SHADOW ARMIES: GHOST TROOPS IN THE FARROUPILHA, 1835-45*

EXÉRCITOS DAS SOMBRAS: TROPAS FANTASMAS NA FARROUPILHA, 1835-45

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ABSTRACT

Armed conflict and politics preceding and during the *farroupilha* (1835-45), a Republican secessionist movement on Brazil's southern frontier, were rife with *chefes*, as they preferred to say, rather than the rapacious caudillos of their South American neighbors. These heroic men on horseback changed sides with seeming ease, and yet, somehow, always had enough troops to go after their enemies. However, these battlefield armies were substantially smaller than those found in the official and personal documents of the day. Throughout the *farroupilha*, forced conscription, patriotic appeals, and the power of kinship proved the most reliable ways to increase troop size. Many of the well-promoted encounters of what were primarily irregular forces were relatively trifling, although their reports were always epic. Inflating military egos went along with inflating army numbers. Canny *chefes* developed other means to present more strength: principally by looking to small military pacts (*convênios*), after which, to armed asylum seekers (*emigrados*), and in the publication and presentation of projected force tables. At times, the *chefes* caused great political discomfort among friend and foe alike by their incomprehensible actions, deceptions, and intrigues, which surprisingly were taken in stride. What seemed as erratic and boastful caudillo behavior, which emerged after the post-independence period in the Platine Basin, where government structures were weak and ineffectual, was in effect a response to the difficulties in putting together and maintaining horse armies in thinly populated regions.

Keywords: Military Pacts. Banda Oriental. Libertos. Seekers.

RESUMO

Os conflitos armados e a política anterior e durante a Revolução Farroupilha (1835-45), movimento secessionista republicano na fronteira sul do Brasil, estavam repletos de chefes, como eles preferiam dizer, ao invés dos caudilhos vorazes de seus vizinhos sul-americanos. Esses homens heroicos a cavalo trocavam de lado com aparente facilidade e, no entanto, de alguma forma, sempre tinham tropas suficientes para perseguir seus inimigos. No entanto, esses exércitos de campo de batalha eram substancialmente menores do que os encontrados nos documentos oficiais e pessoais da época. Em toda a Revolução Farroupilha, o alistamento forçado, os apelos patrióticos e o poder do parentesco se mostraram os meios mais confiáveis para aumentar o tamanho das tropas. Muitos dos bem propagandeados encontros,

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que eram principalmente de forças irregulares, eram relativamente insignificantes, embora seus relatos fossem sempre épicos. A inflação dos egos militares acompanhou a inflação dos números do exército. Os chefes astutos desenvolveram outros meios para apresentar mais força: principalmente olhando para pequenos pactos militares (convênios), após os quais, para requerentes de asilo armados (emigrados), e com a publicação e apresentação de tabelas de força projetadas. Às vezes, os chefes causavam grande desconforto político entre amigos e inimigos por suas ações incompreensíveis, artifícios e intrigas, que surpreendentemente eram tomadas com calma. O que parecia um comportamento caudilho errático e presunçoso, que surgiu após o período pós-independência na Bacia Platina, onde as estruturas governamentais eram fracas e ineficazes, foi na verdade uma resposta às dificuldades de montar e manter exércitos de cavalos em regiões pouco povoadas.

Palavras-chave: *Convênios. Farroupilha. Banda Oriental. Libertos. Emigrados.*

I

The *farroupilha* has produced a large library of original scholarship and archival compilations of documentary evidence, making it, perhaps, one of the most written about events in Brazilian history. Civil wars seem to have this effect. For example, at a minimum, there are more than 50,000 books alone on the American Civil War (McPHERSON, 1988, p. ix). In the case of the *farroupilha*, the revolution and creation of a new republican state continue to provoke debate and study, resulting in a remarkable number of dissertations, essays, and books. For *riograndenses,* the *farroupilha* is a foundational story, one which provides a direct connection to today's gaucho citizens' distinctive pride and self-image, undergirded by its defining trait, an independent spirit as different from the rest of the country as is its climate. In today's Rio Grande do Sul, there is an annual celebration, a weeklong event of folkloric and historic traditions with the *farroupilha* as its central theme, which renews the ideas of exceptionalism born in the "heroic decade" (OLIVEN, 1996). Of the many appealing narratives emerging out of the *farroupilha*, exceptionalism resonates more than any other: it was less bloody than the race-tinged revolts elsewhere during the Regency Period; in fact, some still hold to its abolitionist sentiments; the rebels, noble republican warriors imbued with the individualism of frontier ranching life, were not conquered, per se, but met as equals to conclude a peace in order to face a new growing and common threat, Juan Manuel de Rosas' Argentina; the smooth restoration of the province back into the Empire was overseen by ex-*farrapo* notables and the Empire's victorious commander, the *barão de* Caxias, surprisingly the former rebels' first choice as provincial president; and finally, the *farrapos* had achieved independence in their minds, only to relinquish what they had won in order to serve, once again, as the tip of the lance against Brazil's historic enemies.

The *Arquivo do Rio Grande do Sul* and its published primary documents from the Varela Collection are the essential threads that bind together every story, and the reverential care of its documents are testimonies in and of themselves of the *farroupilha's* cultural and historical prominence (SILVA, 2019). Of all the new studies and new methods of analysis applied to the *farroupilha*, the older works of Alfredo Varela still stand out. No one yet has delved into the war's murkier episodes better than he in his six volume monumental study, *História da grande revolucão* (1933), and his two two-volume works: *Duas Grandes Intrigas* (1919) and *Politica Brasileira* (1929). They are dense and highly partisan, extolling the *farrapo* patriots as well as the very land itself. His intimate topographic knowledge in setting the scene, present in almost every one of his paragraphs, sets Varela apart from any other *riograndense* historian. Events are laid out in over-the-top language, interspersed with classical references and pointed criticisms of those in the struggle who failed to meet his moral standards. Despite all this and more, his works for investigators are rich in detail and interpretation.

Varela constructed his unabashed separatist viewpoint on the private collection of José Domingos de Almeida, who served as the rebel treasury minister, wielding power to control and administer sources of income from land and cattle. Always strapped for funds, his ministry collected just enough to keep the little republic alive, making him, in Varela's eyes, the pride of the revolution, as important as Bento Gonçalves da Silva's nobility of purpose; and Varela was quick to debate those who were devotional to the Empire. After the war, Almeida added documents and recollections from old friends to his own archive, hoping to write a true insider's history of the war, but shied away, afraid of puncturing reputations (MIRANDA, 2016, p.166). He was never ready to divulge all, for unmasking former comrades could implicate his own behavior. Varela continued Almeida's pursuit of documents, ready to tell a sweeping tale of great men. His style, allusions, and presentation reflected the sprawling ambitious set of revolutionaries who bought into the proposition of separation. In his telling, Varela revealed some of the underbelly of what was going on back then: intrigue, misinformation, and duplicity. Varela understood that much of these subterfuges were essential parts of the revolution's past.

For concise, dispassionate, more recent analyses of *convênios*, the studies of Joana Bosak de Figueiredo (2012) and César A. Barcellos Guazzelli (2005, 2012, 2015) stand out, as do the studies of Mario Barrera (2013) who has entered the complex world of the anti-Rosas alliances of the riverine provinces with *riograndense* factions during this explosive period. In the area of recruitment José Iran Ribeiro (2010, 2011), Luís Augusto Farinatti (2011) and Miqueias H. Mugge ((2018) are essential in the *farroupilha's* be-

fore, during, and aftermath. On the particular question of *liberto* recruitment and participation, Daniela Vallandro de Carvalho (2013) has covered new and important ground. As for the key *chefes* and caudillos there are major biographical gaps. The studies of John Charles Chasteen (1995), Karl Monsa (2012), and Joseph Younger (2011) delve into the behaviors and relationships amongst the *chefes*, lawyers, and merchants across the platine basin. The existence of armed exiles, bandits, mercenaries, and the alliances among *estanceiro* private armies awaits a historian in the vein of Paul J. Vanderwood (1981) who explored the significance of bandits and local authorities in the politics of disorder in 19th century Mexico. Eduardo R. Palermo (2009) and Raúl Fradkin (2011) have begun this exploration.

II

This essay explores the problems of raising troops in one contiguous region, Uruguay and the southernmost Brazilian province of Rio Grande do Sul, which were experiencing concurrent revolts in the 1830s and 1840s. Each depended upon the other in the sparsely settled grasslands, but were also in competition with one another for limited resources, in particular for what seemed a dwindling, finite number of troops. As Uruguay and the Republic of Rio Grande do Sul were new nations with strong militia traditions, they felt a repugnance for building professional standing armies; and even if they wanted to, they would not be adequate to provide security or hold territory won. In the decades before the *farroupilha*, stretching back into the late 18th and early part of the 19th centuries, *riograndenses* fought as militiamen and guerillas on the southern frontiers and were, at times, absorbed into the *Luso*-Brazilian regular armies of the day as light cavalry regiments. When victorious, they were awarded land grants and administrative support from Lisbon, and then Rio, to bolster their expansionist desires, benefiting them as well as safeguarding national ambitions. Out of this *estância* expansion, mobile militias and private armies were the rule when colonial regular forces were experiencing the lulls of peace.

