

Report from Rio by Lorenzo Carrasco

Braganças ask return to monarchy

But three different branches of the family claim to be the true royal descendants.

The Brazilian daily *Jornal do Brasil* reported in June that Prince Philippe de Tassa Saxe-Coburgo e Bragança (Thurn und Taxis, in German) is proposing the return of the monarchical system to Brazil, alleging that it is the only political system that could guarantee stability in the country. "It is the most advanced system, portends national stability, and gives greater flexibility to government initiatives," opined the Prince.

Great grandson of the Emperor Peter II, Philippe believes that it will be possible to install a British-styled parliamentary monarchy through the deliberations of the National Constituent Assembly, which will be elected at the end of this year to write a new Brazilian constitution. Philippe and the rest of the royal Bragança family insist that in the Constituent Assembly, "all forms of government should be discussed, and the people should choose the concepts most appropriate to . . . their country."

This latest bit of insanity from the Thurn und Taxis and Bragança families could be dismissed, were it not for the widespread coverage it has received in newspapers like *Jornal do Brasil*, whose editors have perhaps not forgotten their own monarchical origins in the year 1891. In fact, *Jornal do Brasil* was founded with the collaboration, among others, of the Baron Rio Branco, for the purpose of serving as the mouthpiece of the monarchist tendencies that existed at the

birth of the republic. Today, *Jornal do Brasil* is intertwined with the interests of the Bank of Boston, another enemy of the republican system of government, known for its role in drug-money laundering.

Meanwhile, the Baron Rio Branco, founding father of Itamarati (Brazil's foreign relations ministry), defended in his correspondence of that era the idea that "the parliamentary monarchy is a more advanced form of government than a republic, and served less the interests of the Bragança family, than of the nation . . . by making Brazil an exception in America." It was precisely through the creation of Itamarati that the Baron succeeded in prolonging imperial foreign policies, even under the republic.

This fact would be little more than an anecdote of history, were it not for the present-day intrigues of Itamarati, such as were shown during the recent visit of President José Sarney to Portugal. There, under pressure of Itamarati protocol, President Sarney offered a reception which differed little from the monarchist fashion of rendering homage to the Emperor Peter II, as even *Jornal do Brasil* noted. It was perhaps this very detail which resurrected the old illusion of a Brazilian monarchy.

The illusion does not lack advocates, even within government circles. Take the case of Celio Borja, a minister of the Federal Supreme Court. Celio Borja, adviser to President Sar-

ney, last year spread the outrageous proposal that Brazil's credit system be handed over to the foreign banks. At the time he declared: "The Brazilian debt is private. . . . It would be sufficient for the government to let go of *centralization of exchange* to situate the renegotiation of the debt in other terms. Ending the *centralization of exchange* would open up an opportunity for foreign creditors to bring dollars to Brazil. The opening up of strategic sectors such as the financial system and of computer data systems to foreign capital would make the political renegotiation of the foreign debt possible."

The representatives of the Bank of Boston, and of course the editors of *Jornal do Brasil*, fully agree with such a proposal!

The monarchists have their Brazilian Monarchist Party (PMB), with backers in various Brazilian states. Three branches of the Bragança family claim to be legitimate heirs to the non-existent throne of the Brazilian empire. First, the branch of the Vasouras, who have as their pretender Don Luis de Orleans e Bragança, a prominent member of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP), the paramilitary cult whose "political platform" is premised on the return of the traditional monarchy to Brazil. The Vasouras family lives in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The Bragança family lives in Petropolis, and is headed by Peter Gastão de Orleans e Bragança, who administers the inheritance of the Emperor Peter II. A third branch is the already cited Thurn und Taxis, headed by Prince Philippe de Tassa Saxe-Coburgo e Bragança, born in Austria but a nationalized Brazilian and a promoter of the Brazilian Institute of Monarchist Studies of Rio Grande do Sul, in the extreme south of the country.