

Quebra-Quilos and Peasant Resistance:  
Peasants, Religion, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil

by

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A Dissertation

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## **ABSTRACT**

On October 31, 1874, market-goers in the town of Fagundes, near Campina Grande, Paraíba, rioted, smashing recently-installed scales based on weights and measures of the metric system. They resorted to violence to protest increased taxes, high prices of goods, the forced implementation of the metric system, fear of being drafted into the army or enslaved, and the imprisonment of two leading bishops. Dubbed Quebra-Quilos, or “Break the Scales,” by the authorities, this uprising quickly spread from Paraíba to Pernambuco, Alagoas, and Rio Grande do Norte, fifty uprisings in all, before finally being suppressed by the authorities.

This dissertation reconstructs the social and political world of peasants in the northeast. Examinations of what I believe to be an alliance between the peasants and various priests allows my analysis to integrate the rural lower classes with the high politics of the empire. It brings to light the issue of what constitutes morally acceptable behavior by groups of people faced with what they viewed as an impossible economic future and violations of community norms of justice: what happens when groups of people (in this case mostly peasants, but cutting across class lines, with the apparent alliance with priests) see their economic livelihood, social status, and religious institutions threatened by egregious violations of acceptable behavior. In this case, the government was held to be the cause of the current crises and was targeted by these rioters as a result.

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## **NOTE ON CURRENCY**

The monetary unit for nineteenth-century Brazil was the reis, milreis, and conto. One milreis equaled 1,000 reis, written out as 1\$000. The conto was made up of 1,000 milreis, written out as 1:000\$000. Although the value of the milreis fluctuated widely throughout the century, the 1871 exchange rate with the US dollar, as an example, was forty-nine cents. Thus the 200-400 reis tax (or \$200-\$400) discussed throughout the text equaled roughly 9.8 to 19.6 cents.



## INTRODUCTION

On October 31, 1874, market-goers in the northeastern Brazilian town of Fagundes, near Campina Grande, Paraíba, rioted, smashing recently-installed scales based on weights and measures of the metric system. Largely peasants, they resorted to violence to protest increased taxes, high prices of goods, the forced implementation of the metric system, fear of being drafted into the army or enslaved, and the imprisonment of two leading bishops. Dubbed Quebra-Quilos, or “Break the Scales,” by the authorities, this uprising quickly spread from Paraíba to Pernambuco, Alagoas, and Rio Grande do Norte, roughly fifty uprisings in all, before finally being suppressed by the authorities.

This dissertation reconstructs the social and political world of peasants in northeastern Brazil. It examines the alliance between the peasants and various priests in order to integrate the rural lower classes with the high politics of the empire. It also brings to light the issue of what constituted morally acceptable behavior by groups of people faced with what they viewed as an impossible economic future and violations of community norms of justice: what happens when groups of people (in this case mostly peasants, but cutting across class lines, with the apparent alliance with priests) see their economic livelihood, social status, and religious institutions threatened by egregious violations of acceptable behavior. E. P. Thompson noted in “The Moral Economy” this exact situation, when he reported that, in the eighteenth-century,

It is possible to detect in almost every eighteenth-century crowd action some legitimizing notion. By the notion of legitimation I mean that the men and women in the crowd were informed by the belief that they were defending

traditional rights or customs; and, in general, that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, he argues that:

[T]hese grievances operated within a popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices.... This in turn was grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor. An outrage to these moral assumptions, quite as much as actual deprivation, was the usual occasion for direct action.<sup>2</sup>

And though Thompson was writing on the eighteenth-century, his findings are especially relevant with the case of Quebra-Quilos. Here, the government—local, provincial, and imperial—was held to be the cause of the current crises; they violated “the moral economy of the poor,” forming an “occasion for direct action”: Quebra-Quilos.

This dissertation also investigates popular religious beliefs among rural Brazilian peasants. The public/private, religious/secular, and social/political dichotomies are all vital aspects of this dissertation. Popular beliefs were both challenged and reinforced by the authorities, leading to a religious crisis which pitted the Church against the State. However, as this dissertation demonstrates, peasants were not merely allowing their views to be manipulated by the authorities, but they actively participated, sometimes violently so, in creating and sustaining traditional forms of religious practices and institutions. In doing so, the alliance with priests was seen as invaluable. Not only did this alliance morally justify uprisings that also had economic components, but it became an integral part of the crisis itself, as they were fighting to support the Church as their

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<sup>1</sup> E.P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the Eighteenth-Century Crowd,” in *Past & Present* 51 (May 1971), 78

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

moral leaders against heterodoxy, especially Masonry. In exploring the peasant and clerical alliances in opposition to the state, this work examines cleavages within the church. While many clerics appear to have allied with the rioters, others supported the authorities in attempting to repress them. In short, this work looks not only at resistance to the demands of the state, but also a moral framework in which peasants sided with rebellious priests in opposition to what they both perceived as an increasingly secular state.

