

# THE STORY OF BLACK LANCERS

## THE IMPERIAL BETRAYAL

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### Summary

On November 14, 1844, after almost ten years of armed struggle, on the eve of the peace agreement between the Rio-Grandense Republic<sup>2</sup> and the Empire of Brazil, the Black Lancers Corps of the Farroupilha Army — previously disarmed by General Davi Canabarro<sup>3</sup> — was attacked in surprise on the banks of the Porongos stream and decimated by imperial troops in a battle "waged between Caxias<sup>4</sup> and Canabarro, with the aim of getting rid of the Blacks in arms and eliminating any resistance to the signing

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<sup>2</sup> Rio-Grandense Republic, name of the defeated separatist Republic.

<sup>3</sup> David José Martins, known as David Canabarro and also called General Canabarro (Taquari, August 22, 1796 - Santana do Livramento, April 12, 1867) was a Brazilian military man and one of the leaders of the Farroupilha Revolution.

<sup>4</sup> Caxias: Important general, during the war he was promoted to marshal, of the Brazilian Army whose fame in combat made him the patron of the Brazilian Army with the Imperial title of Duke.

of peace. Since then, a curtain of silence has fallen over this shameful episode, better known as the "Betrayal of Porongos". This essay makes a historical rescue of this unfortunate and controversial event, as well as the decisive participation of Blacks in the Guerra dos Farrapos. Likewise, it seeks to elucidate the controversy surrounding the abolitionist character or not of the farroupilhas<sup>5</sup>.

Keywords: Black Lancers, Betrayal of Porongos, Farrapos War, The Negro in the Farroupilha Revolt, Abolitionism.

"...already the terrible spearmen [...], all free and all tamers of horses, had made an advance movement involving the right flank of the enemy, who was forced to face them also on the right, in disarray. The valiant freedmen, imposing in their ferocity, were making themselves stronger than ever, and that incomparable platoon, made up of slaves freed by the Republic, selected from among the most skilled tamers in the Province, all Black except for the senior officers, looked like a forest of lancer. The enemy had never seen from behind these true children of freedom, who fought so well for her. Their lancers, longer than normal, their very black faces, their robust extremities, hardened by constant and tiring exercise, and their perfect discipline, instilled terror in the enemy (GARIBALDI<sup>6</sup>, 1910, p.132).

**One of the least studied and least known** issues of the Farroupilha Revolution is the contribution of Blacks in this struggle and the outstanding role that the famous Black Lancers played in it. All according to the well-known "invisibility" to which Blacks are usually relegated in the official history of our country and our state.

Specialist in Afro-Asian History by FAPA<sup>7</sup>. Member of the Coordination of the Center for Economic, Social and Political Debates of Rio Grande do Sul<sup>8</sup> (CEDESP/RS) and of the Center for Marxist Studies of Rio Grande do Sul. It must be said that, since its inception, the farroupilha struggle had an important participation of Blacks and mulattoes. Thus, it is the imperials themselves who inform — a few days after the outbreak of the rebellion — that "the strength of the rebels who presented themselves near the Azenha

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<sup>5</sup> Farroupilha; Farrapos: onomastics for rags war and war men in Farroupilha Revolution.

<sup>6</sup> Giuseppe Garibaldi was an Italian general, guerrilla, *condottiero* and patriot. He was nicknamed the "hero of two worlds", due to his participation in conflicts in Europe and South America. Born: July 4, 1807, Nice, France; Died: June 2, 1882, Caprera Island, Italy.

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<sup>8</sup> State of the Federation that in 1835 decided to form a State within Brazil, which would be the "Piratini Republic", but was defeated by the Empire of Brazil.

and who later entered the city of Porto Alegre, did not exceed 80 to 90 people, Indians, Blacks and mulattoes, most of them armed with spears" (AHRGS-3, 1985, p.131). And, on the day the revolt begins, Dr. Hillebrand, leader of the German settlers in São Leopoldo, informs: "I am going to communicate to my fellow Germans that a party, for the most part composed of Blacks and Indians, is threatening the authorities from this Province" (BENTO, 1976, p.172). Giuseppe GARIBALDI —active participant in the first years of Farroupilha Revolution —recounts in his memoirs the great participation of Blacks since the beginning of the fight: "The people who accompanied me were a real cosmopolitan throng, made up of men of all nations and all colors. Americans for the most part were free blacks or mulattos, and I saw as a rule, the best and most faithful" (1910, p.66-67). And, later: "Our infantry, in which all but the officers were men of color, was excellent and eager for general combat. " (1910, p.131). In countless other passages of his memoirs, Garibaldi gives his testimony about the value and contribution of Black combatants in the struggle of the Gauchos republicans. The American historian Spencer LEITMAN also states that shortly after the capture of Pelotas, on April 7, 1836, the farrapo chief João Manuel de Lima e Silva freed and armed hundreds of slaves:

After the battle, the Farrapos armed about 400 slaves who had fallen into their hands, as they felt the need to increase their army, and would have freed everyone if the *charqueadores* had not without fleeing to Rio Grande, taking those who had stayed with them. [...] João Manuel was the main promoter of the enlistment of freedmen, wandering mestizos and slaves in the republican army that was graduating. A few months before his victory in Pelotas, he had organized manumitted men into an infantry unit (1985, p. 64).

Contesting criticisms of his decision, João Manuel highlighted the bravery of Blacks and their military discipline, already demonstrated in Bahia, during the War of Independence, and in Pernambuco, in 1824. In correspondence with Domingos José de Almeida, Minister of the Treasury, he defended his initiative, arguing that the freedmen had passed the test of battles gracefully, fighting alongside proud veterans in the Cisplatine Campaigns and on the glorious 12th of September, saving the "honor of the army" in a recent fight between Farrapos and Legalists. At the same time, he urged his fellow soldiers to "increase the number of these infantry corps as much as possible" before the Empire sent reinforcements. On September 12, 1836, the 10 Cavalry Corps of Black Lancers was constituted, with more than 400 men,

just before the battle of Seival, where it played an important role in the victory against the imperials:

[...] complementing, by the way, what had already been planned and carried out, in part, since Pelotas, when, for example, the freeing of slaves who settled in the square, "providing services to the Homeland, had been decreed forever. With elements on the 12th of September the 1st Corps of Lancers of the 1st Line was created, classified as "incomparable" by Garibaldi, in his Memoirs, consisting of soldiers chosen from among the most select tamers of horses in the Province. "Expert knights", [...] "eminently sober", demonstrated an "unheard of courage" by the Blacks to whom the Revolution "opened the doors of political and civil citizenship", in the words of "O Jornal", of 9 October 1838 (FAGUNDES, 1989, p.188).