At the time of Brazilian Independence, Rio asserted its claim to the Cisplatine, only to lose it in the 1825-1828 war against Argentina, which led to years of instability and conflict in what was the new nation of Uruguay (AXT, 2008). *Riograndenses* were firsthand witnesses and reluctant participants in this war in which a small number of determined Uruguayan guerillas could, with outside help, in this case from Argentina, determine their own destiny. Bento Gonçalves da Silva had taken a leaf from the Uruguayan notebook of Juan Antonio de Lavalleja, the nationalist Oriental of the "immortal 33," to use later in his attempt to create an autonomous Rio Grande

do Sul. The winds of sedition in his relationship with Lavalleja in the early 1830s had led to his appearance before the Court in Rio; instead of being upbraided, Bento Gonçalves returned home with honors. Placating the frontier commander of the Jaguarão demonstrated Rio's reliance on these volatile *chefes:* Rio would be malleable if there were to be another southern rising (BRASIL, 1887, p.201- 216; VARELA, 1919, v.2, p.398). Not long after, in September of 1835, Bento Gonçalves marched on and took the provincial capital of Pôrto Alegre with his National Guard troops. The *farroupilha* had begun. In the battlefield of geopolitics, Rio Grande do Sul against the Brazilian monarchy was hardly, at first glance, a fair fight. But despite the province's small population, it loomed large in Brazil's calculations where its *chefes* and cavalry had played critical historical roles in the drama of foreign Imperial wars and moving southern frontiers.

Riograndense chefes displayed several contradictions within their small rural societies and into their satellite properties beyond the frontier, where defining the lines between heroes and rogues were difficult. The two Bentos, Gonçalves and Ribeiro, both commanders of the frontier, had contrasting and opposed purposes. Bento Gonçalves, with his radical dreams for a nation, was considered heroic until he was not; and Ribeiro, who thrice switched allegiances, lusted for recognition and power. They would find themselves tangled together in convenience when working, for example, to construct *convênios* and, again, at each other's throats at the battle of Ponche Verde in 1843. As *chefes*, and later generals in the revolution, converting fellow ranchers, for instance, to revolution, was one matter; taking up arms was another. It was a constant challenge in a world that could abruptly change with a major defeat of a caudillo army, upending politics and disrupting cattle commerce, the latter a critical link in determining a war's direction and its short term success. *Campanha* ranches were the primary source of *riograndense* officers and troops, but many were reluctant to let all their sons and *capatazes* go to war. While a number of prominent ranchers were vocal sympathizers, they considered themselves neutrals. Some ranchers with strong ties to the conservative *charqueadores* and the Empire left the province's interior for Uruguay and Pôrto Alegre, and a few found safety in Rio. Victories by forces on either side of the border were short-lived, since the defeated, using minimal resources, could reconstitute themselves to re-enter the fray, and many a caudillo had ties to town merchants; those in Montevideo were especially important, with substantial financial clout (YOUNGER, 2011).

Armies were smaller than advertised, dropping and adding soldiers according to the seasons. Deserters were a common complaint, disappearing like the dust from horses in the sunlight (*AHRGS*, Varela Collection,

hereafter, CV-; CV-10.175-180). Even Caxias, with the war going his way, was alive to such dangers, an important reason why he kept his troops busy and on the move, carting about a small treasury in the *campanha* not just for payouts to the amnestied, but understanding that his soldiers needed compensation (CAXIAS, 1950,p.74).

When a relatively rare *farrapo* major operation was underway, the rebels would try to scoop up whatever men were available. The *chefes* preached republicanism, federalism, and bits of democracy to rally the countryside, while tenaciously holding on to local power, privilege, and military rank. Like their legalist opponents, they feared slave insurrection and anarchy, and maintained a distrust of Spanish-American caudillos, who may have had the look of allies and saviors. These issues tempered any real *farrapo* desire for change, and would be the factors, along with slavery and market concerns, that would draw them back into the Empire. Borderland chaos offered benefits, principally in the expansion of properties; however, *farrapo estanceiros* tried to shape the revolution to family needs first (FRADKIN and RATTO, 2011). Much of revolutionary leadership came from very large, interconnected clans that sought to increase their cattle holdings. Recruitment came from inside their *patrias*, including their own extended families, to which they added *agregados*, itinerant cowboys, freedmen, Native Americans, and others identified as poor and dislocated by war, a shallow pool of recruits both compliant and wild. There was a special eagerness for deserters, since they had some training and, perhaps, had held on to their arms. Slaves were taken off ranches, removed from *charqueadas*, or fled on their own into *farrapo* ranks, but were consciously managed differently from other recruits.

This shifting borderland environment of men, cattle, and horses spawned a military culture susceptible to plots, where rumors ran unchecked. Most inhabitants, other than militant *estanceiros* and their republican town allies, learned to keep society as it was or thought best not to question. In these sparsely populated lands, *chefes* firmed up lesser forces into what seemed like higher numbers, going beyond the usual enlistment and conscription measures, creatively using diplomacy to negotiate *convênios*, armed political refugees, and publicized troop organizational tables, turning them into partisan fantasies. Behind many of these moves was the promise of military alliances with neighboring states experiencing similar recruitment predicaments, as in the neutrality *convênio* with Corrientes, January 1841 (VARELA, 1933, v.5, p. 386). In using these devices, they intentionally left a picture in the minds of their enemies that larger armies were on the way, which had the important additional benefit of perhaps gaining diplomatic recognition. Flattering their own egos, the rebels understood

that as long as Rio believed in their might, they were mighty (CORONATO, 2017). These *convênios* and the other military measures were not shameful or dishonest admissions, but largely another aspect of gaucho guerilla warfare, where there was no disgrace in avoiding enemy contact. For *farrapos*, these were pacts designed to restrain Rio's military advance or possibly put the rebels into a position to extract better peace terms (KRAUSE and SPRECHER, 2006). Their best asset in these military pacts were the fighting *farrapo libertos*, whom they offered up but were reluctant to hand over; by some estimates, close to a thousand fearsome cavalry and infantry, enough firepower to dramatize *farrapo* intentions and strength.

From Rio's viewpoint, Rio Grande do Sul was both controversial and pivotal: *riograndenses* needed to be contained yet supported in their expansionist cattle- raising ways to benefit not only them but greater Brazilian territorial aspirations. The many decades-long push into the Banda Oriental had created a formidable, local, light cavalry that Rio needed to politically satisfy, as well as use as a counterweight to Spanish-American revolutionaries and governments. Geographically positioned on the fault line of Empires, the province was a perfect target for multiple machinations not just from within, but also from several outside points (VARELA, 1919). Its importance both strategically and economically demanded careful handling. But just as in other provinces, Rio Grande do Sul roiled in the 1830s with the politics and divisions of greater Brazil, and was a mark, as well, for ambitious caudillos who sought a chance to boost their reputations by eagerly contacting *riograndenses* not entirely innocent from their own desires (see FARINATTI, 2010; Ribeiro 2010). Once underway, the *farroupilha* entered the turbulent world of Juan Manuel de Rosas' Argentina and were enmeshed in the cunning stratagems of Fructuoso Rivera. The question was not whether the *convênios*, which both the *farrapos* and Rivera sought, would work, but whether they would be worth it. Time and time again, each disappointed the other with their futility, knowing that though troop transfers were at the heart of the deal, neither had sufficient and reliable troops to even loan temporarily.

Before and during the *farroupilha* and the Uruguayan *guerra grande* (1839-1852), the breakaway Brazilian province was the focus of Spanish-American revolutionaries, the important fourth piece in the famous Quadrilateral plans of the nationalist José Gervasio Artigas. His later disciples, including Fructuoso Rivera, carried forward his ideas on forming a confederation of riverine states, Uruguay, Corrientes, and Entre Ríos, to confront not only the growing centralized power of Buenos Aires, but Brazil, too (MESSIAS, 2018). There was an element of truth in those plans; several plots seen in stolen, forged documents purporting secret meetings of those

who actively wanted to detach Rio Grande do Sul from its sister provinces (BRASIL, 1887, [sessão secreta, 1833]). A suspicious but not yet inflamed Rio wanted explanations, though great economic forces at play would keep the breakaway province within the orbit of the Empire. Despite all that the rebels would accomplish in the *farroupilha*, sustaining a long struggle against a larger, better equipped opponent, declaring independence, setting up a small working government, and collaborating in several foreign *convênios*, they were unable to attain recognition or soldiers from the governments in the region, or even persuade a good majority of their own citizenry, for that matter, to follow the tricolors of their revolution. Perhaps just a third of the population, estimated at 150,000 souls, were active on the revolutionaries' side. Varela was more generous. He estimated a provincial population of 185,000, of which 12,000 left for Uruguay, leaving 45,000 within the lagoon zone, and those under *farrapo* rule at 138,000, but not all decided for, in an area a little less than size of France (1933, v.5, p.311).