In reconstructing the long neglected social world of the free rural poor, this project contributes to a broader understanding of the Brazilian Empire. Much of the historiography supports the notion that the Second Empire in Brazil (1841-1889) was relatively peaceful. This dissertation, in exploring this series of revolts demonstrates the need to reexamine the assumptions of a peaceful countryside characterized by a high degree of consensus. It extends Hamilton de Mattos Monteiro's findings that this period in Brazilian history was anything but nonviolent and peaceful.<sup>3</sup> By highlighting what happened when the traditional relationships between peasants and landowners broke down, this work suggests limits to the social control upheld by patronage in nineteenth-century Brazil, a topic so ably analyzed in Richard Graham's path-breaking work, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*.<sup>4</sup>

Chapter One focuses on filling the historiographical void. Since this uprising was one of the largest uprisings during the Second Empire, Chapter One is dedicated exclusively to narrating the events of that revolt, beginning with the origins in Paraíba

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<sup>3</sup> Hamilton de Mattos Monteiro, *Crise Agrária e Luta de Classes (O Nordeste Brasileiro entre 1850 e 1889)*. (Brasília: Horizonte Editora Limitada, 1980), 22-28.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

and then following the general path along which the revolt spread, from November 1874 to February 1875. It presents the reader with a narrative of the key aspects of the revolt, to be analyzed more thoroughly in subsequent chapters. Peasant voices are pulled out of the historical record not from their own writings, as none exists to be found, but through interpretations by governmental officials: police commissioners (*delegados*), deputy commissioners (*subdelegados*), block inspectors (*inspetores de quarteirão*), county judges (*juizes municipais*), district judges (*juizes de direito*), justices of the peace (*juizes de paz*), district attorneys (*promotores públicos*), military officers, and above all, provincial presidents.

Cecília Loreta Mariz, in look at the poor in contemporary Brazil in *Coping with Poverty*, that “poor people are not helpless; they can and do act in order to change their situation.”<sup>5</sup> In the case of this dissertation, the poor are seen as “the agents of social transformation,” although “transformation” should refer to retroactive change, or attempts to return to a time when life was “better.” This dissertation, then, merges this perspective with that of E.P. Thompson: peasants can and often are the agents most ardently *opposed* to social change.<sup>6</sup>

In 1875, Henrique Augusto Millet, an engineer and plantation owner, published a series of newspaper articles in which he argued that the cause of the revolts stemmed from the sad state of the economy in the 1870s.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation has much merit.

Chapter Two examines the economic context of the Quebra-Quilos revolt. Although the

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<sup>5</sup> Cecília Loreto Mariz, *Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 5.

<sup>6</sup> E.P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the Eighteenth-Century Crowd,” in *Past & Present* 51 (May 1971).

<sup>7</sup> Henrique Augusto Millet, *Os Quebra-Quilos e a Crise da Lavoura*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (São Paulo: Global, 1987).

American Civil War allowed for a significant increase in the export of cotton from Brazil's Northeast, the market for Brazilian cotton collapsed with the resumption of cotton exports after the Civil War and the expansion of cotton production in India and Egypt. But the Northeast's traditional export crop, sugar, was also experiencing stress. With production costs exceeding export prices on the eve of the revolt, all levels of northeastern society began to suffer. Plantation owners reacted by selling slaves to the coffee regions of the Southeast and turning to the free peasants as their replacements. The state reacted by increasing taxes to make up for the loss of import/export revenues; in Pernambuco, thirty-two new taxes were passed from 1870-1875 and twenty-nine preexisting taxes increased. The peasants, as they had traditionally done, turned to the landowners for assistance. But the landowners were themselves suffering from the economic crisis, and were attempting to ride out the economic slump with fewer slaves. They therefore turned to the peasants for additional labor. Peasants suffered the additional indignity of seeing their social status decline as they took over the work previously done by slaves, and frightening rumors began circulating that they would soon be enslaved themselves. Then came new taxes, threatening the ability of the peasants to acquire food and other basic necessities.

Chapter Three looks at religion, or, more accurately, the "Religious Question." Not dissimilar to the Mexican peasants under Father Hidalgo in 1810 who shouted "Long live religion" and "Death to bad government," the peasants of the Brazilian Quebrados revolt shouted "Long live religion and death to the Masons," a direct consequence of the Religious Question of 1872-1875. It was in 1872 that the recently appointed bishop of the diocese of Olinda (Pernambuco), Vital Maria Gonçalves de Oliveira, an

ardent ultramontanist, received word that the Masonic lodge of Recife was planning to celebrate a mass commemorating the anniversary of its foundation. Pope Pius IX had recently published on December 8, 1864 the *Syllabus of Errors*, the addenda on the encyclical *Quanta Cura*, which denounced Masonry. However, this encyclical never received the imperial placet, meaning the pope's condemnation should not have reached the desk of the bishop. But it had, and Bishop Vital ordered the clergy not to participate in the Masonic anniversary. He further instructed all Catholic brotherhoods—important social institutions in nineteenth-century Brazil—to expel all Masonic members. After many of the brotherhoods refused to expel their Masonic members, Bishop Vital, along with Bishop Macedo Costa of Pará, suspended the offending brotherhoods. The government ordered the reversal of the suspension, and when the bishops refused, ordered their arrests. Their trials in February and June 1874 led to their imprisonment.

In support of these bishops, many priests in the Brazilian Northeast began preaching disobedience to select laws; Father Nóbrega, for example, preached that one need not obey a “Masonic” government, as many high-ranking officials were Masons. Scholars are divided as to whether or not evidence exists to support the argument that the Religious Question caused the Quebra-Quilos revolt. This chapter suggests that many of the Jesuits deported by the government during the Religious Question did indeed sympathize with the ultramontane priests, that many priests actively preached against the government, and that many peasants felt morally justified in the revolt by citing defense of religion as justification, in one instance slashing the portrait of D. Pedro with a knife while claiming that he was a Mason, and in another attempting to dig up the body of a Mason that had been buried in the church cemetery. In short, although economic reasons

may have been more immediate causes of this uprising, the Religious Question provided moral justification.