The Black Lancers were Blacks who were free or freed by the Republic — on condition that they fought as soldiers for the republican cause — or by former slaves belonging to the Imperials. For the most part, they were recruited among the Black peasants and tamers of the Serras dos Tapes and Herval (Canguçu, Piratini, Caçapava, Encruzilhada, Arroio Grande), in the South Zone of the State. Initially commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Joaquim Pedro Soares, later they were headed by Major Joaquim Teixeira Nunes. They participated in the expedition to Laguna, playing an important role in the constitution of the Julian Republic. They were the shock troops of the farroupilha army. His role was so important that, on August 31, 1838, the 2nd Corps of Black Lancers was formed, with 426 combatants.

Since the Decree of April 21 of the current year did not exist, which gave new numbers to the Cavalry Corps of the 1st "Army Line", declared the number in which the Lancers Corps of the same Line should be, which had previously been created with the number of First; and in the Missions Department there is also a grown Force of Lancers gathered and organized with some Officers, and in a state of forming another Corps of this Weapon, which is needed at that Point for its defense: [...] Art. 1.0 The so-called First Line Lancers Corps is created in that Department of Missions, which will be called Second, leaving the other already created with the same numbering as the First (O POVO, 1930, p.17). Referring to the Black Lancers, Cláudio Bento tells us: Excellent cavalry fighters, they gave themselves to combat with great courage, knowing, as true children of freedom, that this, for themselves and their brothers of color and liberators, would be at stake in each combat [...] skill your favorite weapons —the spears. [...] They waged war based on local resources. [...] Most rode horses almost bareback. [...] They were also armed with a

dagger or machete and, in certain houses, some firearms [...] Their coarse wool ponchos — *bicharás*<sup>9</sup> — served as a bed, blanket and protection from the cold rain. When in combat on horseback, wrapped around the left arm, the poncho was used to cushion or deflect a spear or a sword strike. [...] They were extremely skilled in using the bola as a weapon of war [...]

When narrating the siege of Porto Alegre by Farroupilha troops, Calvet FAGUNDES informs of the large participation of freed Blacks also in the infantry troops: "Bento Gonçalves<sup>10</sup> could be seen in the most advanced lines to the of the site, appearing, in the words of the chronicles of the time, `in front of the trenches, with 400 infants, almost all Black, and with an equal number of cavalry." (1989, p.225) In response to this growing participation of Black fighters in republican troops, the imperials enacted in November 1838 the "Law of the Whip", determining that every rebellious "slave" who was arrested should receive from 200 to 1,000 lashes. At the same time, they promised a letter of manumission for every rebellious "slave" who surrendered to the imperial forces. The republicans' retaliation was exemplary and extremely enlightening of the majority thought among the farroupilhas in relation to slavery:

Caçapava, 11.05.1839 — 4th of Independence and the Rio-Grandense Republic. Having the tyrannical Government of Brazil, by notice of the Department of Justice, of November 15, 1838, determined to the intruder and entitled President of the Province of Rio Grande de São Pedro, the application of 200 to 1000 lashes to every man of color , who, freed from captivity, in accordance with the laws of this Republic, has been part of its armed force and falls prisoner of the so-called legal troops, that immoral government despises all kinds of process and judicial formality for the qualification of that supposed crime. It was in obedience to the sacred laws of humanity, lights of this century and to the true interests of the citizens of the State, that the Government [of the Rio-Grandense Republic] began to free captives capable of the profession of weapons, workshops and colonization, in order to hasten, at once, the emancipation of this unhappy part of the human race. And, this, with the serious sacrifice of the Public Treasury, since those who demanded the compensation of these captives, received it immediately or received a document for timely compensation. The President of the Republic, in order to claim the inalienable rights of humanity,

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<sup>9</sup> Thick wool, white and black, with longitudinal stripes.

<sup>10</sup> Bento Gonçalves da Silva (Triunfo, September 23, 1788 – Pedras Brancas, July 18, 1847) was a Brazilian military man, one of the leaders of the Farroupilha Revolution, which sought the independence of the province of Rio Grande do Sul from the Empire of Brazil. He was the first president of the ill-fated Rio-Grandense Republic, and one of the most important figures in the history of Rio Grande do Sul.

will not allow the free man from Rio Grande do Sul, regardless of the color with which the accidents of nature have distinguished him, to suffer unpunished and unavenged, the unworthy, barbaric, demeaning and outrageous treatment, prepared for them by the infamous Imperial Government. In retaliation for the provocation, it decrees: Sole article: From the moment there is certain news that a free man of color has been flogged, by the Government of Brazil, the General Commander of the Army or the commander of any Division shall take lot among the imperial officers, of any rank, our prisoners and will have that officer whom the lot designates pass through the arms. Domingos Jose de Almeida. Minister and Secretary of State for Interior Affairs, Finance and Justice (O POVO, 1930, p. 274).

By this decree it is clear, first of all, that the farrapos did not convey Black who fought in troops republicans as slaves, but as free men, and that the liberation of slaves, by payment to their owners, was not made only in relation to those who fought in the troops farroupilha, but also to work on "workshops and colonization", "in order to accelerate, ready, the emancipation of this unfortunate part of the human gender". Referring to the creation of the Black Lancer Section and its importance in the War of Farrapos, the imperial historian of Alencar Araripe, severe critic of the farrapos, says:

[...] Now the Republic added this permanent force, organizing the Battalion, which he called the Lancers, composed of slaves, which for violence the rebels snatched from the stances of the legalists, or who voluntarily sought the banners of rebellion, which he had, for the hope of liberation, or who bought from the possessions of the Republican government. Of three sources, therefore, they came the slaves enlisted in the rebel army, extortion to opponents, convention with friends, invitation to the oppressed! [...] In slavery would find the powerful rebels aid to maintain the cause they were undermined from freedom (1986, pp. 49-50).