Fortunately for the secessionists, Brazil in 1835 was paralyzed by the real trials of forging a nation. Rio mostly fretted about the seditious goings on in the south, unable to initially mount a proper response to September 20th worthy of an Empire (VARELA, 1933; 1919; 1929). Over the years, more often when times were less tense than when at war, *riograndenses* maintained surprisingly good collegial cross-border arrangement, their guarantees against what they believed were the autocratic excesses of Rio de Janeiro. Bento Gonçalves was a master of these intricate pacts with the Orientals, which improved his standing with Rio, who feared these closer ties. His 1833-34 *emigrado* associations had convinced him that he could push Rio even further to gain limited autonomy for his province (TJARKS, 1964). Once independent, the *farrapos* aggressively continued to try to strike new bargains with their platine revolutionary brothers.

Before plunging ahead to put down the more serious *farroupilha*, Rio chose to eliminate what were considered lesser regional threats, though the revolution's territorial reach and capabilities contained the seeds of existential loss, a catastrophic end to the very idea of the Brazilian Empire (CORRÊA, 2016). A forced withdrawal from the southern platine river systems would expose Brazil's entire interior to foreign powers. Naturally, the *farrapos* had to be dealt with or the contagion of succession could spread, leaving Brazil without its southern defenses. Conversely, there was a push and pull of fractious elements from the smaller riverine states to fraternize and draw closer, by employing *convênios*, with Rio Grande do Sul. Still, nothing was cut and dry, although an independent Rio Grande do Sul afforded every player, whether in or out of power, an additional layer of territorial protection, especially from Argentina's dictator Rosas, the most threaten-

ing to Brazil and the little *riograndense* republic. Rosas' principal objective in bringing the riverine states to heel opened up options for all, now greatly enhanced by the *farrapo* revolt. Brazil's fratricidal southern conflict turned the *farroupilha* into a chess match of sorts where certain caudillo masters tried to dominate *riograndense chefes* like pawns; however, the rebels' own consuming ambitions vaulted them onto the board. Presenting potential allies with gratuitous advantages, *convênios* were part of their plans (VIDAURRETA, 1987).

The moment seemed riper than ever for the circulation of misinformation in the post turbulent Independence era, with so many entities wishing to be viable states. Much was simply the result of poor lines of communication and a highly partisan press, but other news flows and reports were consciously manipulated; talk of army strength and margins of victory were cause for reportorial exaggeration (VARELA, 1919, v.2, p. 570-1; CV-10.135; 10.299). Caudillos and others were rightly suspicious of the outcomes of battlefield accounts or government bulletins, aware that friends and enemies were good at planting untruths and amplifying outcomes of deaths inflicted and the hordes they were facing. The use of spies reflected the porous nature of recruitment, discipline, and security. Spies sent out to gather intelligence returned with stories, while unverified claims from interrogations and volunteered information were hard to corroborate. Often the colonels would send their spies right into the enemy camp to report back on readiness, troop size, morale, and battle plans. That they could enter undetected and be immediately considered comrades engaged in idle campfire talk were indications not just of security lapses but the ease of coming and going (CV-10.197). Sifting through information took a discerning eye and an honesty to admit the presence of lies, deceit, infiltrators, and traitors (see CV-10.169; 10.197). The *farrapos* had plans to try to overcome some of these issues with a well thought-out provincial postal system, which linked *farrapo campanha* ranches to each other. However, it failed since the ground under their feet moved too quickly. When necessary, *farrapo* operatives were adept in simple encryption methods, but the most sensitive of all were left for face-to-face meetings of the principal actors or communicated by those entrusted with delivering important information (CV-7876). Highly delicate goings-on or instructions were tightly held by a small circle, and when explosive, affecting the standing of extremely prominent persons, as in the Porongos case, their embers soon burnt out (CV-3103).

Before September 20th, local provincial newspapers were extreme and partisan, seeding the ground for later perceptions about particular caudillos or governments. Information vacuums, quickly filled with oppos-

ing narratives and claims of deaths, reprisals, and the like were difficult to deny or substantiate. The vast majority of the province was illiterate, thus highly susceptible to forms of controlled information retold from newspapers, pamphlets, proclamations, or word–of-mouth. Bento Gonçalves and Almeida's famous 1838 Manifesto, for example, was an artful conveyor of inspirational propaganda that justified the rights of free men to revolt. Troops placed their trust in leaders to interpret what was real, but their rights and privileges were few, similar to those of their enemy. The *farrapo* mouthpiece, *O Povo,* admirably served its revolutionary function with judgements on the entire cast of platine actors. To prove *O Povo's* worthiness, editors Almeida and Luigi Rossetti, one of many Italians who assisted the revolution, filled its columns with high level commentaries and authoritative writings of famous world thinkers on best practices and forms of government, which gave additional credence to the revolution's higher principles compared to those of the decadent Empire they were fighting. One is left with the impression, though, that this was done in order to fill blank pages. To dramatize strength and to serve notice that the *farrapos* were far from being defeated, that their armies were not in decline but rather expanding, the rebels resorted to conventional pronouncements and governmental notifications, dutifully reported in *O Povo*. If war was to be waged on a large scale, the *farrapos* needed to provoke near- friends and enemies into believing the republic was a powerful adversary. *Convênios*, courting *emigrados*, and padding troop organizational tables had more potential as military recruitment tools, which were real military objectives, in and of themselves, containing elements of the truth and the realities of various moments; or at the very least deterrents, proving that the *farrapos* belonged to the platine world of new states.

Fabricating strength, though, was always secondary to the rebels' real dependence on Guard formations, on whom the *farrapos* relied on for their supreme self-confidence, knowledge of the terrain, and tactics that exploited their horsemanship (BENTO, 1992). Their cavalry exhibited the primitivism of horse fighters against the Empire's growing edge in manpower and resources. *Farrapo* National Guard cavalry were expert in the tactics of plains warfare, but the Empire had at its disposal the rebels' mirror image, *riograndense* cavalry loyalists. They were more than an imitation. Imperial cavalry composed of *riograndense* riders were coordinating with its vastly superior navy, able to rapidly reach scenes of action by way of steam and flatbed boats; and Brazilian mobilization in guns and men was rapidly building after 1837. In order to counter these advantages, the *farrapos* rationally chose to fight defensively, using space and time as their best allies. When stripped away, rebel military power, however, belonged to the colo-

nels of varied ambitions and revolutionary commitments, not necessarily to the newly established government or to the high command. At critical junctures they sometimes stayed away from calls to join major operations, as Bento Manuel did at Taquarí or Bento Gonçalves at Porongos. Much depended upon their inter-personal relationships, which were one of the reasons why provincial-wide operations were so few. The colonels were fine on their own.

Their war was, above all else, a conflict on and between borders; one in constant motion, always in the hunt for recruits among the dispossessed. Orientals and *riograndense* loyalists, as well, were in the mix for these hinterland deserters, bandits, vagrant cowboys, runaway slaves, Native Americans, and asylum seekers, to add to their citizen-soldiers. *Farrapo* officers vainly tried to hold on to those already attached to the National Guard. Placing their stamp on these elastic horse armies proved difficult for the high command, never mind those encountered by the ministry of war. Unwittingly, the Republic had inherited the obstructionist problems found in the militia and National Guard organizations (Ribeiro, 2010).To keep the colonels in line, as well as to keep them from living off the land, Almeida instituted a wide-spread confiscation program, while José da Silva Brandão tried to bring uniformity and process into military organization and procedures. Although everyone could profit from confiscation, it bred jealousies; and Brandão's rigid designs to bring order to the ranks ran straight into an individualistic gaucho war-making culture. In the end, the two ministers were forced to accept elements of institutionalized chaos and the actions of the Republic's headstrong *estanceiro*-officers (SCHMITT, 2018; BENTO, 1992). Bento Gonçalves, too, time and again, had to ignore or accede to his colonels' complacency, warranting his own indecisive reputation.

With more than half the provincial population outside their direct control, recruiting became much harder, although the rebels still managed to conscript and attract men from the older major populated centers of the lagoon zone. At first, slaves were not on the agenda, knowing how sensitive men were to any whiff of abolition. But soon after their sacking of the principal *charqueada* center of Pelotas and seizing slaves off loyalist ranches, especially those in Uruguay, slaves were beginning to be seen in rebel ranks, first at Seival in September 1836, and then formally admitted into the Republic's 1st line at Piratini in November of the same year. There the rebels had re-established themselves after the disastrous loss at Fanfa, which partially decapitated the leadership. Left in charge of the Republic's military preparations were men who had extensive professional military backgrounds: Brandão, João Manoel de Lima e Silva, and José Mariano de Mattos, all outsiders, born in other provinces. Almeida, originally from Mi-

nas, held a militia title, too, but primarily served as the Republic's first treasury minister, developing steadier sources of finances to support *farrapo* armies in the field.