Todd Diacon noted in *Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality*, that millenarianism and millenarian movements result from “an internal crisis of values,” both material as well as spiritual. Here, the material crisis was the economic downturn and rise in taxes, and the religious crisis revolved around the clash between the clergy and the state—the Religious Question. Millenarian movements, he argues, “promise to heal the suffering caused by a spiritual, as well as a material, crisis.”<sup>8</sup> I agree. But it appears in the case of Quebra-Quilos that peasants need not become millenarian to address those concerns; they can collectively destroy the *symbols* of the material crisis (break the scales, for example) in defense of upholding the values of the other, the spiritual crisis. Thus no millenarian movement resulted as a result of this uprising.

Chapter Four examines the Recruitment Law of 1874. Social agitation followed from the passage of a new law designed to modernize the military. Traditionally, the military recruited into its ranks those accused of crimes, real or imagined, depending on manpower requirements. And from 1864-1870, during the Paraguayan War, the need for troops was great. In the 1870s, under the guise of modernization, the imperial government passed a law ordering the registration of all adult males; a lottery would decide those who would actually be drafted, draftees serving for six years. Eric Hobsbawm argued in setting up his analysis on “banditry as a social phenomenon” that peasants turn to banditry as a way “[to] resist the encroaching power of outside authority

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<sup>8</sup> Todd Diacon, *Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality. Brazil's Contestado Rebellion, 1912-1916*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991), 132.

and capital.”<sup>9</sup> The uprising against the Recruitment Law of 1874 demonstrates that when outside authority attempt to alter the system, peasants collectively resisted. Thus when the Quebra-Quilos revolt erupted, then, not only did the peasants destroy the weights and scales, but they then went on to destroy all tax and notarial records—all records important for taxing the peasants, registering land ownership, and recording peasant names for military recruitment.

Chapter Five looks at modernization and the implementation of the metric system in Brazil. If a key cause of discontent stemmed from the economic decline in Northeastern Brazil, to make matters worse, the cost of food also rose. But to the peasants, the cost increase seemed to be the direct result of political machinations in Rio de Janeiro. The imperial government, in a modernization campaign, sought in 1873 to begin enforcing an 1862 law mandating the use of the metric system, at pain of imprisonment and/or fines. However, merchants would have to pay for the scales and pay a tax to have them declared the official weight. Since the scales were on average ten percent smaller than the traditional measurements, merchants merely sold their goods at the same prices. But, with volume having diminished, the reality was an increase in the price of goods sold at the markets. To make matters worse, an additional tax was placed on everything sold at the market—the *imposto do chão*. This, too demonstrates a material crisis among the peasants and would be attacked as symbols of that crisis.

The final chapter, Chapter Six, looks at the suppression of the revolt. Although the actual revolt was indeed very important, the suppression of these movements and subsequent arrests and recruitment, demonstrate ways in which the authorities dealt with

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<sup>9</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Banditry*, rev. ed., (New York: New York Press, 2000), 9.



it, aiding in our understanding of how the centralized government system of imperial Brazil reached out down to local levels. It began in Fagundes, but then dozens of uprisings occurred throughout the Northeast, only to disappear with the arrival of the military. Repression was brutal, but with the revolt already having died out, the tactics employed by the military revealed only that there was no overall leader of this revolt, only local leaders of the individual uprisings. With no leader to serve as spokesman, giving voice to the peasants, and only one-sided accounts (official reports, newspapers, etc), historians have desisted from explaining the revolt itself, relying on half-hearted attempts at mentioning a revolt did indeed occur, and it was probably caused by economic and/or religious factors.

One often wonders how to give “voice to the voiceless,” or at least to tell their story in as unbiased a fashion as possible. Mark Thurner, in *From Two Republics to One Divided* demonstrated how that can be accomplished. Based on his demonstration of how it could be done, I too have chosen official correspondence, judicial records, police proceedings, ecclesiastical records, newspaper publications, and other official records (such as law codes) as the basis of my primary research.

This revolt is perhaps the most important one of the Second Empire. It was the culmination of the economic decline in the Northeast, the upheaval over religion and politics, restructuring of the system of military recruitment and the questioning by the peasants of the overall process of modernization. Thus this work examines modernization, exploring ways in which it corresponds and ways in which it conflicts with traditional peasant societies. The analysis exams the extent of discontent over the Religious Question, which in turn contributed to the overthrow of D. Pedro II. This work

also illustrates peasant attempts to reverse time, to return to an era in which peasants and patrons both knew their places and mutually worked to each other's benefit. And it demonstrates at ground level the effects on peasants of the decline in traditional crops in a monoculture system. In short, this dissertation aims to examine a large array of social issues through the Quebra-Quilos revolt.

## CHAPTER 1

### TIPPING THE SCALES

#### **Introduction**

On October 31, 1874, at the marketplace of Fagundes, near the city of Campina Grande, Paraíba, a regular market was being held as was tradition. This time, however, the buying and selling of local goods and merchant products was accompanied by grumblings and shouts as individuals exclaimed that they were no longer going to pay the market taxes—the *imposto do chão*. This tax consisted of 100 reis for each carried load of goods (by volume) and 200 reis for each unit of weight.<sup>10</sup>

The name, as it suggests, referred to an area of land (*chão*) in which the seller would deposit his or her goods. Upon touching the ground, a tax would then have to be paid to the municipal tax collector as he came by. Shouts increased as the multitude joined in and chased away the tax collector. They also proceeded to tear down all the posted lists of provincial taxes which they found, although it is unclear as to whether this was actually before or after the uprising occurred.<sup>11</sup> Thus, argued one witness, the cause of this uprising at Fagundes was discontent over the payment of municipal taxes—the *imposto do chão* having been a key municipal tax implemented in 1873.<sup>12</sup> That accomplished, the peasants began to break the scales and measurements of the newly

