. The prices of sugar and cotton especially had reached an all-time high during the Napoleonic wars, but with peace in 1815 both suffered collapse. Pernambucan cotton especially faced massive competition in Europe from the United States. In 1817 the regionalist antagonisms in Pernambuco towards the central government resurfaced, and this time conspiracy broke into open revolt. Early in the year a republic was proclaimed in Recife and agents sent abroad to gain international recognition.

The seventy-four day Republic of Pernambuco revealed ambiguities and divisions among the would-be opponents of the status quo, no less acute than among its adherents. The enthusiastic support from the great proprietors and slave holders and their hatred for the Portuguese merchants was a predominant and unifying factor among the separatists. But they could agree on little else. Fears and antagonisms were immediately brought into the open by the “Organic Law” promulgated by the provisional government as a draft constitution. The municipal councils of the hinterland balked at two sections in the organic law in particular, one promising religious toleration, and the other “equality of rights.” Inevitably the latter raised the issue of slavery. The provisional government explained that property, even that “most repugnant to the ideal of justice is sacred.” No less offensive to the great landowners was the mobilization of the *povo*, small sharecroppers and squatters, the marginally employed free population, and artisans, whose ideas, fraternization and occasional interracial solidarity offended their sense of status, and challenged their local authority. Rent by internal factionalism, blockaded by sea, and with a land army approaching from Bahia, Recife capitulated.²¹

There had been no response to Pernambuco's requests for international recognition. The provisional government had expected support from the United States and France—Jefferson's friend, the Abbé Corrêa, had worked mightily in Washington to thwart Pernambuco's representatives and frustrate the merchants of Baltimore who were helping them—but it was Britain that really mattered.²² British influence over the central government in Rio de Janeiro, however, offered much greater opportunities than did the encouragement of separatist revolts. London had no strong material interests at stake in Pernambuco by 1817, for raw cotton could be obtained in great quantities from the United States and sugar from British islands in the Caribbean. The provisional government of Recife had little to offer that Britain had not gained in 1810. British policy too was strongly influenced by the slave trade. Strong pressure by the British government in 1810 had forced Dom João to promise the gradual abolition of trade “throughout the whole of his dominions.” In 1815, the government in Rio agreed to abandon the trade north of the equator. Neither commitment was entirely satisfactory to Britain as the

²¹ Carlos Guilherme Mota, *Nordeste*, (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1972), and José Honório Rodrigues, *Independência, revolução e contrarrevolução*, 5 Vols., (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria F. Alves Editora, [1975-1976]), and *Revolução de 1817. Documentos Históricos*, 9 Vols., (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional, 1953-1955).

²² León Bourdon, *José Corrêa de Serra: Ambassadeur du Royaume-uni de Portugal et Brésil a Washington 1816-1820*, (Paris: Centre Cultural Português, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1975).

slave trade continued legally below the equator between Portuguese territories in Africa and those in South America. The separation Britain was less reluctant to support was that between Brazil and the Portuguese enclaves in Africa. Until 1820 this intra-imperial trade was a question of internal Luso-Brazilian concern; after 1825, however, this major obstacle to outright interference was removed by the separation of Brazil and Portugal, and British insistence that the African territories remain linked to Lisbon, not to Rio de Janeiro. As independent and sovereign nations, the slave trade between them and South America became internationalized and open to suppression by the British Navy on the high seas.

Yet even the British, who after all did not abolish slavery in their own colonies until the mid 1830s, privately recognized the strength of slave owning interests in Brazil. Henry Chamberlain told George Canning:

There are not ten persons in the whole Empire who consider the trade a crime, or who look at it in any other point of view than one of profit or loss, a mere mercantile speculation to be continued as long as it may be advantageous.²³

José Bonifácio himself saw the Brazilian dilemma with great realism. He told the British envoy Henry Chamberlain in April 1823:

We are fully convinced of the impolicy of the slave trade ... but I must candidly state to you that the abolition cannot be immediate, and I will explain the two principal considerations by which we have been led to this determination. One is economical, the other political.

The former is founded upon the absolute necessity for taking measures to secure an increase of *white* population previous to the abolition, that the ordinary cultivation of the country may go on, for otherwise upon the supply of Negroes ceasing, that cultivation would go backwards and be followed by great distress. ... we shall lose no time in adopting measures for drawing European emigrants hither. As soon as these begin to produce this effect, the necessity for the African supply will gradually diminish, and I hope in a few years a stop will be put to it for ever....

The latter consideration is founded upon political expediency as affecting the popularity, and perhaps even the stability, of the government. The crisis and representations in the trade we might perhaps venture to encounter, but we cannot, without such a degree of risk as no man in their senses think of incurring, attempt at such a moment as the present to propose a measure that would indispose the whole of the population of the interior.... Almost the whole of our agriculture is performed by Negroes and slaves. The whites unfortunately do very little work, and if the landed proprietors were to find their supply of laborers suddenly and wholly cut off, I leave you to judge the effect it would have upon these uninformed and unenlightened class of people. Were the abolition to come upon them before they were prepared for it, the whole country would be convulsed from one end to the other, and there is no calculating the consequences to the Government or to the country itself.