The *farrapos* assembled cavalry armies in the range of 3,000 to 3,500 troops during major operations. When first organized in November of 1836, *farrapo* armed strength was around 2,400 to 2,500 with a good chance of reaching 3,000 (CV-10.350). Most often they relied on smaller units and patrols in fast hit and run attacks (VARELA at times counted upwards of 4,500 VARELA, 1933, v. 5, p. 306; GUAZZELI, private communication believes considerably lower in the 2,500 range). In the war's last phase, under the *duque* de Caxias, Imperial forces eventually rose to an impressive 12,000 soldiers, about half of Brazil's entire national army, testimony to the *farroupilha*'s importance, while the rebel army continued to suffer losses (ARARIPE, 1986). Next door were 23,000 Uruguayan combatants and outsiders who had joined the *guerra grande* (BARRERA, 2017). Every able-bodied male between settled land and the hinterlands had become fair game for army recruiters. With men at a premium there was a measure of brutality and depravity in assembling troops. Officers were forced to modify their contempt for conscripts, for once issued their mounts, a good number were likely to take off (CV-10.310-311). Resisters and deserters, if they were not ex-slaves, were treated rather well, and indiscriminate killings, rare (CV-10.205). There existed the notion that most men had a price in coin or well--being, which could turn them to one side or the other (See BARRERA, 2015 on the question of the art of violence in the Spanish-American provinces during the *guerra grande*).

To their credit, the ministries under Almeida, Mattos, Brandão, and a few others kept the colonels mostly satisfied and, importantly, apart from one another in order for the war to go on. As important as they were in their ministerial roles, the colonels would never have allowed a professional army to become the political instrument of Mattos, Almeida, Lima e Silva and Brandão, nor would they flood their ranks with Black troops. The absorption of confiscated slaves into the ranks and economy was a major issue everyone understood and avoided. Within the bounds of the confiscation program, unwritten restraints held *estanceiros* from creating unmanageable conditions which in the foreseeable future could lead to reprisals. When it came to the disposition of confiscated slaves, the needs of the *estanceiro*-soldiers paramount. Deprived of the protection of the law and citizenship, the *liberto* situation was conditional, harsh, dehumanizing and subject to their *farrapo* officers who feared the popular mobilization of armed and trained, politicized Blacks. By one respected colonel's count, the *farrapos* resisted signing up an additional 6,000 slaves they possessed.

(PAZ, 2015; PORTINHO, 1990, p.37). Numbers of this magnitude had the potential to radically change the war's course, but the *estanceiro*-soldiers kept a lid on accepting them as revolutionary comrades.

Certainly Mattos and Lima e Silva, the creators of the two Black brigades, were the leading advocates for more Black units. On this issue, the *farrapos* showed they could all fight on the same side, yet still fight amongst themselves. This aspect of the business of war offended Brandão and Bento Gonçalves, who saw the undeniable military value of the *libertos;* nevertheless, they bore the responsibility when it was so badly mismanaged and countermanded by those who ostensibly reported to them. Prized as fighters, although not recognized publically as such, the *libertos* were becoming indispensable diplomatic assets. Because rebel army recruitment was so haphazard and uneven, it never reached desired, maximum numbers; and, the *libertos* remained about a third of all forces. Importantly, unlike the National Guard cavalry, which generally fought seasonally and had easy furloughs, the two Black brigades were in service year round. *Estanceiro*-soldiers were afraid, then, that if the *liberto* numbers increased, their power would be even more difficult to curb, straining internal racial relationships and exacting a high price on their personal fortunes. *Estanceiros* never gave up on all the dangers inherent in slavery now exacerbated by war. Moreover, they had examples, reported in *O Povo*, of the bloody racial reckonings going on in the Northeast, a situation they found appalling.

Considered by the Empire the most fanatical of the *farrapo* ideologues, Mattos knew his best bargaining chips in any negotiations were his *liberto* soldiers. Their temporary transfer to the riverine states, implied in the offensive-defensive Cangüé alliance of 1838, would be codified at San Fructuoso in 1841. Immediately controversial, the *libertos* were a uniquely designed expeditionary force, a source both of strain and hope. A seasoned *farrapo*, Mattos knew deliverance would still come from the southeast. Cangüé, though, had addressed critical issues of mutual importance: hot pursuit across borders, and the elimination and the disarmament of *emigrados*, parts of the larger agreement, which pointed to reciprocal support and qualified recognition. Both parties wanted to contain or control spillover violence, yet realized that unrest, at times, actually was beneficial (VARELA, 1933, v.5, p.173). Better than anyone, Rivera had mastered the art of uncertainty, while protecting his flanks. At the time of Cangüé, a Rivera emissary was headed for Rio, looking for money. Hardly transparent, Rivera's double dealing was rebuffed, but itchy diplomats and governments savored his inventiveness, ready, at least, to listen and sometimes recompense (VIDAURRETA, 1987, p. 435). An unstable borderland was a vital source of troops, a place to remold bandits, deserters, runaways, *emigrados*, and others into their ranks. Insuf-

ficient will and avarice on Rivera's part, along with accumulated distrust on both sides, destroyed Cangüé's implementation, but it was an outline for the next *convênio,* again mostly directed by Mattos.

Mattos used the *libertos* as bait, but there was also an element of moral compatibility in his approach. Politically and philosophically, he aligned with Uruguayan republican progressivism in supporting fuller Black social and military participation to the point, later, of proposing emancipation for all *riograndense* slaves. The *libertos* were key, in his thinking, to securing not only *riograndense* independence, but insuring Rivera's dominance in Uruguay which, perhaps, would win the Oriental's gratitude. Mattos, though, had always distrusted him. His and the *farrapos'* extreme dislike of Rivera was reinforced after Cangüé, when the Oriental failed to follow through on his commitments. In 1841 the troop loans were explicitly stated, a more powerful instrument of violence. For Mattos, unlike many of his patriotic comrades, there was little downside in re-engaging Rivera's help. Mattos easily saw that in Rivera's world nothing was black or white; if you did not stand fully with him and his *colorados,* it did not necessarily mean you stood against him. Total opposition to Rosas, of course, was different. Militarily, an intertwined Uruguay and Rio Grande do Sul, on the surface, seemed a win-win, but the *farrapo* rural elite expressed an inescapable awareness that Uruguayan emancipation, long linked to caudillo recruitment, exponentially changed the odds if the *liberto* formations were charging around on the other side of their borders. Slavery had to remain untouchable (CV-10.349; LEITMAN, 1985).

To Brandão, these small, unstable, Spanish-American entities would benefit, at least on paper, from military pacts. As the war was going poorly, Brandão thought unwinnable, he appointed another *farrapo* luminary in April of 1839, Antônio Manuel Correira da Câmara, selected for his knowledge of platine diplomacy, to search for what were illusive *convênios;* to find a solution, any solution, to improve *farrapo* standing, or maybe give them a little more time (CV-3229; 3230). He was the Republic's best publicized secret, lobbying for diplomatic roles in Paraguay and Corrientes (VARELA, 1933, v.4, p.353). Da Câmara's background and career accomplishments surpassed those of Mattos, who was a talented and decorated soldier in his own right and who, one day, would become, oddly enough, the Brazilian Empire's minister of war. Da Câmara was haughty in the powers of his own career as a world traveler, participant in the Napoleonic wars, independent Brazil's first envoy to Buenos Aires, and especially greeted in his native province of Rio Grande do Sul with great deference. All this was most extraordinary, as he was the son of the Rio Pardo frontier (CÂMARA, 1964, 1970). Ponte Ribeiro, Brazil's premier diplomatic thinker, praised da

Câmara a true "visionary" (SOUZA, p. 399, n.263). Brandão's selection of da Câmara came in the middle, and headlong into, Mattos' second go-round with Rivera. Da Câmara had given much thought and was not shy on advice on how to handle the wily Oriental (CV-3229). But the reality was clear: the riverine states were riven with their own internal problems (VARELA, 1933, v. 4, p. 462-2). This could be said for the *farrapos*, too, clearly seen in the ministerial disarray of sending several emissaries into the field without explicit instructions. Mattos' prior and current experiences and having the ear of Bento Gonçalves led to his success at San Fructuoso. The agreement's outcome was just a larger illusion than Cangüé. Rather than bringing about *farrapo* independence through *liberto* military exploits in foreign lands, as called for in San Fructuoso, it sowed the seeds of the republic's and the *libertos*' destruction.

The *farrapos* were becoming cannier at exploiting these *convênios* as a cheap tool of statecraft to advance their interests, which, at a minimum, aimed to deter Rio. Especially welcoming was the chance to partner within the bounds of political causes dear to their own, the idea of autonomous republicanism. As Rio Grande do Sul struggled to achieve relevance, it found itself caught in a dilemma to assert itself as an independent state among rivals and potential friends while trying to find alliances in order to stand on its own. If the terms of San Fructuoso were carried out, the *farrapos* would have projected real force into foreign affairs, assisting Rivera militarily in Entre Ríos; but, unlike Cangüé, they would be the signatory that failed to deliver. Objectively, San Fructuoso was more potent than Cangüé, a calibrated escalation meant to convince Rio and Buenos Aires, to a lesser extent, that meddling into Rio Grande do Sul's affairs would come at a high price, the unleashing of its *libertos*.