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<sup>10</sup> Arquivo Nacional (hereafter AN), Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, President of Paraíba Silvino Elvidio Carneiro da Cunha to Justice Minister Manuel Antonio Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 31-32.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. Colonel Severiano da Fonseca, who Rio de Janeiro sent to crush the uprising, after investigating, declared that “the movement began because of the collection of the *imposto do chão*.” See “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do comandante das forças imperiaes estacionadas na Província da Parahyba do Norte,” *Publicações do Arquivo Nacional*, 34 (1937), 114.

implemented metric system. Since the use of these new measurements also required a tax to be paid, breaking them was a natural extension of their grievances over taxes. A local uprising had now occurred. And had it stopped here, it may have been remembered as merely another small rural agitation, if remembered at all. However, it quickly spread to the municipal center of Campina Grande and throughout the entire region of the northeastern states of Paraíba, Pernambuco, Alagoas, and Rio Grande do Norte, becoming a full-fledged rebellion.<sup>13</sup>

Investigations following the uprisings demonstrate the peasants' anger as well as a natural turning to local leaders for guidance. In Fagundes, nearly all witnesses attested, it was "spontaneous, without any plans or head,"<sup>14</sup> but in Campina Grande, where it spread next, nearly all rebels followed identifiable leaders. Seven individuals in particular stand out as leading groups of agitators in what became known as the Quebra-Quilos revolt, although much to the dismay of the central government as well as subsequent historians, no single leader stood out as guiding the overall movement in general. As will be analyzed in more details in subsequent chapters, the cause of this revolt was a combination of complex factors, including a region in the midst of economic stagnation and even collapse, rising taxes to deal with the decline in governmental revenues, the ultramontane controversy and its accompanying concern with Masons, and a reform in the military recruitment system. Moreover, the government imposed the metric system, which became the initial focus of the rioters, although rioters did not stop

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<sup>13</sup> A short though incomplete overview of this uprising can be found in Hamilton Mattos Monteiro, *Revolta do Quebra-Quilos*. (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> AN, *Op. Cit.*, 92.

with the destruction of weights and measures, but went on to address pent-up grievances through violent—but rarely deadly—means.



**Map 1: Brazil during the Empire.** Source Thomas E. Skidmore, *Brazil : Five Centuries of Change*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3.

### ***Taxes and Tax Records***

Although the authorities would label this revolt the Quebra-Quilo in reference to the metric system, the reality was that this was first and foremost a tax revolt.

Throughout the month of November 1874, rumors began to spread that many peasants in Fagundes, in the province of Paraíba, were planning to come to the main city of Campina

Grande to do away with provincial taxes.<sup>15</sup> Chapter Two discusses why these rumors were spreading any why they evolved into riots, although a key aspect here is that the peasants simply refused to pay any more taxes.



**Map 2: Paraíba.** Source: Hamilton de Mattos Monteiro, *Revolta do Quebra-Quilos*. (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1995), 17.

In Paraíba, on both November 7 as well as November 14, resistance to the payment of taxes occurred at the weekly markets of Fagundes. The most grievous, as will be discussed below, was that of the *imposto do chão*.<sup>16</sup> According to one official, Colonel Fonseca, peasants from this town itself and neighboring regions attacked this city repeatedly on November 14, 21, 23, 28, and on December 2, 4, and 5.<sup>17</sup> During the first attack, on the November 7, the district judge, accompanied with the vicar, raced to the scene and attempted to convince the rioters that they were not paying an overly high rate of taxes and therefore needed to desist. They both failed in their attempts: as reported by

<sup>15</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 22

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 35 and 37 for imposto do chão, 42 and 45 for the implementation of the metric system, and 45, 51, 65, 74 and 79 for the new law of recruitment.

<sup>17</sup> "Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do commandante," 115.

the Paraíba government to Rio de Janeiro in May of 1875, no amount of cajoling could convince the peasants to resume paying their taxes.<sup>18</sup>

Within two weeks, this anti-tax revolt had spread beyond Fagundes; on November 21, nearly all of Fagundes' neighboring towns were attacked, though in no concerted action.<sup>19</sup> According to information presented to the General Legislative Assembly in 1875, it was on that day, a Saturday, that close to 800 armed men descended on the town of Ingá, east of Fagundes.<sup>20</sup> Since they were refusing to pay anymore taxes, they sought to destroy all government records which were being used to collect these taxes. Thus they sought out the archives of the town council, burned them, and then broke into the county building (*casa da comarca*) and destroyed all of the papers that they had found there as well.<sup>21</sup> Here at Ingá, the rioters not only burned the tax records, but then forced the police commander, Aranha, to sign a paper in which he agreed, among other items, to end all new taxes.<sup>22</sup> Aranha did so, and then, according to A

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<sup>18</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, "Paraíba Minister Dispatch", May 21, 1875.

<sup>19</sup> The actual cities were: Alagoa Grande, Alagoa Nova, Pilões, Arara, Ingá, Independencia, Bananeiras, Espalhada, Esperança, Guanabira, Fagundes, Serra do Pontes, Mageiros, and Itabayana, in addition to Arêa and Campina Grande. See "Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante," 117 and *A Provincia*, November 27 1874.