Araripe realizes, with acuity, the very important role that the freed people played in the Farroupilha fight, since "proclaiming freedom of the slaves who came to defend the freedom of the Republicans, the victims of social oppression closed and the generals of the Republic had a certain number of men who formed the Basase of their military strength. "At the same time, he rejoices the fact that Rio Grande do Sul did not have a large slavery, for" if it were not so, it would have the rebellion found powerful militia for his separatist work; And most likely the separation would have been consummated "(1986, pp. 86-87). Dante de Laytano (1908-2000) highlights the engagement of Blacks freed in the Farroupilha Fight: The farrapos found in Blacks, not the mercenary soldier and passive, but the ally, in a campaign

armed for the liberation of his state [...] were elements of collaboration, entered with the first insurrects, they were aware of the secrets and revolutionary passwords and took part in the first avalanche that played against the Empire (1983, p. 210). Spencer Leitman states that "when the war ended, the farrapos have two Black Divisions on their ranks, one of infantry and one of cavalry, totaling a thousand men. According to the calculations of the Imperial Army, Blacks composed from one third half of the rebel army "(1985, p.65). Leitman also refers to the great participation of other sectors impoverished in the Farrapos struggle: "In addition to slaves, other social output groups filled the gaps of the rag army. adventure and fortune usually. Often, however, they were individuals who supported the formation of a federated republican state. Gauchos, Indians, free Blacks and slaves fled from Uruguay, where they were subject to the forced recruitment practices of the Uruguayan and Brazilians colonels, which operated there with the objective of opening a second front against the rebels "(1985, p. 68). And, in a page note, confirms the participation of former slaves in tasks such as gunpowder manufacturing, smoke cultivation and mate herb that the government had implemented "(1985, p.69). In contrast, the slave and racist contempt of the imperials in relation Black to Blacks is evident in the words of Saturnino de Souza and Oliveira, president of Rio Grande do Sul, commenting on the bloody imperial victory in São José do Norte:

The repelled enemy had 200 dead and us 100; But he had 200 dead slaves and we had, besides good and lower soldiers, two distinct 2nd Battalion captains, a Lieutenant Colonel of Artillery, a Captain-Lieutenant of the Armada [...] and perhaps each one should these official merchants enter the scale with one of Bento Gonçalves's Blacks, insurrected against their masters? Should one of them be sacrificed by 200 Blacks without gaining another advantage? (1986, p.121).

It is also important to highlight that the farrapos had two mulatto leaders among their primary leaders: miner Domingos José de Almeida — Treasury Minister of the Republic of Piratini<sup>11</sup> — and the carioca<sup>12</sup> José Mariano de Mattos —twice minister of war and navy and President of the Republic Farroupilha between November 13, 1838 and March 14, 1841. It was Mariano de Mattos, a convinced abolitionist, who presented at the Constituent Assembly — on behalf of the majority, formed by Bento Gonçalves, Mariano de Mattos, Domingos José de Almeida, Antônio Souza Neto, José Gomes Portinho, Ulhoa Cintra and other Republican heads — a

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<sup>11</sup> Piratini (name of the city where the Rio-Grandense Republic was proclaimed)

<sup>12</sup> Carioca: The native people of Rio de Janeiro.

project that abolish captivity, the resemblance of what had been done in the neighboring Uruguay. The reaction of the minority — led by Antonio Vicente da Fontoura<sup>13</sup> and seconded by David Canabarro and Onofre Pires —was so violent, threatening to an irremediable split of the farroupilhas, which made their approval unfeasible:

[...] In one of the sessions, José Mariano, as a representative and defining the principles to which the faithful of Bento Gonçalves were brought, presented to the Assembly a project that abolished captivity, similar to what was done in the neighboring Uruguay. [...] The minority, based by Antonio Vicente opposed, irreducible and beast, leaving us patent, with his usual, penalizer truculence, the fragile bumps in which he supported himself, to preclude "freedom general slaves ". [...] In the "Diary What was writing, at a certain time Anured Vicente alludes to this parliamentary episode: after referring" to the vile and weak soul of the Mulatto José Marian and "to Mofino Bento", "Two Demons, "despised by every decent man," asserts that the emancipating plan presented by "this mulatto", "in the middle of the assembly", had "the sinister end of everything confusing to [...] stole more widely and evaded If for the neighboring country "(Varela, 1933, p.16).

The division of the farroupilhas was evident in relation to the abolition of slave, although among a good portion of its leaders prevailed the opinion favorable to her. The difficulties of the struggle, however, would not allow their realization. The result of these circumstances, the project of constitution of the Rio-Grandense repunction did not establish the widespread abolition of slavery, but to the defined in its article 6 as Citizens Riograndenses:

All free men born in the territory of the Republic. 2 —All Brazilians who lived in the territory of the Republic dismisses the memorable on September 20, 1835, and have provided services to the cause of revolution or independence, with the intention of belonging to the Riograndense nation. [...] 5 ° — All foreigners who have fought or combat, in the present War of Independence, as long as they reside within the country and intend to fix their domicile (Abreu, 1930, pp. 42-43) .

What allowed the freed Blacks who fought in the armies farroupilhas were considered citizens of Rio Grande do Sul. Years later, General José PORTINHO would comment: "The Republic never proclaimed freedom from slavery (which was a mistake); if he had proclaimed it, he could have

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<sup>13</sup> Antônio Vicente da Fontoura was a Brazilian politician, diplomat and merchant. Main civil leader of the Rio-Grandense Republic, he negotiated the peace of Ponche Verde, which reintegrated Rio Grande do Sul to Brazil



formed an army of freedmen of more than 6,000 men because in the Province there were them" (1990, p.37). In his "Memories Economo Policies", written in 1817 and published in 1822, *charqueador*<sup>14</sup> António Gonçalves CHAVES —a literate man, sympathetic to the Farroupilha cause and a friend of Domingos José de Almeida — defended that "Slavery is irreconcilable with modern political economy" (1978, p.59) While making a moral critique of slavery, CHAVES calls attention to the low productivity of slave labor, its inadequacy to industry, the use of division of labor and the use of more advanced technologies:

I cannot by any means devise the smallest advantage to modern nations by way of slavery [...] How can a free man associate in the culture of the land or in any other line of work with a captive man [...]? And if it is only the slave class that privately has to do the work of agriculture and heavy arts, how will the products of Brazil be able to advance? Agriculture cannot, under this terrible system, prosper, nor can industry be born. [...] the slave is at the same time a footman, a baller or a carpenter [...]; how can there be a subdivision of labor? [with the] absolute prohibition on the importation of slaves, the industry will appear among us. [...] the same slave class will supply, in the progress of its emancipation, unfettered arms to the different branches in which they are more expert (1978, p. 58-77).