In the short term, knowledge of San Fructuoso's existence raised rebel spirits, but only stiffened Rio's resolve (Guazzelli, 2005; CORONATO, 2017). Theoretically, the *convênios* were far more effective for defense than offense, arousing more intrigue than warfare, since there was minimal intention to fulfill the offensive clauses, which called for troop deployments and exchanges. These kinds of negotiations were a never-ending, cat-and-mouse game played by small entities to confound larger enemies. They allowed vulnerable states to plant landscapes of fear, permitting *farrapos* to recover and then regroup to fight at a later date. Within the platine, *convênios* were unlikely to upend the contours of the established diplomatic order; yet, conceivably, had a cumulative effect tempering or even delaying larger invasions. The constant jockeying for favors enhanced individual ambitions, whereas stability curtailed the drive for profits in land and cattle, and plugged entry points into wider regional caudillo politics.

Unlike Cangüé, the *farrapos* had taken the lead to drive the negotiations for the San Fructuoso treaty, this time explicitly offering up *liberto* troop loans to Rivera. San Fructuoso spelled out the not insignificant numbers to be levied to Rivera: 200 cavalry and 500 infantry. In reality, what was a scare tactic shook not just the borderlands, but the corridors of power in Rio. Mattos and Bento Gonçalves may have been sincere about sending the *libertos* into the near- abroad, but the *estanceiro* officer class rejected their deployment on two counts: first, the loss of control over the *libertos* and, by extension, the loosening of the bonds of slavery; and second, extending too much power to an unreliable Rivera. To assure Rivera and demonstrate to Rio their intentions, Bento Gonçalves started to assemble troops (VARELA, 1933, v.5 p.384-6; 448; CV-570). At the highest levels, the Brazilian government responded by developing contingency plans to contain the *liberto* threat that imperiled Brazilian interests in the region. However, in the end, their plan to dissuade Rio backfired, making the Empire and Caxias more resolute; uncompromising when it came to the *libertos* and the war, yet more open and forgiving to *farrapo* officers.

Upping the ante after learning its contents, Rio's Minister of War José Clemente Pereira identified the San Fructuoso *libertos* as slaves, a total of a thousand *"organizados e agguerridos."* In highly confidential letters circulating in the Rosas camp, the *riograndense* troop numbers for the Entre Ríos expeditionary force had risen to 2,000 (BARRERA, 2013, p 85). Heading this planned expeditionary force into Entre Ríos was one of the best rebel fighters, Antônio de Souza Netto, a close confidant of Bento Gonçalves and an *estanceiro* with extensive properties and slaves in the Tacuarembó. It was fair to assume that Mattos and Bento Gonçalves believed San Fructuoso would lead to other pacts with Corrientes, Entre Ríos, and Santa Fe (FIGUEIRDO, GUAZZELLI, 2017). Dangling the *libertos* was implicit in any future pacts, as it was at Cangüé (VARELA, 1933, v.5, p.354). San Fructusoso stunned Rio's highest officials with its news. Classified reports indicated Rivera's intention to take the Island of Martin Garcia with Black soldiers, expanding the war deep into Argentine territory. So dangerous was this troop transfer that it brought Rosas' envoy into talks with Foreign Affairs Minister Aureliano de Sousa e Oliveira Coutinho, which nearly ended in a treaty for the two enemy powers to unite against the combined rising threat of Rivera and the *farrapos* in the La Plata. Calmer voices about *farrapo* intentions and realities were drowned out (LEITMAN, 1977, p.514-515). The legalist governor of Rio Grande do Sul believed the *farrapos* were using threats such as these to provide cover for their limitations, correctly coming to the conclusion that Bento Gonçalves would never voluntarily diminish his forces. Still, it was easier to believe otherwise. Reports on *libertos*

deserting ranks *en masse* proved untrue for the moment (LEITMAN, 1977).

José Clemente asked his *Conselho de Estado* to provide advice on how the *libertos* were to be dealt with during and after pacification, fearing these *libertos* could easily involve Brazil in a war with Uruguay, since it was extremely likely *"... os escravos armados, procurem reunir-se ao General Rivera."* (GUAZZELLI, 2005). He highlighted several important realities: that the *escravos*, as he called them, were politicized; that Rivera's recent abolition-related recruitment policies were especially attractive to ex-slaves who were fighting to secure their freedom; and that *farrapo* promises of conditional freedom and white officer command would be insufficient to keep them in check. Instead of saving the Republic, San Fructuoso redirected the war towards Caxias' campaign of constant military pressure, amnesty, and monetary rewards, while all the time undercutting *liberto* strength.

Caxias never believed that the *farrapos* were entirely free from Rivera's web, which had ensnared the *libertos*. Caxias, upon entering the *campanha*, felt no need to explain himself in rounding up *libertos* and placing them in irons. His intentions and instructions were clear (LEITMAN, 2018). Certainly, he had been made aware of the history of *liberto* military exploits and activities when he began his operations. Anyone in the higher circles of government and the army would have known of the brief rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil, brought about by San Fructuoso. And there were more disturbing links. Back in 1841, a large contingent of 100 Black infantry deserted *en masse* into Serro Largo, swallowed up into Rivera's ranks, dispelling the notion that men without horses were less likely to flee service, and confirmed the inability of the *farrapos* to control their armed slaves (CV- 1736; 2016; 5411). Caxias certainly would have been briefed about such a mass desertion of *libertos*, but was not necessarily knowledgeable of the particulars of the July 1841 Durazno *convênio* that called for their repatriation (LEITMAN, 1985 p. 514-15). But now, they were Rivera's men, and more could follow. Then again at the ill-fated conference of the riverine states at Paysandú, (1842) Bento Gonçalves, in an observer's role, offered to contribute 700 of his infantry, more than the number embodied in the San Fructuoso accord; yet again, a threat intended for Rio's consumption, since he did not have anywhere near this number (VARELA, 1933, v. 5, p. 66, 406-7). The most recent of the *convênios*, Cuareim, in March 1844, spoke volumes about Black insurrection, if only seen in the presence of the *farrapos*' principal delegate Daniel Gomes de Freitas, a Bahian and former minister of war of the spectacular *sabinada* slave insurrection, especially close to general Netto, the most recalcitrant of rebel officers (LEITMAN, 2021). Caxias had more than an inkling of this last *convênio* of Black dangers, which he had penetrated.

Caxias would be proven correct about the existence of Cuareim, or perhaps even another agreement carrying similar clauses regarding *libertos,* which were later confirmed in the *farrapo* documents recovered at Porongos (LEITMAN, 2018; CÂMARA, 1970, v.2, p.531; CORONATO, 2017, p. 238). In his eyes, the *libertos* were the core of the rebel army and a lifeline to Uruguay; ghosts who were alive. He knew this as a military man, as did Rio, that acceding to rebel peace demands to bestow Imperial *alforrias* to secessionist slaves was the most dangerous precedent for a slaveocracy. For the most part, *riograndenses* were in agreement at the war's end on eliminating any *liberto* threat, and desired a return to normalcy when it came to the institution of slavery. After all, it was the very basis of their economy; and without slavery, expansion into the better Uruguayan grasslands would be imperiled. As the *libertos* had grown in importance within the deteriorating rebel armies, the *estanceiro*-soldiers' mind-set easily paralleled that of Caxias. Their Black comrades had become expendable.

Disorder existed everywhere in the Platine, where armies alone were unable to contain its spread. *Convênios,* the stuff of weak, internal allegiances, served as mechanisms for cross-border social control, temporarily helpful, but insufficient in preventing chaos. Despite what appeared to be a range of opportunities, the *farrapos* never struck any durable alliances with established nation states. Institutional failures, caudillo rivalries, and, most importantly, the lack of large dominant armies kept the situation fluid, forcing the *farrapos* to make these small, tenuous agreements, which materially did not affect their survival; however, the little *convênios* in the short term were successful in constructing images of future dangers. The attention paid to the *libertos* in the *convênios* lodged in Rio's mind, regenerating and mutating into policies and actions, which targeted them for dispersion and destruction, and accelerated the entire pacification process. The very idea of these *convênios,* with their projection of *libertos* militarily engaged across frontiers, was frightening and not easily dismissed. (GUAZZELLI, 2005; LEITMAN, 2018, 2021).

Certainly, Brandão, Mattos, Bento Gonçalves and da Câmara understood that ties were much easier to achieve on a one-to-one diplomatic basis than the grander *artiguista* idea surrounding the creation of a federated Mesopotamian state which required higher levels of cooperation and the ceding of certain powers (CV-3229). Despite their relationships, needs, and political stance, the *farrapos* were not inclined to surrender their independence since that implied a negotiated halt to expansionism. When they insisted that Rivera acknowledge their nationhood to trigger the 1841 *convênio,* he declined. He was savvy enough to know that the *farrapos* would never relinquish their *libertos*. He, too, had little leverage to influence *farra-*

po decisions, never more evident than after his coming catastrophic Arroyo Grande loss in 1842. Once again, he took what remained from his broken army into the *farrapo* war zone. Only the comfort of time- honored sanctuaries were available; and, as important as they were in recharging caudillo comebacks, they were no substitute for an effective, working *convênio* that promised reliable sources of funds, supplies, and the option of borrowing trained, well-armed men. Maybe, there was too much profit in endemic borderland conflict to make frontiers more permanent or in accepting the bidding of regional caudillos, which would reduce the *chefes*' control over smaller, less wealthy lands (VARELA, 1933, 5, p.339, n.133; YOUNGER, 2011; CADY, 1969). True, the *farrapos* were accommodating with their cross- border neighbors; still, *riograndenses* were considered expansionists despite their complaints about Rio's poor record on achieving favorable *riograndense* frontiers. Actually, the turmoil helped *riograndenses* acquire additional ranches in the northern Uruguayan departments, where they already were dominant. Spanish- American caudillos, sensitive to this reach when they were not in the business of selling lands to them, reacted to events much like the *farrapos,* rather than in the development of precise, honorable agreements. Adhering to treaty clauses with aggressive cattle and land-hungry trespassers were dangerous propositions.