We know that as long as it is carried on and a state of slavery continued in the country, that real sound industry cannot take root, that a vigorous prosperity cannot

²³ Henry Chamberlain to George Canning, Rio de Janeiro, December 31, 1823, in Webster, vol. 1, 232-234, citation from p. 233.

exist, that our population is unsound, and so fully are we persuaded of these truths that were it possible, we would at once abolish both.²⁴

These objections to slavery were not, it must be emphasized, so much the result of “humanitarian” or “philanthropic” sentiment, as they were in Europe, but were more similar to the objections to slavery in the United States in the same period, and were a response to the perception that the racial balance of the population was potentially and dangerously unstable, or would impede the growth of a nation on an European model. Those few who urged eventual emancipation of the slaves, such as José Bonifácio, did so not because of the humanity of slaves, but because they wished to see Brazil europeanized, not only in terms of aspirations, institutions, and national purpose, but also in terms of the composition of its population.

But Bonifácio was in one important respect far more radical than were his North American counterparts, and his attitude reflected a strong current of thinking that had emerged in the eighteenth century, especially during the long rule of the Marquês de Pombal of which Bonifácio was very much an heir. He was skeptical, and explicitly so, about the ability of a society so heterogeneous as that of Brazil, where, as he put it, white proprietors, black slaves, and poor mestizos did not possess a sense of identity that united them. On the contrary, as enemies among themselves, they were more predisposed to conflict than to unity. It was therefore, he believed, necessary to homogenize the population which signified eliminating slavery, integrating the Indians, and encouraging miscegenation between Indians and whites and between whites and blacks. He intended thereby to create a Brazilian “race” composed of mestizos united by a common national identity. As a metallurgist of some fame in Europe, he used a metallurgical analogy for what he envisioned: he sought, he wrote, to “amalgamate so many diverse metals, so that a homogeneous and compact whole might emerge.” Only in this manner would the “sloth and vices” of the whites be eliminated, “we tyrannize the slaves and reduce them to brute animals, and they inoculate us with their immortality and all their vices” was the way he described it. We now know, of course, that Jefferson engaged in his own form of clandestine amalgamation, but this was, as he might have said had he chosen to acknowledge his relationship with Sally Hemings as he did with the Englishwoman Maria Cosway in Paris, an affair of the “heart” not of the “head.” Bonifácio’s was very much a policy of the head. But Bonifácio, the protégée of Jefferson’s friend, the Abbé Corrêa da Serra, was after all with his distinguished reputation and achievements as a natural scientist, the sort of natural philosopher Jefferson aspired to be. And over the question of slavery it was the patriarch of American independence, Thomas Jefferson, who equivocated, not the patriarch of Brazil’s independence, José Bonifácio.

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²⁴ Henry Chamberlain to George Canning (secret), Rio de Janeiro, April 2, 1823, in Webster, vol. 1, 222-223.

²⁵ William Howard Adams, *Thomas Jefferson: the Paris Years*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press: 1997), 207-250; also John Chester Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery*, (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia: 1991).

The ideologues of “free trade” in Brazil also took an essentially racist view. José da Silva Lisboa, who had urged the opening of the Brazilian ports to the Prince Regent in 1808, argued in 1818 that the progress of São Paulo was due “to extraordinary preponderance [there] of the white race.” Rio Grande do Sul, the granary of Brazil as he called it, likewise, had been colonized by “the Portuguese race, and not the Ethiopian population.” Taking the example of Madeira, he asserted that “experience had shown that once the supply of Africans has been cut off, the race does not decrease and decline but becomes better and whiter...” He went on to ask: “Was the best area in America to be populated by the offspring of Africa or of Europe?” To avoid “the horrid spectacle of the catastrophe that reduced the Queen of the Antilles [Haiti, that is] to a Madagascar,” Brazil should be prevented from becoming a “Negroland.” He wished to see the cancer of slavery eliminated from the Rio de la Plata to the Amazon.²⁶

The question of slavery thus raised fundamental questions about the most desirable course for Brazilian development, questions as to the type of society, state, legal system, and government Brazil as an independent state would adopt. But what to do about slavery divided “enlightened” men, and it consolidated the determination of those major commercial and landed interests whose welfare depended on slavery to make sure that the new structures of state power, as well as the new constitutional monarchy, remained firmly wedded to their interests.

In sum, Brazilian intellectuals, traders, and patriots might espouse “liberalism,” but their zeal was strictly limited to a desire for access to markets, protection of property, and guarantees that debts would be paid. And in this centralism, monarchy and continuity were paramount. Brazil’s “patriots” were realists and they could move no further than their base of social support. Those who did so, such as José Bonifácio, were soon jettisoned.