Also noteworthy is the note that the newspaper Farroupilha O POVO published in response to a reader from Arroio Grande who denounced the introduction of slaves in Rio Grande do Sul:

Censorship against such scandalous, barbaric and inhuman trafficking, cursed by God and men, has been carried out by all the newspapers in the world; all philosophers and all illustrations rushed against him; different governments signed treaties with Brazil to abolish it. [...] For a long time now, public opinion, morals and religion have loudly cried out against smuggling so ignoble and so unworthy of the nineteenth century, but to no avail! [...] But it does not matter. Time will remedy everything. The day of triumph for the Republic will not be long in coming, and as soon as the Sun of that beloved day has purified the land of Santa Cruz with its life-giving rays, the Laws and Treaties will no longer be violated. [...] New systems will introduce new things and humanity so cruelly offended will have its days of joy (1930, p.174).

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<sup>14</sup> *Charqueador*. Meaning: The production of beef jerky, beef dried in the sun and salted as a means of preservation, before the refrigeration era, was the most valuable economic source in Rio Grande do Sul, and the people who worked there, mostly slaves, were *charqueadores*.

Expressing, at the same time, the permanent contradiction of the farroupilhas in the face of the serfdom issue, the same newspaper O POVO stamped in its pages, in many of its editions, advertisements for the purchase and sale of slaves... Analyzing the participation and situation of Blacks in the Revolution Farroupilha, sociologist Clovis MOURA states:

Since Abolition did not appear in 1822 [Independence of Brazil], as they had hoped, the slaves did not lose hope. They continued, as we have seen, to engage in subsequent movements. In the Farroupilha Revolution they will feel at ease because, apart from the Insurrection of the Tailors, in Bahia, no other movement was so emphatically and ostensibly anti-slavery as the one led by Bento Gonçalves. The slave's participation had a rational, logical character. There was no contradiction existing in other events when they participated in fights by order of their masters, as we have seen. Furthermore, as he did not weigh very heavily on the economy of the con-flagged region, the slave quickly became a soldier [...]. The farroupilha authorities themselves were in charge of emancipating them. [...] The type of pastoral economy did without the African slave. Agricultural work, especially mate herb, was not such as to require a concentration of slave labor such as the economy of mills or mining imposed. [...] That is why the ruling strata of the conflicted region did not have an interest in maintaining the status of slavery, as fiercely as it happened in the Northeast, where it was the mainstay on which the entire regional economy was based (1988, p. 97). -98).

In the same sense, Júlio CHIAVENATO manifests himself:

It was easy to recruit slaves, as they even waited for the arrival of the farrapos to join an army that would 'liberate' them. Fighting alongside the farroupilhas was a concrete opportunity for freedom for the slaves. There was no lack of Blacks who fled from their masters in Uruguay to swell the Rio Grande do Sul forces (1988, p. 51).

In a process carried out in 1837, in Porto Alegre, the letter from the owner of a runaway slave, accusing an old man of having given him refuge:

This coitus and support given by that old man, the company of other mulattoes also from his office, mixed with the damned and pernicious maxims spread with the detestable Revolution, they penetrated not only many whites, but the mixed class freedmen and slaves, who immediately thought they were freed! (MOTTA, 1985, p. 132).

According to historian Margaret BAKOS, the enlistment and recruitment instructions of the Secretary of War Affairs of the Republican Government,

of 1837, determined that the selection of candidates should be based on their good conduct, robustness, patriotism and adherence to the republican cause. Singles, between 18 and 35 years old, whites, browns, Indians and free Blacks were recruited. A citizen could exempt himself from serving in the campaign by offering a Black slave, with a letter of manumission, to fight in his place. Many people would testify, after the conflict, that the farroupilhas had encouraged the insurrection of Black slaves, with the aim of incorporating them into the revolutionary ranks:

Agostinho José de Menezes denounced the fact in Pelotas, where, if according to him, around 304 Black slaves were diverted from their owners by the farrapos in exchange for promises of freedom. [...]. Azevedo e Souza reports facts that implicate the farrapos with insurrections of Black slaves in Pelotas [...] Manoel Jubo Tureiro Barreto and José Ignacio do Saldo confirm everything and Joaquim José Maria Panot adds that the farrapos held large meetings of the slave culture, mainly in the city of São Francisco de Paula (1985, p. 90-91).

Caldre e Fião, an intellectual and writer from Rio de Janeiro, confirms: "The rebels (farrapos) called slaves into their army, of which they made four battalions and some squadrons of cavalry. [...] During the war, the slave masters suffered resounding revenge and knew well the value of these enemies" (CESAR, 1976, p.3). Referring to a first attempt to negotiate peace at the end of year 1840, between Rio de Janeiro and the farroupilhas, Tristão de Alencar ARARIPE informs that Bento Gonçalves presented a proposal in which demanded "the freedom of the slaves who are in our service" as one of the priorities conditions. (1986, p.111) As the imperials did not agree with this demand, Bento Gonçalves stated that "in Rio Grande the war would continue, Blacks who five years ago were fighting for freedom in America could not return to shackles" (MACEDO, 1995, pp. 38-39). Ulhoa Cintra, consulted, replied in the same way: "Men who stood shoulder to shoulder with us in the defense of freedom, they cannot return to captivity" (MACEDO, 1995, p. 39). A few years after the end of the Farrapos War, the same ARARIPE, unsuspecting of any sympathy for the farroupilha rebels, will acknowledge:

At one point, however, they were always consistent and loyal. Using slaves to defend the freedom they preached, not abandoned at the last moment of the fight and struggled with the imperial government so that these unfortunates would not return to captivity. Although the imperial government recognized the danger of legitimizing the manumission of those who conquered with weapons in hand, in a country whose first element of their production was the slave, [...] the soldiers of the Republic, recruited in slavery, preserved in the Empire the condition of freedom by demand of the leaders of the rebellion (1986, p. 10).