<sup>20</sup> *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Quarta Sessão da Decima Quinta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Dr. Manoel Antoni Duarte de Azevedo* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1875), 2 (hereafter *Relatorio Apresentada á Assembléa Geral* [1875]) and Horácio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1958), 136.

<sup>21</sup> *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Quarta Sessão da Decima Quinta Legislatura*, 2-3, de Almeida, "Dom Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil," 164-165.

<sup>22</sup> Armando Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos: Lutas Sociais no Outono do Império*. (Campanhia Editora Nacional, 1978), 24

*Provincia*, handed his command over to the police lieutenant and fled the city, possibly to get government help, and possibly fearful for his life.<sup>24</sup>

The neighboring city of Areia was also attacked on this same Saturday.<sup>25</sup> And once again, the officials, including the district judge, João da Mata Correia Lima, could not oppose nor convince the rioters to desist. Rioters quickly disarmed his police force, and then proceeded to burn the city council papers and archival records. This time, though, they found a band and forced them to play music in accompaniment of the burning and destruction of the papers.<sup>26</sup>

Once the town of Ingá, the city of Areia, and other neighboring areas were attacked, and the archival records destroyed, rioters once again turn back to attack Campina Grande, which is locate southwest of Areia and northwest of Ingá (See Map #1 above). And again, tax records were burned. An example at this time and in this city serves to demonstrate the outrage of the

Paraíba cities, towns, and settlements attacked between November 7-27, 1874:
Alagoa Grande
Alagôia Nova
Arara
Areia
Bananeiras
Cabaceiras
Campina Grande
Espalhada
Esperança
Fagundes
Guarabira
Independencia
Ingá
Itabayana
Mageiros
Pilar
Pilões
São João do Cariri
Serra do Pontes

Table 1<sup>23</sup>

peasants over the taxes, while retaining loyalty to their Church leaders. Rumor arrived that João de Barros, being held in the city prison of Campina Grande on charges of

<sup>23</sup> "Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante," 117 and *A Provincia*, November 27 1874, De Almeida, "D. Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil", 164-165, Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 33-51, and *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléia Geral* (1875), 3. Also see Arquivo Público Estadual Jordão Emerenciano (hereafter APEJE), Códice "Officios Diversos," 1874-1879, MS24, From [unnamed] probate judge (juiz municipal dos orphões) to President of Pernambuco, Henrique Pereira da Lucena, Nov 26, 1874.

<sup>24</sup> *A Provincia*, November 27, 1874.

<sup>25</sup> de Almeida, "Dom Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil," 165.

<sup>26</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 33.



homicide, was about to be broken out of prison by his sons and brother. The vicar of Campina Grande, Calixto da Nóbrega, who would later be arrested as a key leader in the Quebra-Quilos movement, immediately requested the assistance of approximately eighty people to come from nearby Quemados to defend the jail. These eighty men did indeed come, but stated that they were willing to come to the city only to defend the prison, and made it known that they were opposed to taxes.<sup>27</sup>

The rumors proved to be true: João de Barros' family, including his brother, two sons, and roughly seven additional men, arrived and attacked the prison on the night of November 22. They had been briefly deterred earlier that day, perhaps as a result of the added security quickly implemented. But that night, when they arrived at the prison, they encountered a mere fifteen or sixteen troops guarding the jail. These troops, faced with approximately eight of Barros' followers, offered no resistance and in fact the provincial Police Chief Barretto later complained that instead they handed over their weapons to the criminals (which is why the police chief argued that the police troops guarding the jail that night should be arrested and punished).<sup>28</sup> The eighty men from Quemados proved useless as a defensive force, largely because of their refusal to protect a government which was implementing taxes to which they had voiced their opposition.

Rioters would again attack Campina Grande a number of additional times following this incident. On one such occasion, estimated to have been November 27 or 28, a group of rioters arrived and went to the house of the tax collector.<sup>29</sup> The provincial

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 71, 81, & 90.

<sup>28</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, "Paraíba Minister Dispatch (Despacho de Ministro Paraíba)," May 21, 1875.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 38.

tax collector lived in the settlement (*povoação*)<sup>30</sup> of Poçinhas. It was there that rioters destroyed the records of two individual tax collectors, provincial as well as a “general” tax collector, presumably in charge of collecting imperial taxes.<sup>31</sup> Upon arriving at the house of one of the tax collectors, the group knocked on the door. The collector, however, stated that he would only open his door in the morning. So this group kicked down the door and proceeded to ransack the house, searching for any applicable tax records.<sup>32</sup>

Following the destruction of the papers of the scribe, they proceeded to the house of the district judge. This time, one of the rioters, Caboclo Antonio, took the lead, breaking down the door with an axe. As was by now routine, they entered, ransacked the house, and burned all the papers they could find.<sup>33</sup> Afterwards, they proceeded to the city council building where they pried open the door with an iron bar. Finding the desired room locked, they broke down the door and began burning all the papers they could find. Lastly, they went to the house of the council scribe.<sup>34</sup> Various sources claim that on this night, the papers burned by this group included the civil and criminal records, papers from the justice of the peace, and property records.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> All records use the term *povoação*, which can also be translated as hamlet or community, but is most widely translated as settlement.