Along with the other institutionalists, Brandão, Almeida and Mattos saw the revolution in decline before the *estanceiro*-soldiers did, which led to increasingly impulsive attempts to find ways out. This was a lens into the expansive open-ended *farrapo* approach to diplomacy, one more firmly based upon supposed past friendships than with ideology, pushed by desperation. While the rebels opened fragile lines of communication with several caudillos and nascent entities, their main focus was to resuscitate and expand upon Cangüé, which meant dealing again with Rivera. It was always Rivera. In this critical period the *farrapo* government sent out emissaries to Corrientes, Entre Ríos, and into the maze of intrigues in the bustling commercial ports of Montevideo and Buenos Aires. Some of these quasi-diplomats were noted military men, such as Bento Manuel Ribeiro, his son Sebastião, and others, including Italian commercial agents who had revolutionary bonds to the Brazilian insurrectionists (VARELA, 1933, v.4, p.463-4,514; CV-8033). Outwardly, the *farrapos* looked to harness the nationalistic winds blowing across Europe and Latin America, at least borrowing the language of the new revolutions, but the countervailing currents of *riograndense* regionalism dominated the conversation (VARELA, 1919, v.2, p.578-9, n.42). Apparently several important legalists, too, who disagreed with *farrapo* interpretations of republicanism were ready to step in to establish independence and republicanism. The *farroupilha* remained

centered on the colonels' homelands, where their capacity to raise troops was the greatest (VARELA, 1933, v.5, p.232). Bento Manuel, in negotiating a private land deal while on a critical diplomatic mission for the *farrapo* government, said it best in a moment of honesty: "*Estes tolos* [including Bento Gonçalves] *cuidam que eu vou trabalhar por elles, porem eu vou trabalhar para mim*"(VARELA, 1933, v.4, 484-85].

The making of accords in times of war called for a rough calculus that young nations made in which one faction was determined to be more strategically vital than another. In dire straits, responding to factionalism defeats, territorial loss, and internal rivalries, Brandão rationalized that any signing was a deterrent to Rio's aggression. The *estanceiro*-soldiers less interested with these larger state issues were more concerned about cattle territory slipping away. Whether or not Montevideo recognized the Republic of Rio Grande do Sul, there was no way to escape its stranglehold on rebel commerce. Da Câmara understood this dependency, proposing to his leadership the benefits of acquiring and developing another port between Montevideo and the frontier. But the cattle trade to Montevideo's *saladeros* was too well established, and its merchants too rich, to permit competition. Spanish-Americans were not particularly anxious to help liberate their Brazilian-American republican brothers, which would upset their current cozy commercial ties; whereas, an independent Rio Grande do Sul, in control of its own ports and *charqueadas,* would again emerge as a more strengthened rival to be dreaded; more so, if they negotiating a more equitable commercial relationship with Rio (CV- 3229; 3237).

No matter how many *convênios* were considered, and the few signed, they were no remedy for being landlocked; a *campanha*-based state without revenue producing ports and resources, except for cattle. As unfavorable as trade was with Montevidean merchants, it kept the revolution alive. The *farrapos* laid siege to Pôrto Alegre three times, and failed to retake Rio Grande and Pelotas. A breakout expeditionary attack into Santa Catarina ended in a long retreat south (1839-40). Having their strength undermined externally, as well as from within their own leadership, the *farrapos* could do little after 1843 to check Caxias' relentless advance. They remained straddled between the São Gonçalo defensive front and the frontier, finding themselves positioned into ever tighter spaces. They had lost much of their initial advantages in mobility, which earlier had translated into the long-range lethality that had made them famous. Stringing together game- changing battlefield victories were, of course, a good antidote in solidifying independence, but, except for the monumental Imperial defeat at Rio Pardo, the *farrapos* failed to muster a sequence of consequential victories.

The *campanha* and the borderlands yielded no doubt the same number of men that it did in 1836 and, perhaps, less, as the *guerra grande* heated up. Without additional infantry, heavy guns, and a credible naval component beyond what Giuseppe Garibaldi constructed, the rebels were trapped inside their *campanha* stronghold. They were a new nation isolated from the rest of the world that produced next to nothing. What little they managed to make in their *trem de guerra* workshops were of poor quality and totally insufficient. Lead and powder needed to be carted in from Montevideo, as was practically everything else. Larger, productive *pelotense charqueadas*, the source of meaningful returns, as were the port revenue structures, were all in legalist territory. The *farrapos* and legalists conspired together in lively contraband, but this, too, eluded Almeida's coffers. The rebels had a few small *charqueada* operations, but shifting ground eventually placed them into enemy controlled territory. In order to just persist, the rebels needed a steady supply of reliable and effective recruits. To overcome their geographic dilemma and troop shortfalls, the rebels softened up Imperial defenses with counterpropaganda, imaginative inventions, and engaged *emigrados* and others who drifted into the borderlands.

Forced out of Piratini, the rebel capital since November of 1836, the little government re-located to Caçapava (January 1839). Facing pressure from all sides, Brandão began to renovate the entire military side of the enterprise. Within a few months he crossed swords with the mercurial general Bento Manuel, which numbered his days. For Bento Gonçalves and other decision makers, the choice was easy; they needed the lord of the Alegrete and his devoted followers' ability to win actual future battles. With a short window in front of him in which to act, an emboldened Brandão put forth plans to reorganize recruitment, his armies, logistics, and communications. Most of this flurry of activity was window dressing. It was in this same time frame that he appointed da Câmara as special envoy in search of *convênios.* In less pressing circumstances, the *farrapos* would have applauded this professional soldier for what seemed like a series of cold-hearted decisions. Spilling out of Caçapava, his decrees, orders and circulars stood little chance, however, of reinforcing sovereignty with real might and arms. But the bigger idea was to bolster spirits and demonstrate the government's firm control over the interior (VARELA, 1933, v.4, p. 282-3). He unleashed a paper torrent, some deliberately engineered to gain breathing room and time.

The most powerful of all his initiatives was the grand re-organization of the rebel armies, issued a few months following his departure from the war department. This was a document of numbers that hid decisive facts and was published without attribution in October of 1839 in *O Povo*.

Usually, such an important act would be introduced by a signed ministerial decree; but, in this case, either out of haste or the realization of its hidden potency, it was released; likely that either Mattos or Almeida, or both, thought it essential. Temporarily, Almeida had added the ministry of war to his portfolio. Perhaps, too, its timing would assuage the national grief over the death and commemoration of the revolution's most admired general, Lima e Silva. Both, if they had a hand in it, certainly would have been appreciative of its propagandistic and deterrent value which, undoubtedly, was Brandão's original intention (*O Povo*, 19 and 23 *de Outubro de* 1839).

Whether Brandão was presiding over his ministry or not, any real reformation of *farrapo* force tables was a masquerade. The army's establishment in November 1836, compared to Brandão's plan, seemed trite, transcending all reason, caution, or physical reality. Brandão was exercising his prerogatives, knowledge, and imagination to assemble a land force to match that of the Empire. His was a phantom army without even a sliver of a chance to be considered a force multiplier. The war was going on longer than expected, exacting a toll in funds and morale. More than ever, *riograndenses* expressed a restless dissatisfaction about serving. The patriotic fever of the glorious days of September 20, Seival (1836), and Rio Pardo (1838) were behind them when recruitment seemed easier. Restricted to mostly the *campanha* and its borderlands, enlistment opportunities were being vastly reduced; but, from the very beginnings of their rising, they had never fought with the numbers they claimed. During almost ten years of war, the largest rebel force that had gathered at Taquarí in 1840 may have reached 3,500, according to the contemporary jurist and court historian Tristão de Alencar Araripe (Araripe, 1986, p.229). If Bento Manuel's forces had arrived, the number would have climbed, but he did not share the intensity of this critical moment (VARELA, 1933, v.5, p.38-9).