Leaving aside ARARIPE's lack of awareness of the serious differences of opinion among Farroupilha leaders over the servile issue (which will lead to Porongos's betrayal), his testimony is uncontroversial. And Antônio Vicente da Fontoura himself, a hardened slave owner, was forced to include, among the republican demands for peace, a clause assuring that "all captives who served in the Republic are free and recognized as such". As the possibilities for pacification increased, the Imperial Government began to prepare politically and militarily for this. The Minister of War, José Clemente Pereira (1841-1842), was concerned with the diplomatic and military problems that would arise if a large number of former slaves armed forces sought asylum to continue the war from Uruguay. The farrapo Blacks had become more cohesive, with a precise and militant ideology, which could lead them to seek the protection of the unpredictable Fructuoso Rivera:

To avoid a war with Uruguay, the minister asked his advisers whether it was necessary to set the "terrible precedent" to reward slaves giving "freedom for the crime of insurrection. The pacification of Rio Grande do Sul, then, could include resistance in Uruguay, which would lead to war. Even more, an adventure imperialism in Uruguay could cause serious diplomatic problems with Argentina under Juan Manuel de Rosas (LEITMAN, 1985, p. 72).

The same issue worried the farrapo chiefs who were against the abolition of slavery — represented mainly by David Canabarro and Antônio Vicente da Fontoura — who had assumed the main civil and military functions of the Republic, removing Bento Gonçalves, Domingos de Almeida and Antônio Souza Neto and who were now negotiating peace with Caxias<sup>15</sup>. On the one hand, it was impossible to obtain a minimum of consensus to make peace without guaranteeing the freedom of freed Blacks who had been fighting for the Republic for ten years. In addition, it would be very risky for Black combatants to return to menial work, which would take the yeast of rebellion to the slave quarters. On the other hand, for the reigning slave order, it was dangerous to keep a large contingent of Blacks with military experience free.

It is in this context that, at dawn on November 14, 1844, the "Surprise of Porongos" takes place, in which the Black Lancers — previously disarmed by Canabarro and separated from the rest of the troops — they were attacked by surprise and decimated by the Imperial troops commanded by Colonel Francisco Pedro de Abreu (Moringue), apparently, through a collusion

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<sup>15</sup> Caxias: Important general, during the war was promoted to marshal, of the Brazilian Army whose fame in combat made him the patron of the Brazilian Army with the Imperial title of Duke.

between David Canabarro and the Duke of Caxias , to get rid of Blacks in arms and force the signing of the Paz de Poncho Verde.

The combat at Porongos, which was more a one-sided slaughter than a fight, dispersed the main republican force, and showed that the rebellion was dead. [...] In Porongos, then, the revolution expired. It was then that negotiations began, which gave peace to Rio Grande do Sul (ARARIPE, 1986, p. 211).

According to Spencer LEITMAN, Caxias used the contradictions between the farroupilha leaders to divide them, even using bribery. So he made a deal with David Canabarro, the top Farrapo general, to end the war. By common agreement, they decided to destroy part of the farrapo army, precisely its Black contingents, in a pre-arranged battle, known as the "Porongos' Surprise", which took place on November 14, 1844. In his secret instructions to Chico Pedro, imperial commander of the operation, Caxias determined: "In the conflict, spare the Brazilian blood as much as you can, particularly the white people of the Province or Indians, as you well know that these poor people can still be useful to us in the future" (AHRS-1, 1983, pp.30-31). The complete transcription of this letter, kept in the Historical Archive of Rio Grande do Sul. Canabarro fulfilled his part in the combination and separated the Black men from the rest of the troop. Isolated and unaware of the collusion, the farrapos Blacks fought bravely, being massacred:

The " Porongos' Surprise" paved the way for the Paz de Poncho Verde a few months later. Blacks in rags had suffered a major setback. Eighty out of every hundred killed on the battlefield were Black. The " Porongos' Surprise" remained a closely guarded secret for many years. Domingos José de Almeida was the first to question Canabarro's conduct, carrying out an investigation personal connection for almost twenty years after the battle. He revealed the secret, but his confirmation, through the use of official correspondence, was not obtained (LEITMAN, 1985, p. 75-76).

According to reports, David Canabarro camped in the vicinity of Cerro dos Porongos — the current municipality of Pinheiro Machado —with about 1,200 men; "João António camped on the left bank of the Porongos stream, in good field; the unarmed infantry, on the bank of the said stream, and Neto's cavalry, further on in good ground" (TABORDA, 1985, p.81). Alfredo VARELA, the great historian of the Farroupilha Revolution, informs that "a farrapo party notified Canabarro in time that the terrible surprise was coming over their camp, and it was when the part of the indicated unit burped the boast [...] that all the Rio Grande knows: `The Moringue feeling the my smell

of sweat doesn't come here». General Netto, concerned about the situation, went to Canabarro to tell him that the enemy was approaching. According to VARELA, when he was not heard by him, despite insisting, because informants of his confidence had detected the hidden march of the Moringue, prepared for the eventuality of the attack (1933, pp.247-248). In the early morning of November 14, 1844, Chico Pedro — Moringue — fell on the troops the "unprepared" farroupilhas, looking for animals kill mainly the Black Lancers, disarmed by Canabarro, which he and Vicente da Fontoura escaped unscathed:

A squadron of 40 men [...] falls suddenly on the unsuspecting army [...] Soldiers run from all over, astonished and amazed, while in vain some officers try to organize the ranks. —It's Moringue! It's Moringe! It is the cry of all mouths. The human wave, which had spread in several directions, tried to gain distance to rebuild itself [...] But behold, the wave shatters against an unexpected barrier. It is Chico Pedro himself who, ambushed with the bulk of his forces, was waiting for the result of the attack to appear in front of those fleeing. The situation is dire. The farrapos, after the first moment of stupor, recover courage and are ready to die fighting. Teixeira, the bravest of the brave, whose boldness once astonished Garibaldi himself, gathers his lancers, the 40th Regiment of the Line and a few squadrons, but the imperial forces multiply, appearing from every point. Second charge, more impetuous, more desperate, is also repulsed. This is the sign of the general rout. [...] Only a few groups keep resisting and in them the combat is fought with melee weapons. Teixeira's Black spearmen fall, fighting one against twenty, in an incomparable effort of heroism [...] it is a nameless carnage, a complete rout. A little more and all resistance collapses (CAGGIANI, 1992, p. 137-138).