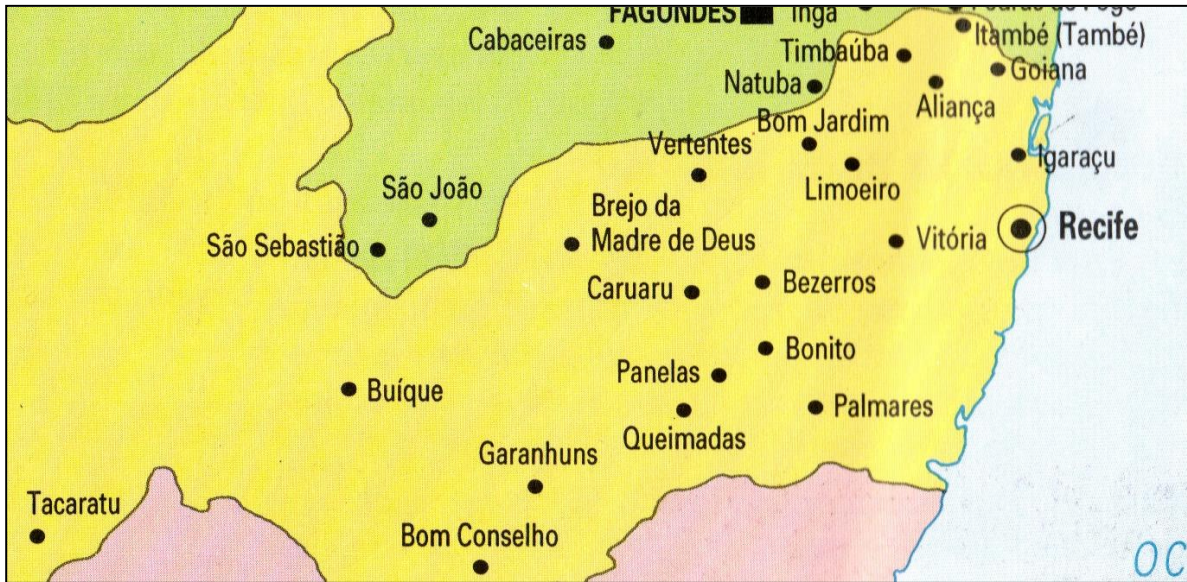
<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 34 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, 21 May 1875.

<sup>32</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 53.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 28, 30, & 38.



**Map 3: Pernambuco.** Source, Mattos Monteiro, *Revolta do Quebra-Quilos*, 17.

On the same day (November 21) that Paraíba erupted in revolt, so too did Pernambuco, the neighboring province to the south. On that day the Pernambucan city of Timbaúba, just southeast of Fagundes, a riot broke out. At first, reported the district judge, rioters began telling people in that town not to pay their municipal taxes. And since an official from the treasury just happened to be in the town, he became the target of the rioters who beat him, although not before first burning the papers of the office of the scribe of the deputy commissioner as well as those of the Justice of the peace.<sup>36</sup>

The closest Pernambucan city to Paraíba, Itambé, rests on the boundary with one street divided between the two provinces: one side of the road belongs to Paraíba and the other to Pernambuco.<sup>37</sup> Some sources claim that as the city closest to Paraíba, it was the first to be attacked on the twenty-first, although other sources refer to the attack being on the twenty-fourth.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, either November 21 or 24, various groups of rioters

<sup>36</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to [illegible], Dec 1, 1874.

began attacking the town of Itambé.<sup>39</sup> The local guard stationed in Itambé proved ineffective at stopping the entrance and subsequent destruction of the town by these rioters, so President Lucena, Provincial President of Pernambuco, sent a reinforcement of forty regular line troops on the twenty-seventh.<sup>40</sup> These regular soldiers, under the command of Captain Pedro de Alcantara Tiberia Capistrano, were hurriedly put aboard the steamship *Goyanna* and then force marched to Itambé.<sup>41</sup>

Upon arriving in Itambé on November 30, the reinforced troops confronted this uprising. In Itambé, where the rioters armed themselves with clubs, there were “very grave events,” according to the district judge, João Francisco da Silva Braga.<sup>42</sup> He also noted that Pilar, in Paraíba, was attacked simultaneously with similar results; armed with make-shift weapons, the rioters proceeded to county buildings of Itambé and Pilar and began ripping up and burning the papers and books they found therein. Though not a lot of people participated in the destruction of the archives, the Itambé rioters all declared that there were more waiting outside if needed.<sup>43</sup>

By this time, Captain Capistrano and his forty men had arrived. However, they were put under the orders of the district judge (Silva Braga) who ordered Captain

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<sup>39</sup> APEJE, Códice “Officios Diversos,” 1874-1879, MS24, From [unnamed] probate judge to Lucena, Nov 26, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to [illegible], Dec 1, 1874.

<sup>40</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to [illegible], Dec 1, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874.

<sup>41</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, District judge of the County de Itambé José Vicente Mecina de Vasconcelos to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Captain Pedro de Alcantara Tiberio Capistrano, commander of the forces of Itambé to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>42</sup> APEJE, Códice “Officios Diversos,” 1874-1879, MS245, police commissioner of Itambé, João Francisco da Silva Braga to Lucena, Jan 2, 1875.

<sup>43</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Vasconcelos to Lucena, Nov 31, 1874, *Revista Illustrada*, Dec 12, 1874 and *Jornal do Commercio*, Dec 12, 1874.