Officially, Brandão's organizational tables would have incredibly doubled the *farrapo* army, had it been at full strength. Brandão wanted Rio and other countries to see that they were building armies as well as a powerful, centralized state with a 1st line of professionals of almost 4,500, and 5,000 of National Guard cavalrymen (BENTO, 1993, v.2, p.55; *O POVO*, p. 471). This was to be an army of invasion, not a guerilla army. But reorganization at these levels was nothing more than a pipedream, and Brandão knew it, as the revolution's expert in the disposition of men, horses, and guns. In the field in 1839, his armies totaled about 3,000 rebels pitted against 8,000 Imperial troops, of which 6,500 were active (VARELA, 1933, v. 5p 184-5). First, the army, as it barely existed, relied on foreign credits from undependable cattle drives, promissory notes, depredations, and appeals for contributions; and second, ideologically, any dramatic increase

in 1st line troops would more than double the number of slaves in the *liberto* infantry ranks alone. Brandão had company. Bento Gonçalves, wanted more Black infantry in order to hold territory and use in his negotiations with Rivera, who had shown his congenital need for Black troops. However, Bento Gonçalves thought filling out current rolls was more advisable than in creating new units (VARELA, 1933, v.5 p. 321-23; CARVALHO, 2013). The impossible sacrifices the plan required were left to others to imagine.

All the military men in the *la plata* faced these demographic challenges, some though, more creatively than others. Behind a bulwark of paperwork, Brandão's best defense was to attack in order to shore up confidence in the government. Rivera, on the other hand, resorted to hard-nosed tactics which had no standing in law and custom, exemplified in his depraved depopulation strategy which was not new, having used these extreme anti-civilian tactics before in the 1820s. Now, in the late 1830s, he was set to turn the Uruguayan interior into a desert to make it harder for his opponents to recruit and find remounts. He placed interior settlements onto carts, hundreds of them, to carry men, women, and children to defensible frontier points along the *riograndense* frontier. These villages on wheels carried thousands of people, far out numbering his escorting army (BARRERA, 2017). Along the frontier, his migrating settlements placed him in competition with the *farrapos* for recruits, while greatly opening up a monumental but temporary contraband commerce. Whether he assumed *emigrado* status or not, Rivera's contingents fought among themselves and simultaneously, with the larger forces of his immediate opponents, generals Manuel Oribe and Justo José Urquiza. *Farrapos* had lots in common with Rivera, continuing their contacts and negotiations with him, except when they had their own interests and security to consider. In a way, to complicate matters further, both *farrapo* and legalist-leaning ranches inside Uruguay were at risk, as were their slaves, as conscription targets. Across the border, legalist ranchers had become permanent *emigrados*; armed colonists with their own small private forces and, when convenient, allies. Otherwise, to the Uruguayans, they were just robbers (VARELA, 1933, v.5, p. 69,311).

Unlike Rivera's population transfers, the *farrapos* tried, hard as it was, to keep their interior a reservoir for recruits. Whatever the war brought, more than likely there was not much change in the number of its inhabitants; still relatively low, a reflection of the dominant cattle culture. Recruitment remained the rebels' most pressing problem. Legalists fled the zones that the *farrapos* controlled, which, through Almeida's semi-legal confiscation programs, led to temporary occupations by a foreman and a few peons, *agregados*, slaves, and others they could trust. Within their forces the *farrapos* continued with time-honored generosity, in furloughs and exemp-

tions, to ranching families, who had many sons. Ranchers who were fence-sitters merited some respect, but they, too, met the violence of bandits, deserters, and marauders who had similar desires to survive. Deserters received relatively mild punishments or were forgiven if they rejoined rebel units. Lenient Imperial amnesty, especially in the days of Caxias' march through the interior, depleted *farrapo* numbers faster than battlefield deaths. Over 2,000 rebels would accept Caxias' offers, including the most famous, who were once its most hardened rebels, including Almeida, Mattos, and da Câmara. Seamlessly, da Câmara now labored directly under Caxias' orders to fabricate an inviting diplomatic climate with Rivera.

Having and developing frank discussions over strength of force expansion certainly was advisable, but caudillos in the *la plata* and his own *chefe* compatriots, with knowledge of gaucho warfare, must have known Brandão's plan was removed from *riograndense* reality, which intimately rested on slavery. Even if Brandão's plan managed to increase levies to fill out his tables, there would be too many officers' sons to engage, promote and pay, according to Bento Gonçalves. Almeida's treasury was empty (VARELA, 1933, v. 5, p. 321). Perhaps, Brandão thought Rio would hesitate in order to reconsider its heavy investment. He was attempting to extend what was already a long, drawn out conflict. For the time being, his army of ghosts would have to do.

Unpredictable concentrations of hundreds of armed *emigrados* were a source of worry for Rio, less so for the *farrapos*, who often shared friendly political pasts. Having them inside the borderlands gave the *farrapos* new batches of recruits and a measure of diplomatic leverage with Rio, although they also could turn against their protectors. For out-of-power Uruguayans and others from the riverine states, asylum and refuge were a safety net and a place from which they plotted their return. Port merchants and *saladaristas* sometimes were their comrades in ambition, given how fast events could turn. They, too, were agile in calculating the odds in their support of certain *emigrados*. *Riograndense* frontier commanders, though, were more natural allies of the *emigrados*, generous towards those in political trouble and on the run for their lives, knowing that one day the shoe could easily be on the other foot (BARRERA, 2013).

Aligning with a constellation of contenders increased the chances of being on the winning side, which could translate into rewards. Some *emigrados* operated like bandit-patriots, looting and rustling for one party or another, mounted and armed, ready to return when the time was right to invade their native lands or spend a little time to play a part in the host country's violence (VANDERWOOD, 1992). Borderland ranchers harbored

and welcomed them, while provincial representatives treated them warily, only asking that the *emigrados* be disarmed and kept in camps at respectable distances from the frontier. Of course these requests were overlooked. Restrictions on their activities as asylum seekers were difficult to enforce; and, if enforced, the *emigrados* simply slipped away. For decades, the borderlands survived on cross-border trade, smuggling, and rustling. Conflict dislocated men into *emigrados* and cattle herds into rustling and contraband targets in such incredible numbers to move international markets (CADY, 1969, p. 122-3). *Emigrados* confused already complex patterns, providing economic incentives to keep the borderland on fire (VARELA, 1933, v. 5, p.75).

Of all the numerous *emigrado* situations in the 1839-40 period, from the *correntinos, entrerianos, santefecinos,* who had entered the warring Brazilian province, the Oriental Lavalleja brothers were obviously the best candidates to cultivate (CV-10.166). With a history of successes and their close attachments with Bento Gonçalves, the rebels were becoming progressively cautious, believing they were now turning into Rosas' henchmen. (VARELA, 1933, v.4, p. 250). Though Rivera had chased the brothers into temporary exile, they remained good secondary candidates for an alliance. On separate, unauthorized diplomatic tracks, several prominent *farrapos* were re-engaging with the displaced forces of Antonio Lavalleja and his brother, while Brandão, during his tenure, was looking to take a more formal route at the state level. For him, regular state-to-state relationships offered the best chances for assistance and for increasing perceptions that *farrapo* armies were about to grow in orderly fashion.

Overly aggressive, the rebels never developed a coordinated official strategy needed to attain sustainable ties beyond local friendships. Accustomed to acting alone, rebel *chefes* sometimes used their own relationships and timing to reach out to *emigrados* and legalist enemies to strike accords, often without orders (CV-10.197). These were not the formal, signed *convênios,* but personal transitory agreements (VARELA, 1933, v.5, p.189, 205-6). The bureaucratic Brandão was looking for Uruguayan partners more established than those who were being hunted. Providing sanctuary, for instance, to the *correntinos* required a delicate hand; the *farrapos* wanted good relations with Entre Ríos without upsetting Argentina (CV-2935).

The line between authorized and unauthorized diplomacy was as ill-defined as were the borders, reflecting the scramble for allies. In the stateless zone of the Jaguarão, the Lavalleja *emigrados* drifted in and out of *farrapo* military units. In real terms, the *farrapos* reaped new support, even if temporary, from their presence. *Emigrados* were available to anyone with

power and money. In general, the *farrapos* were better at enticing men like these into their ranks, as they controlled the frontier. Experienced in horse culture and war, their willingness to fight for little or no pay found them singularly valuable to recruiters. Since they were up for grabs, it gave them agency, a measure of choice, but they, too, were subject to coerced conscription.

All the *farrapo* emissaries in the 1839-41 period were no match for an army of one, a person so consequential in determining the war's outcome, the Imperial consul in Montevideo Pedro Rodrigues Fernandes Chaves. As a *riograndense,* Chaves was intimate with the traits of every officer in the contest and was a special target of *farrapo* rage. He was the brother and confidant of the despised provincial president in the days of the September rising. Bento Manuel considered Pedro Chaves the head of the *"exaltados legalistas,"* whose strong attachments to Portuguese commercial interests triggered the revolution (CV- 2337). The loyalist colonels who had blunted the separatists' attempts to sever the province also owed much to Chaves. Incensed *farrapos* labeled them *chavistas*. He straddled traditional diplomacy while operating in the dark geopolitical corners of the platine, masterfully sowing discord and false stories. Working behind the scenes in Montevideo, Chaves contained Rivera's influence with the *farrapos* while he advanced Brazil's principal strategic objective to inhibit their aggression. Chaves believed the *farrapos* were conducting an illegal and immoral war, allowing him to put aside the niceties of diplomatic and military etiquette. Although suspicious of legalist comings and goings, the *farrapo* consensus was that it was not in Brazil's interest to ally with Rivera; nevertheless, they should not discount *"convenções ...se fazem secretas, e mutuos auxilios se prestam, sobcapa, que valem tanto, ou mais, que um public tratado,..."* (VARELA, 1933.v.4, 249 quoting Almeida).

