

Arthur da Silva Bernardes



Biographical Information

Lawyer, born in Viçosa, Minas Gerais, on August 8, 1875, he graduated from the Law School of São Paulo in 1900. He was a collaborator and director of the “A Cidade de Viçosa” newspaper (1903-1905). Elected alderman of Viçosa (MG) - Minas Gerais Republican Party (PRM) from 1905 to 1906, during his last year he was elected as President of the City Council, accumulating the office as mayor. He was elected to the state legislature by the same party (1907-1909), he served two terms in Congress (1909-1910 and 1915-1917). He was nominated secretary of treasury of the state of Minas Gerais (1910-1914), he created the Benefit Fund for State Public Servants in 1912, which 10 years later was transformed into State Public Servants’ Social Security, besides contributing to the creation of the Agricultural Mortgage Bank, which is now the Minas Gerais State Bank. He was president of Minas Gerais (1918-1922). By means of direct election, he became President of the Republic on November 15, 1922. He was elected Senator in 1927 and traveled to Europe the day after he was sworn in due to charges of fraud, only participating of sessions in May of 1929. He was one of the articulators of the Revolution of 1930 in Minas Gerais, becoming one of the leaders in the Constitutional Revolution of 1932; he was arrested and went into exile in Lisbon. He was pardoned in 1934 and was elected to the state legislature. He then became a constitutional and then a federal congressman (1935-1937). With the establishment of the New State (1937), he has his freedom of locomotion restricted to Rio de Janeiro and Viçosa, until he was confined to his farm in the latter city (1939). Leader of the PRM Party (1918-1932), he was also a member of the directing committee of the Nationalistic Social Party (PSN) in 1932, but he ended up returning to his former party, where he was elected as president of honor (1933-1936). He was one of the signatories of the Manifest of Mineiros (Minas Gerais) (1943), and one of the articulators for the candidacy of Brigadier-Major Eduardo Gomes as president of the Republic (1944-1945). In 1945 he became a member of the provisory director committee of the National Democratic Union (UDN), but on that same year he was one of the founders of the Republican Party (PR), becoming its first Chairman. He was one of the chairmen of honor of the Center for Petroleum and National Economy Studies and Defense (1948). He was elected constitutional congressman for the PR of Minas Gerais in 1946, later he was elected federal congressman from 1946 and 1955, when he was reelected but did not participate in the activities, due to his death in Rio de Janeiro, on March 23, 1955.

Presidential Period

The Artur Bernardes administration suffered strong political instabilities generated by the Lieutenants Revolt against the dominating oligarchies and the advance of the labor movement, which made him govern in a permanent state of siege. The fifth candidacy of Borges de Medeiros, leader of the Republican Party of Rio Grande do Sul, for the presidency of the state resulted in a civil war involving the opposition in Rio Grande do Sul. The dissident oligarchy, grouped in the Liberating Alliance, had the federal support for the candidacy of Assis Brasil. Borges de Medeiros, in order to defend his position, organized the Provisory Corps under the command of Flores da Cunha, Oswaldo Aranha and Getúlio Vargas, among others, besides hiring Uruguayan mercenaries. After months of confrontations, an agreement was signed between Borges de Medeiros and Assis Brasil, on December 14, 1923, in which the federal government recognized Borges de Medeiros as president of Rio Grande do Sul, not being permitted a new reelection.

The Lieutenant movement erupted in Rio Grande do Sul in 1923, with the support of the Liberating Alliance, also reaching Santa Catarina and Paraná. The following year, part of the military garrisons of São Paulo joined the movement. After several days of combat, the city of São Paulo was under their control, after governor Carlos Campos ran from the city. The rebellion was planned by servicemen involved in the failed coup of 1922, among them, Lieutenant Eduardo Gomes, one of the survivors of the "Fort 18". Artur Bernardes ordered the bombing of the city, starting on July 11, 1924. The population of São Paulo abandoned the city and the balance of the attack was of 503 dead and approximately 4,800 wounded. Without the means to resist the pressure from the legalist troops, approximately 3,500 insurgents headed towards the Rio Grande do Sul troops, led by Luís Carlos Prestes and Mário Fagundes Varela.

President Artur Bernardes also faced the Prestes Column, formed in 1925, under the command of Lieutenant Luís Carlos Prestes, who traveled the interior of the country for two years trying to get the population to revolt against the government and the dominating oligarchies.

Source: National Archive – Information Center of Presidential Collections

Summary

- | Ninth Period of the Republican Government - 15.11.1922 to 15.11.1926
- | Born: Viçosa - MG, on 08.08.1875
- | Died: Rio de Janeiro - RJ, on 23.03.1955
- | Profession: Lawyer
- | In Office: 15.11.1922 to 15.11.1926 (04y)
- | Age when taking office: 47 years old
- | Type of election: direct

! Votes received: 466,877

! Inauguration: on 15.11.1922, during solemn session of Congress, presided by Senator Antônio Francisco de Azeredo

! Observation: He took office legally despite the state of siege