Capistrano to retain his troops inactive.<sup>44</sup> President Lucena called up the National Guard under the pretext that these forces (of Capistrano) had proven to be insufficient.<sup>45</sup> This probably explains the district judge's reluctance to use them. Nonetheless, Captain Capistrano, in command of the soldiers of Itambé, took them on December 7 to patrol the market, ensuring that peace and tranquility would prevail. And with the soldiers looking on, the 600 marketgoers remained calm, even when the police commissioner of the municipal district (*termo*), entered the market with some troops and began to collect taxes.<sup>46</sup>

The following week, at the weekend markets in the county of Nazareth, groups of people "more or less numerous" began descending on individual markets as well: Angelica, Alliança, and Vicencia were all attacked.<sup>47</sup> At Vicencia, rioters attempted to burn the office of the scribe of the justice of the peace; Provincial President Lucena claimed that they were successful,<sup>48</sup> although the interim district judge of Nazareth, Pergentino Saraiva de Araujo Galvão, stated that the deputy commissioner stopped the group in Vicencia from burning the office of the scribe of the justice of the peace but could not stop them from destroying the city records, in particular the tax records.<sup>49</sup>

At 4 am on December 2, a group of sixty armed men dressed in leather arrived at the Village of Bom Jardim from Barra de Matuba, in the province of Paraíba, and

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<sup>44</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Silva Braga to Lucena, Nov 30, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874.

<sup>45</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Silva Braga to Lucena, Nov 30, 1874

<sup>46</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Vasconcelos to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Captain Pedro de Alcantara Tiberio Capistrano to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874.

<sup>47</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Araujo Galvão to Lucena, Dec 5, 1874, *Revista Illustrada*, Dec 12, 1874 and *Jornal do Commercio*, Dec 12, 1874.

<sup>48</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874

<sup>49</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Araujo Galvão to Lucena, Dec 5, 1874.

attacked the town.<sup>50</sup> They proceeded to the archives of the tax collector and of the scribes. They destroyed the papers they found, although by this time all important papers had been removed from the archives and hidden away, so the papers destroyed were of little worth. They then sought out both the district attorney and the tax collector to kill them, although there is no evidence that they succeeded.<sup>51</sup>

The following week, on December 11, fifty to eighty rioters arrived at the municipal district of Limoeiro.<sup>52</sup> Going to the market, they sought to incite the marketgoers to join them in refusing to pay taxes.<sup>53</sup> And the following day Caruarú was hit (December 12). At 8 am, word reached Caruarú that a large group of rioters were en route to the city, intent on destroying all papers they could find as well.<sup>54</sup> This group consisted of anywhere from 200 men to 400 rioters.<sup>55</sup> Together, they “conducted an Auto de Fé” burning the papers from the archives at the city council.<sup>56</sup> After

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<sup>50</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>52</sup> Provincial President Lucena reported that approximately fifty rioters arrived at the municipal district of Limoeiro, although the police commissioner stated it was eighty-eight. See Ibid., Dec 31, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Police Commissioner Joaquim Appidio Rosa da Costa of the municipal district of Limoeiro to Correia de Araujo, Dec 19, 1874.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874. Note that it is not entirely clear whether they met at the church and then went to the market, or met at the market and then went to the church.

<sup>54</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Duarte to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874.

<sup>55</sup> According to an unnamed district judge, there were 200 members of the group, although according to the county judge from the municipal district of Brejo de Madre de Deus, the number was closer to 400. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, da Silva to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, From district judge of the municipal district of Brejo de Madre de Deus, João Alvares Pereira da Lyra to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874. The discrepancy could be explained by a statement from the district judge of Caruarú, João Francisco Duarte, when he stated that the original group was joined by the sellers at the market and a large number of the city’s workers (“proletariats”). See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Duarte to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874.

<sup>56</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Letter from District judge José Antonio Correa da Silva to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874 and *A Provincia*, Dec 19, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Duarte to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Letter from Antonio Victor da Silva Vieira, president of the city council of Caruarú to Lucena, Dec 15, 1874. The county judge (juiz municipal) states that for some reason the rioters did not touch the standards of the weights and measures, nor did they touch provincial records, although the president of the town/city council Antonio Victor da Silva Vieira states that they were destroyed. That said, Vieira does admit that

approximately six hours of burning and destruction, the rioters left (around 4 pm, according to the authorities) promising to return with many more people if the collection of the taxes resumed.<sup>57</sup> Upon leaving the city of Caruarú this group—now up to 400 people—descended on the town of Bezerros. At Bezerros, they provoked disturbances and, once again impeded the payment of taxes, although tax collectors appeared only to have been insulted and not physically abused by this group.<sup>58</sup>

Dried meat (*carne seca*) was a staple in the countryside. At Bonita, on December 12, the tax collector went to collect the tax on this dried meat, accompanied by the district judge, county judge, police commissioner, the district attorney, and an official from the local guard. At the market, the tax collector encountered a *sertanejo* (an inhabitant of the interior of the northeast) selling *carne do sertão*, and ordered that he pay 360 reis in taxes. The seller refused and soon found himself surrounded by a large number of people at the market to defend him. Terrified, he was about to pay the tax when the group around him began to shout “You are a coward if you pay it—don’t pay and don’t fear—enough is enough.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, notwithstanding all of the officials being together, many marketgoers, some of them armed, refused to pay this municipal tax. Forced with an angry mob, these authorities promptly retreated.<sup>60</sup> In response, President Lucena, upon hearing the news, sent thirty to forty national guard troops, twenty regular line troops and

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he hid the archival papers somewhere in the town/city council, and was afraid to convene the *camara* for fear that it would publicize the existence of the books. AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, District judge of the municipal district of Caruarú, Antonio Paulino Cavalcante d’Albuquerque to Lucena, Dec 23, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, da Silva Vieira to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874.

<sup>57</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Duarte to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874. This group was rumored to have gone to Bezerros or Bebedouros; both were attacked this same day. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, da Silva Vieira to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>58</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>59</sup> *A Provincia*, Dec 18, 1874.