Many years later, in 1898, CALDEIRA would denounce that the day before of the attack the Colonel Francisco Pedro, Moringue, camped at the back of the estancia of Dona Manoela, sister of General Netto. She asked her neighbor Joaquim Pereira to go to the Canabarro camp to bring him this information. Canabarro would have told him to go back home and not spread news terrifying in the camp. Then he ordered the quartermaster to collect the cartridges from the troop of freed Blacks:

Canabarro, in combination with Caxias and Moringue, entered Moringue in his camp, to defeat the force commanded by Gen. Grandson, except for Gen. João Antônio da Silveira who was camped in a place that was free from the attack. [...] Moringue [...] before daybreak, the cavalry lined up in front of Canabarro's

camp and ordered the sound of dawn [...] Canabarro, hearing the sound of dawn, mounted his horse with his General Staff and crossed the creek of the said pass and presented himself at the head of the force of João Antônio, who was furious to see the killing that the enemy was doing to his comrades in arms without helping them, because Canabarro did not consent. Canabarro stayed that day in the fields of Porongos and he stayed overnight and the next day he marched serenely towards the Activated field, leaving Neto completely defeated because of the terrible terrain chosen (by the way) by Canabarro (WIEDERSPAHN, 1980, p. 74-75).

Referring to this episode, the authors of the work "The Farroupilha Revolution — documentary history for youth" claim that the attack "he left 100 dead on the field, 14 seriously injured and more than 300 prisoners. The Imperials took the armaments, more than 1,000 horses and the Canabarro file. After this devastating defeat, the farroupilha definitively accepted peace" (AHRGS-2, 1985, p.109). Moacyr FLORES, in his book "Modelo politico dos farrapos", endorses this accusation: "the republican infantry, made up of Blacks, was decimated because the day before David Canabarro had ordered that their cartridges be removed." (1982, p.132) "More than 100 Black ex-slaves died, thus removing one of the obstacles for the Empire to accept peace, as Caxias had instructions not to grant freedom to former slaves who fought as soldiers at República Riograndense" (2001, p.482). And Calvet FAGUNDES informs that "in the combat of Porongos [...] 80% of the dead who remained on the battlefield were Blacks who had raised the alarm by committing to action and who had saved the honor of the Republic Army." (1989, p.252). Alfredo VARELA openly accuses David Canabarro of treason:

It was, however, the copies of his letters [...] that gave me the almost conviction that David was a criminal, and I became very aware that he was nothing more than one, after listening to four unsuspecting contemporaries, incapable of the slightest slide, in or out of charge: José Custódio Alves de Sousa, Manuel Alves da Silva Caldeira, João Amado and José Gomes Jardim, Alcinha Beco. The condemnatory vote was unanimous, the latter being the one that put an end to my doubts, because he belonged to the circle of the minority, that is, of those who had David as their lord-protector. As to having been his brother, Beco did him full justice, and the present work contains one of the most favorable judgments regarding the caudillo. In the chapter on the calamitous incident, which prevented the continuation of the fight, his statements were terribly accusing. However, he stated "he did not believe that Canabarro would sell himself. He believed that, wanting the latter to make peace, he had decided to get rid of those who opposed him. These operations (*adiu*) that he determined, dividing and weakening, prove it. gathering

strength," etc. "They would still fight today, if it weren't for the betrayal. There were still about three thousand men in arms", "magnificent people", in the concept of a legalist. [note n° 298 —there are testimonies of Captain Felisberto Cândido Pinto Bandeira very similar to those of Beco, except in one point. He says that the majority "did not want peace, that Canabarro let himself be defeated at Porongos to make a peace that would give him position and especially fortune, because he didn't care much about positions, but he was ambitious for money" (1933, p. .500).

The behavior of António Vicente da FONTOURA —nominated by Canabarro for the peace talks —is also very suspicious. On the night of November 13, which preceded the Porongos massacre, he noted in his diary: "Tomorrow is my march to Rio de Janeiro. I must first go to the Barão de Caxias camp to meet with the other he orders from you." On November 18, he writes again, as if nothing had happened:

I don't want to [...] describe the setback we had on the 14th because Gabriel is going and he has to tell us. [...] On the 16th I left our camp to continue the peace negotiations and reaching this point, I contracted the Baron on the same principles, and so tomorrow I must go to Court (1985, p. 143-145).

Information that even denies the "legend" that, after the Porongos setback, in response, Canabarro and his followers would have suspended peace negotiations with Caxias, "in a gesture of dismay and pride". Bento Gonçalves' indignation with Canabarro, after the combat of Porongos, can be measured by the letter he sent to a friend named Silvano, dated 27.11.1844, where he states that:

[...] indispensable paths along which he had to advance were so visible that they could only be ignored by those who didn't want to see or hear, or by those who only wanted to listen to traitors, perhaps bought by the enemy!!! [...] Losing battles belongs to captains and no one can be exempt from this; but directing a mass and preparing it to suffer a similar surprise [...] is [...] cowardice of the man who conducts himself that way (SILVA, 1985, p. 256).