Besides finding and paying for horse herds for Imperial military use, Chaves blunted *emigrado* tendencies to affiliate with the *farrapos.* Nowhere was this more evident than in his support for the Oriental General Isás Bonifácio Calderon (CV-7711). Chaves was warmly companionable with many influential Oriental military men, but Calderon was, without question, the most important (VARELA, 1933, v.4, p.331). Chaves modified his secret Court instructions to use legalist ranchers in Uruguay, engaging, instead, Calderon's men to operate within the Brazilian province's borders. On their own, some powerful ranchers attached themselves directly to Calderon, bringing along *emigrados*; in one case, *"extraviadas entrerrianos"* from the battle of Cagancha (1839) (VIDAURRETA, 1987; VARELA, 1933, v.5, p.25). Many established *riograndense* ranchers in Uruguay sought a modified neutrality from recruiters from all sides in going after dubious Por-

tuguese citizenship (CV-7883). Calderon's checkered past as an *artiguista*, Brazilian army general, nationalist warrior, a career remarkably imitated by many others, was secured for the moment by Imperial monies. He operated inside the rebellious province, literally as Chaves' Imperial partner, with an army-sized force of about 500 troops. A hybrid militarist, he was part mercenary and part *emigrado*, scattering such anti-Imperial *emigrados* to the winds, and confronting *farrapo* contingents. Promoted as a dangerous state-backed bandit, Calderon disrupted *farrapo emigrado* enlistment efforts while deftly adding legalist ranchers in Uruguay. His army was so strong and well equipped, it sacked the *farrapo* capital at Caçapava (March, 1840). Declared states of war and appointments had turned Calderon's banditry legitimate, an undeclared arm of the Empire.

As the Brazilian consul in Montevideo, Chaves had what the *farrapo* emissaries did not, considerable amounts of fungible funds. Not only did he pay Rivera off on a regular basis, he also had the government's cabinet in his pocket (VARELA, 1933, v.4, p 318-20). Chaves was not necessarily docile in the face of Rivera's diplomatic abuse, but by feeding him money he kept the Oriental somewhat in check, knowing him so well, and took little offense when Rivera went directly to Rio in search of sweeteners; nor could he stop Rivera from his calculations with the rebels, for this was Rivera's method to pull hard at Imperial purse strings (VARELA, 1933, v.5, p. 123). To a lesser degree, Rivera used the *convênios* and the talks around them to extort small amounts of money from Almeida's treasury; but it was Chaves who held the keys to apparently unlimited funds, not unknown to the *farrapos*, who understood Rivera's primary motivation (CV-7880). Mattos in a cipher to Brandão, explained that Rivera *"...adora cegamente o ouro, sua divinidade"* (CV- 2922). Everyone knew that these secrets, just like the *convênios*, were no secret at all.

Still and always a force to be reckoned with, Rivera, like others of his type, struggled to recruit full troop compliments. A profligate spender, he often ignored his own men. Notorious for not paying his troops, Rivera's armies suffered desertions and discipline issues. Nevertheless, by force of personality, he maintained an astounding visibility to rally recruits, a trait not lost on Chaves. Always skating on the edge of bankruptcy, Rivera gathered funds to invest in land, in one episode purchasing 16 *estâncias*. (VARELA, 1933, v .4, p. 326). Open to the entreaties of important legalist ranchers in Uruguay to raise small private armies of *"partidorios ou mercenaries,"* Rivera would do so for a hefty price (VARELA, 1933, v. 5, p 123). Playing no favorites, Rivera used his elite connections to deal with *farrapo* commanders separately from the ministers, such as Canabarro, for off-the-book loans (VARGAS, 2021, p.27-28). A proud, conceited Rivera traded in land,

favors, and allegiances with multiple, sometimes opposing, leaders and governments, remaining one of his nation's champions even though defeated innumerable times, having torn the faithful from their homes, and openly protected his own interests above those of the country he served.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Empire, unlike the *farrapos*, had at its disposal near limitless manpower, and, importantly, had retained the allegiance of several cavalry officers: tactical masters like Bento Manuel, Pedro de Abreu, Manoel dos Santos Loureiro, Manoel Marques de Souza, and João da Silva Tavares, who could match the *farrapos* at their game. Naval dominance of the coast, lagoons, and navigable rivers sealed *farrapo* destiny to their *campanha.* In coordination with Caxias' land forces, Imperial power applied unrelenting pressure, boxing the rebels into tighter spaces in the interior, capturing along the way most of the little cattle towns by 1843 and 1844. Bagé had fallen, leaving the rebels only Alegrete on the border, its fourth and last capital. The *farrapos* were in continuous competition with loyalists, Orientals, and amongst themselves for recruits across several fronts (CV-10.186). Rebel army organizational charts were always aspirational, reflecting what was an ad hoc army operating out of small semi-autonomous and constantly changing units, with the *emigrados* and *convênios* better bets for building out their armies after 1838, but here, too, these tactics provided little chance for them to mount real counteroffensives.

In sum, the *convênios* were inexpensive ways for the *farrapos* to exaggerate their prowess and emergence as formidable stakeholders to their Spanish-American provincial neighbors, also serving as deterrents to keep Brazil and Argentina in check. Losing adherents, the *farrapos* struck one pact after another with Rivera with the hope of receiving a little respect and perhaps delay Brazil's assaults or, at least, provide them with an improved negotiating position. Perhaps Brandão, Mattos, Bento Gonçalves, and the others involved were so desperate for some kind of presence, they were willing to take chances on being played, while they, too, had learned to play Rivera. Caxias was fast becoming the new *senhor* of the *campanha*, having taken the war to the frontier where Rivera lurked. Of course, Rivera and the *farrapos* pursued their own agendas, but to dismiss the dangers of mutual troop transfers would have been a dereliction of Caxias' duties and a dangerous problem for Brazil. Caxias' force was colossal for the day. It was easy for every *farrapo* in the rapidly disintegrating army to understand the math that even a war of attrition would end badly. Re-integration into the Empire with its accompanying rewards was a rational imperative, eas-

ier and preferable.

Ironically, the only consequential agreements, or better stated, understandings that the *farrapos* struck, were with Caxias. The first resulted in the Porongos massacre and the decimation of what remained of their army, the *libertos*. This secret sellout, smacking of treason, was between enemies. Not only did it end the revolution, but re-asserted authority over their internal enemy, the perils inherent in the institution of slavery (TAYLOR, 2013). The second, the so called Peace of Ponche Verde (1845), was a gathering of *farrapo* military officers who basically had agreed to their own demands. Caxias was not far away, but did not attend nor did he sign the peace (FLORES, 2004).

The *convênios* also have a place in the great debate in the historiography of the *farroupilha*; the struggle over its separatist nature. There were some republican ideologues who wanted a republican-federated state associated with Brazil, and others within the movement who sought an independent state akin to other riverine provinces, perhaps as part of a larger confederation or one which would cede little of its sovereignty. Most *riograndenses* were outside politics and had no real voice: the indigenous, *libertos*, slaves, peons, *agregados,* and others without property and position. Those *riograndenses* involved in the fighting were split into two warring camps, for the *farroupilha* was not just a struggle for autonomy after 1836, but a civil conflict in which former National Guard cavalry fought each other. Probably just as many *riograndenses* stayed affiliated with the Empire; and still others waivered, watching which way the wind would blow. The violence in one place, Rio Grande do Sul, became fodder for the narrow nationalism of the other, Rivera's Uruguay, as these two neighboring provinces were factionalized. Caxias capitalized on these differences existing in both, and, by his defanging of the *libertos,* removed any possibilities for new *convênios,* if the war were to persist into a purely guerilla affair. There were at least five recorded *convênios* with Rivera: the Treaty of Piratini and Durazno were preludes to Cangüé and San Fructuoso, respectively, and the last in Cuareim, 1844, were, on the surface, military pacts, with intentions to encourage a harmony of interests and present new facts on the ground. But the levels of distrust were too entrenched to overcome. Though stipulated, neither the *farrapos* nor Rivera really desired mutual troop transfers. Rio Grande do Sul, like Rivera's Uruguay, wanted to retain their own horse armies, placing them in the mercenary business in the near-abroad posed too many risks. Of course, Rivera would have welcomed the one-way transfer of *libertos,* but that was never in the cards, as slavery was of paramount interest to *riograndenses* who were inward looking expansionists, taking their slaves with them into the Uruguayan regions north of the Rio Negro.

At the *farroupilha's* end, most *farrapos* were eager to move on, anxious to receive Caxias' payouts (SILVA. 2015, 2016). Following Ponche Verde, only General Netto, expressing extreme displeasure, fled to his properties in the Taquarembó, apparently without any intention of regenerating the revolution; and he, too, would return to serve the Empire. With Netto pulling political camouflage over his conscience, the last of the separatists had abandoned the cause.

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