

José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia



Passion or Profession: Founder, Dictator

Period: 1766–1840

José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia studied theology and practiced law before becoming involved in international politics. He helped push for independence from Spain and soon after became dictator of Paraguay. His leadership was unusual in that his strict tactics showed almost no concern for human rights and yet helped the economy, stabilized the judicial system, and improved the standard of living for many.