Ivo CAGGIANI — an author who disagrees with the opinion that David Canabarro plotted a betrayal in the battle at Porongos — cites the work of Alfredo Ferreira Rodrigues where he recognizes that Canabarro disarmed the Black spearmen the night before the attack, presenting extremely fanciful explanations to justify such a strange behavior of someone who, even informed of the approach of Moringue, chose not to take precautions and even disarmed the farroupilha Blacks. The secret letter from Caxias to Chico Pedro, plotting the massacre, is also explained by Ferreira Rodrigues as a ruse by Chico Pedro to demoralize Canabarro and cause division among the



farroupilhas. But Ferreira himself does not hide his perplexity and asks: "Why Canabarro never defended himself, [...] denying this document, contenting himself with saying: —Time will justify me! Why Caxias, afterwards of peace, never defended it, contradicting Chico Pedro's intrigue? Why?" (CAGGIANI, 1992, p.245)

Sometime before, Chico Pedro had imprisoned an official from Canabarro, who asked him not to deport him, sparing him the work and miseries he would suffer. Chico Pedro said that he would only release him on condition that he go and work for the government with the republican infantry, where he would find companions. Asking the prisoner who they were, Chico Pedro told him that that was the key to the secret, but that he had to work, that they would appear. The officer indignantly refused. Chico Pedro, pretending to be moved by his pleas, he released him afterwards, without saying any more to him. The officer, arriving at the republican camp, reported the proposal to General Netto, who communicated it to Canabarro. This one, pretexting the need wanting to replace the old cartridge, he had it collected, saying that he would distribute another one, but the delivery was delayed (CAGGIANI, 1992, p. 244-245)

Evidently, it is implausible that Caxias had any interest in denigrating David Canabarro, the farrapo leader whom he trusted the most and who he counted on to convince the other chiefs to accept peace. As for Chico Pedro, he would be the person least interested in divulging a document and a version that stripped him of all the honors of a resounding victory like that of Porongos. Analyzing the justification presented by Alfredo Ferreira Rodrigues to cast doubt on the aforementioned letter from the then Baron of Caxias to Chico Pedro, the author of the collection of official letters from Caxias, published in 1950 by the Military Press, in Rio de Janeiro, states, on pp. 147-148, in an attached note: "the defense of A. F. Rodrigues of Cabarro seems weak to me. I consider the document legitimate, since Francisco Pedro would not have any convenience in disclosing a document that would strip him of all the honors of a resounding victory, as was judged the surprise of Porongos" (WIEDERSPAHN, 1980, p.79). Likewise, the Historical Archive of Rio Grande do Sul published the entirety of the letter from Caxias to Chico Pedro, without putting its authenticity in doubt at any time. As for us, we were able to have our hands and personally examine the aforementioned document, which is kept in the Historical Archive of Rio Grande do Sul, Varela Collection, Box 6, Pack 22, document CV-3730. Attached to this essay is its transcription, in accordance with the AHRS. For all this, despite the historical controversy regarding the "Betrayal of Porongos", the

overwhelming majority of the evidence is in the direction of its confirmation. A few days later, there was a new setback for the farroupilhas' weapons: Teixeira Nunes and the remnants of his Black Lancers were sent by Canabarro to carry out a highly reckless action (over which, due to the high risk, suspicion also hangs), in the enemy rear:

He had to collect taxes and supply the troops with what they needed in the Arroio Grande district. It should also, if possible, fall straight into the imperial cavalry deposit, beyond S. Gonçalves. Teixeira, although an omen, it was done with dexterity. [...] Realizing that he was now entirely cut off from the army, he sought to gather his flying departures to distance himself [...] noticing in the village above and on the coast of Chasqueiro, the revolutionary contingent was moving in frank retreat towards the northwest, when its misfortune put it in the claws of one of the bravest cubs of the powerful condor, avid for the farrapo substance, which flew and fluttered, in that department of the Republic. The 26th was encamping near Canudos, and Fidelis, the appointed subordinate and good disciple, fell suddenly on the retreatants. [...] he witnessed the exact miniature of what had been seen in Porongos: total and ruinous wreckage. Many succumbed under the legalist iron, spreading the apology of the Abreus that, among those killed in the surprise, was the noble Teixeira, illustrious among the most illustrious boxers of the golden decade. Yet another scandalous untruth, disseminated by the victors' mob. It's fake! "Prisoner, he was murdered" (VARELA, 1933, p. 258-259).

Cláudio Moreira BENTO also confirms the murder of Teixeira Nunes, already wounded:

The end of the greatest farrapo lancer was thus described by [...] Manoel Alves Caldeira [...] By order of Canabarro, after Porongos, Teixeira Nunes went camping on the Chasqueiro stream. Chico Pedro went looking for him there on November 26, 1844. "Chico Pedro was marching along the royal road towards the pass where Teixeira Nunes was —the most fearsome and respected enemy [...] The enemy charged the force of Teixeira Nunes who, unable to bear the charges, was defeated and pursued from death to death. Teixeira's Nunes horse was shot and even so he continued to defend himself with his spear. But he was also shot with the said spear and, no longer able to handle it, he was surrounded by those who followed him closest and gave him a shot in the thigh. Then he fell from his horse, at which time Chico Pedro arrived, to whom he said: Colonel, don't let me be killed. Chico Pedro followed and turning his face to the side said: —

Don't kill the man. Teixeira had made a distress signal and died"  
(BENTO, 1992, p. 176-177).

After the "Porongos' Surprise", peace talks accelerated. The question of the fate to be given to the farrapos Blacks was one of the most intricate questions to be equated. David Canabarro and Vicente da Fontoura, like the Imperials, worked to resolve the problem by disarming the Farrapos and moving them away from the province. Article 5 of the Reserved Instructions (dated December 18, 1844), sent to Caxias, stipulated that "the slaves who were part of the rebel forces presented will be sent to this Court at the disposal of the Imperial Government, which will give them the convenient destination" (WIEDERSPAHN, 1980, p.13). In a letter to Chico Pedro, dated January 15, 1845, Caxias refers that the farrapos "asked me, through Fontoura, permission to gather everyone at a point I wanted to mark, in order to deliberate their dispersion there and the delivery of slaves". Caxias designated Estância das as Cunhas, in Ponche Verde, as the place where he would receive the Black farrapos. According to Alfredo VARELA, Canabarro acts in complete complicity with Caxias, who will say: "David Canabarro (...) is today the boss in whose good faith I trust most, and he promises me to be his first step, as soon as he arrives at the marked point, order the delivery of all the slaves that he still keeps in arms, and that form his main force". According to VARELA:

Still covered with the insignia of the emancipating generalate, His Excellency. he had gone down that he was only going to hand over one of those trustful auxiliaries to authority for money and he had handed over to the marshal-president the Blacks who had fought with him for more than nine years! In other words, he agreed that they would be reduced to their ignoble primitive condition, the freedmen, whose fabulous devotion, whose ferocious incontinence in the war arena, filled Garibaldi with astonishment! [...] Thanks to the weakness of the once mighty David, the wonderful spearmen, the stupendous hunters, ram and unrivaled bulwark of American freedom, would pass, from guarding and defending the hitherto immaculate tricolor standard, to the slave quarters and the farm!!! With a humiliation that even today would shake smug or sensitive souls, they would pass, from the open plains, to the closed enclosure of the imperial estate of Sta. Cruz, in character, no longer slaves of their former masters, but of the Brazilian Nation, which would deliver their value to them, so that the sacred right of property would remain intangible! (1933, p. 297-298).