Slavery and industrial capitalism in fact proved highly compatible within the nineteenth century Atlantic system—industrial capitalism thriving on slave-produced cotton and coffee no less than commercial capitalism had thrived on slave-produced sugar. In this context, reformers like José Bonifácio were double victims. Not only did this economic system itself, both domestically and in its Atlantic dimensions, create conditions hostile to his proposal for fundamental reform; he was also a victim of the British policy, the overbearing pressure of which helped to undermine the one administration with any real commitment to the ending of slavery and slave trade. In secret conversations with Henry Chamberlain in April 1823, José Bonifácio warned the British not to push too hard or too soon:

You know how sincerely I detest the Slave Trade, how prejudicial I think it to the country, how very desirous I am for its total cessation, but it cannot be done immediately. The people are not prepared for it and until this has been brought about, it would endanger the existence of the Government if attempted suddenly. This very

²⁶ José da Silva Lisboa, *Memória dos Benefícios Políticos do Governo de El-Rei Nosso Senhor Dom João VI*. (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Régia, 1818), 160-164.

abolition is one of the principle measures I wish to bring before the Assembly without delay, but it requires management, and cannot be hastened...

With regards to Colonies or the Coast of Africa, we want none, nor anywhere else. Brazil is quite large enough and productive enough for us, and we are content with what Providence has given us.

I wish your cruisers would take every slave ship they fall in with at sea. I want to see no more of them, they are the gangrene of our prosperity. The population we want is a white one, and I soon hope to see arrive here from Europe in shoals the poor, the wretched, the industrious; here they will find plenty, with a fine climate; here they will be happy; such are the colonists we want.²⁷

VII

To feed this Atlantic system and to sustain its economic organization of production, however, one thing was clear: Brazil did not need Portugal. The resentments and the financial and economic difficulties which led to the Oporto revolution, the convocation of the Cortes in Lisbon in 1820, and the formulation of a liberal constitution, arose in large part from the loss of Portuguese privileges and monopolies in colonial trade; and once assembled, the measures of the Cortes quickly reflected these imperatives. Not only was Dom João VI forced to return to Lisbon, but the Cortes soon legislated the end to many of the powers that he had granted to his eldest son, Dom Pedro, who had been left in Rio as Regent. Brazilians increasingly saw the measures of the Lisbon Cortes, strongly supported by the hated Portuguese merchants and immigrants in Brazil, as an attempt at “recolonization” which would turn back the clock on the thirteen years during which Rio had been center of government. It was against this background that Dom Pedro defied the instructions of the Cortes to return to Europe, accepted the title “Perpetual Defender of Brazil” from the Municipal Council of Rio de Janeiro in early 1822, and then, on September 7, 1822, made his declaration of “independence” on the outskirts of São Paulo.

The political emancipation of Brazil is thus a long and cumulative process with much continuity retained along the way; 1808, 1816, 1822, even 1831 are all important moments in this gradual assertion of separation and definition of nationhood. The path was not without its arduous moments to be sure. International recognition only came after long negotiation in 1825, and the promise by Brazil to pay a large indemnity to Portugal. War in the south broke out with renewed vigor along the frontier in the Banda Oriental, and was not resolved until the end of the decade with the establishment, under British auspices, of the independent buffer state of Uruguay, establishing a southern boundary less ambitious than that of either colony or united kingdom. Much internal military activity both on land and by sea was necessary to bring about the adherence of Bahia, as well as the far north. Pernambuco again tried to break away in 1824. Administratively, the country was not “Brazilianized” until the end of Dom Pedro’s short reign in 1831. And it was only in the 1840s that the actions of the Duke of Caxias (a man who was,

²⁷ Henry Chamberlain to George Canning (secret), Rio de Janeiro, April 2, 1823, in Webster, vol. 1, 222-223.

ironically, the nephew by marriage of the rich entrepreneur who in 1789 had denounced the republican Minas Conspiracy to the royal authorities) brought to an end regional separatist revolts. Yet by 1858, well into the long reign of Brazil's second emperor Dom Pedro II, the satisfaction with this outcome was well summarized by Domingos Antônio Raiol in his *O Brasil Político*: "How different [we Brazilians are] from other people who inhabit the same South American continent. When we rest, they fight. When we fraternize, they quarrel. A government monarchic, hereditary, is without doubt a true choice, which tames ambitions and because of stability forms a powerful element of order and prosperity."²⁸

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that every attempt to alter the economic organization of labor failed. The alternative model for Brazilian development, in which European immigration and free laborers would replace slavery, was not to be, at least as long as emperors ruled in Rio de Janeiro; and, as a consequence, the slave trade continued until mid-century, slavery until the 1880s. Nor is it surprising that when slavery fell, the monarchy fell with it. In part, at least, because with the emancipation of the slaves, the republican alternative to the monarchy had at long last also been emancipated from the stigma of separatism and social upheaval.

So I hope that by highlighting some of the multiple contexts within which Brazil became an independent nation, I also may have gone some way towards demonstrating why Brazil was different, and why it is high time historians took a fresh look in a comparative framework at this fascinating and complex transition.□

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²⁸ Domingos Antônio Raiol, *O Brasil Político, dedicado ao Excelentíssimo Senhor Bernardo de Souza Franco, Ministro e Secretário dos Negócios da Fazenda*, (Pará: Typographia do Diario do Commercio, 1858).

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