However, VARELA himself affirms that this last betrayal of the farrapo Blacks was not fully consummated, because Caxias —taking advantage of the provisions of the Imperial Notice of 11.19.1838, which said that those freed by the Riograndense Republic who presented themselves at the service of legality they would be recognized as free, their former owners being compensated —he would have taken them out of the province and freed them, which even caused him strong censures from the reactionary society of the time:

Yet they suffered the foretold humiliation; Canabarro separated 120 of them from his ranks, like someone making a 'split' of cattle, and the herd of poor people led him, the general's collaborators, to the presence of Caxias. This one, it seems, sent them out of the Province [...] multitudes, they followed everything with the letter of manumission or they received it, when arriving at the port of disembarkation. This is what can be reconciled in later debates in Parliament (1913, p. 298).

Doubts still persist regarding the final destination of the former slaves who fought in the farroupilha troops and were delivered by Canabarro to Caxias. Everything indicates, however, that VARELA's opinion holds that Caxias took advantage of the provisions that allowed freeing slaves who surrendered, in order to manumission them. In the same sense, the investigations of Margarete BAKOS point out, who analyzes the discussions in the Council of State about the compensation to the former owners:

Perhaps one of the best sources [...] is the discussions in the State Council on compensation for owners whose slaves fought on the side of the farroupilhas. The long controversy that the matter generated ended with the decision to stipulate the amount of 400\$000 for the payment of compensation to the owners. The interesting thing is that, despite the protest of some board members, who considered the amount of the price of the Black slave for the purchase to be ridiculous, it was maintained with the argument that "the amount of 400\$000 cannot justly be considered the price inferior to the deserving of those slaves, considering their inevitable demoralization, which will make them intolerable to their masters, and of no value in the market" (1985, p. 94).

VARELA also reports on heated debates in parliament on the subject, citing the "Annals" of 1845:

Joaquim Antão Fernandes Leão requested, on May 5, explanations regarding [...] a notice that, he says, "is not in the collections, he asked for a copy of it, whose doctrine seems to him

"an attack on the right of property" and he ends up asking how many slaves were manumitted. Alvares Machado, who takes a hand in the debate, reflects that requesting clarification is an unknown right of the opposition, but he thinks that what was fair later is not now handed over by the revolution, were freed thanks to what was established in the notice of November 19, 1838, whose 5<sup>3rd</sup> ordered that all slaves militarized by the rebels who presented themselves to the legal forces were evaluated and set free, evaluated to pay them to their owners'. This was done (continues) with those of Bahia, at the time of Independence. It can already be seen, therefore, that Marshal Caxias did nothing more than fulfill the Emperor's word in that warning given in the face of all. [. ..] Álvaro Machado explains that the slaves in the service of the revolt, did not return to the power of the masters, and that did not exceed those of 200, including in the sum the 120 that David gave in the act of peace (1933, p. 507-508).

## Conclusion

All of the above, well documented, shows us, in the first place, the enormous contribution of the Black Lancers —and of the Blacks in general —to the farroupilha struggle. Contribution that was not limited to his participation in the armed resistance, but that was also expressed in the most varied productive and administrative activities. It can be said, without fear of being wrong, that in the absence of this contribution, the Republic would not have resisted the Empire's dominion for so many years. On the other hand, historical facts indicate how far from reality is the traditional historiography — laudatory of the "(white) Centaurs of the Pampas" —which, while "forgetting" the decisive participation of Blacks in the Farroupilha struggle, idealizes the spirit "libertarian" and "emancipator" of the big landowners who led the struggle for the Federation and the Republic in the then Province of São Pedro, ignoring their contradictions in the face of the serfdom issue and denying episodes such as the betrayal of Porongos. Likewise, the investigation shows the insufficiency of certain superficial interpretations — which often border on pamphletism — incapable of understanding the historically progressive character of the struggle for the Republic and for Federation, and against the slave and centralist Empire. Progressive character that explains the strong adherence to the Farroupilha struggle of slaves, freed Blacks, mestizos, Indians and "poor people from the countryside". Such anachronistic analyses, in addition to failing to perceive the profound contradictions between the farroupilha leaders, reduce the issue solely to the direction of this struggle by the Gaucho rural oligarchies, ignoring the moment and the historical conditions in which it took place,

which made it impossible to a hegemony of the popular sectors. It would be the same as denying the progressive character of the struggle for the independence of the English colonies in North America, because it was led by large landowners and the incipient North American bourgeoisie. Or deny the progressive character of the French revolution because it was Hegemonized by the "Third Estate", that is, by the nascent French bourgeoisie. Thus, a balanced assessment of the facts indicates, firstly, that the participation of Blacks in the farroupilha revolution was prominent and decisive, being seen by them as a way to conquer their freedom. In this sense, it is important to point out that the farroupilhas — either because of the demands of the military struggle, or because of the particularities of slavery in Rio Grande do Sul — did not hesitate to take up arms and incorporate into their armies the slaves they freed, unlike other revolts at the same time throughout Brazil, where the elites did not have the courage to do so. But, at the same time, the farrapos leaders, due to their class limitations, were not able to take the next step, the total abolition of slavery. Which, possibly, would have guaranteed them victory. The divisions among the farroupilhas themselves, as previously exposed, weighed heavily in this. Finally, the investigation proves that the Combat of Porongos resulted from an agreement between Caxias and Canabarro, with the objective of: 1) eliminating the greatest possible number of Black Lancers, minimizing the problem created by the demand of the farroupilha leaders of liberation of Blacks who fought in the Farrapo Army; 2) cause a strategic defeat to the republican forces, removing the last resistance to the laying down of arms and the peace agreement. A historical reparation for this betrayal is required.

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