<sup>60</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Probate judge of the municipal district of Bonito João Mauricio Correia e Silva to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

an official, guns, and ammunition.<sup>61</sup> With all this, it is no wonder when the rioters attacked the following week (on December 19), blood would be spilt.

When the rioters attacked again on December 19 and went to the house of the tax collector, they were therefore confronted by soldiers. One of the rioters threw some sort of projectile at the soldiers, hitting Miguel Pereira Dutra on the right side of his forehead, leaving him mortally wounded. According to President Lucena, it was this that led to an open confrontation which would leave two more dead; one rioter, Antonio José Henriques, owner of the Engenho Luna Redonda, was killed as well as a captain of the National Guard. More people, including three citizens who volunteered to assist these soldiers, were wounded as the rioters now tried to reach the archives of the provincial tax collector, attacking the doors and windows.

The police commissioner commander (commandante commissário de policia) Manuel Francisco Pessôa de Cunha had been with an ensign, Luis Antonio Fagundes de Sousa, that was guarding the prison. Having received word that Captain Joaquim da Silva Lins was confronting the rioters (as stated above), de Cunha took all of the available troops he could from the prison, leaving Ensign de Souza behind and went to assist the soldiers.<sup>62</sup> With ten troops from the local guard, de Cunha arrived at the house of the tax collector to find it encircled about by rioters. Upon seeing him and the soldiers, the rioters began throwing rocks and shooting in the direction of de Cunha. Nonetheless, he states, he continued to advance, finding all of the doors and windows of the house broken to bits. At about 5 pm, Ensign de Souza arrived with four soldiers under his command, having been sent there by the police commissioner. Together, these

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<sup>61</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* Note that here Lucena states he is Joaquim da Silva Lins is a corporal



authorities, along with the soldiers that accompanied them, “repelled the disorderly and impeded the destruction of the papers of the tax collector.”<sup>63</sup>

Conselho Bento Ceciliano dos Santos Ramos wrote to President Lucena on December 14, reporting that, unlike so many other towns, Bom Conselho was peaceful. But then rumors began to spread that new taxes were about to be passed, taxes that were more egregious than previous ones. Now, each woman would have to begin paying a tax of 5\$000 if they wanted to comb their hair. Because of this tax, “and because of one other that due to decency I will not refer to,” the town of Bom Conselho was to be attacked on the sixteenth.<sup>64</sup> Upon hearing these rumors, this district judge immediately sought to verify whether there was any merit to them. His fears were confirmed when he discovered that in the settlement of Brejão in the municipal district of Garanhuns, next to Bom Conselho, a group of 200 were meeting and were planning to attack in the middle of the night. Armed with this information, this district judge went to the house of the vicar (of Bom Conselho) and to the chaplain of the collegio of Bom Conselho and requested that if the people did come, they would go out and meet them. However, when a group of 400 attacked the town, they simply ignored the priests.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*; also see AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correia e Silva to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Police Commissioner Manuel Francisco Pessôa de Cunha to Lucena, Dec 20, 1874.

<sup>64</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, District judge of the county of Bom Conselho Bento Ceciliano dos Santos Ramos to Lucena, Dec 16, 1874.

<sup>65</sup> This same district judge reported on the twentieth the Reverend Capuchin Friar José to have been the one to have accompanied the vicar. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, District judge of the County of Bom Conselho, Ceciliano dos Santos Barros to Lucena, Dec 20, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Ceciliano dos Santos Ramos to Lucena, Dec 16, 1874.



Map 4: Alagoas. Source: Mattos Monteiro, *Revolta do Quebra-Quilos*, 17.

A week later, December 26, in the nearby province of Alagoas to the south of Pernambuco, yet another group, armed with clubs and knives, attacked the justice of the peace as well of the sub-precinct of the municipal district of Imperatriz in order to impede the collection of both the provincial and the municipal taxes at the local market of the settlement of Mundahú-meirim.<sup>66</sup> Opposition to taxes continued to spread throughout the province of Alagoas: Maceio, Quebrângulo, Pilar (35 km from the capital), Porto Calvo, Leopoldina, da Capella, and the town of Atalaia either rose up in rebellions or threatened to do so during this period.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, interrogation of Felix the slave of Antonio Teixeira de Aquino, by Police Commissioner Arthur Henrique de Figueiredo Mello, Dec 31, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 25, 1875.

<sup>67</sup> *A Provincia*, Jan 6, 1875; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Telegram from police commissioner of the municipal district of Porto Calvo, Captain Fito Passos to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 4, 1875; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 15, 1875 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Fito Passos to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 11, 1875.; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 15, 1875; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, commander of the infantry force of Alagoas stationed in the town of Atalaia, Lourindo Peregrino Bandeira de Mello to Vieira



**Map 5: Rio Grande do Norte.** Source: Mattos Monteiro, *Revolta do Quebra-Quilos*, 17.

In Rio Grande do Norte, simultaneously, the cities and towns closest to Paraíba began to feel the effects of the uprisings and joined in. That morning, the inhabitants of the municipal district of Jardim do Seridó began in the eastern and southern portions of the municipal district (the two ports closest to Paraíba) to come together to break the scales and burn the archives of the town council and tax collection office in order to avoid paying taxes. As they proclaimed their goals, they ridiculed Lieutenant Colonel Manoel Ildefonso d'Oliveira Azevedo and the police commissioner and deputy police commissioner.<sup>68</sup> Throughout the month, shouts of “break the kilos and don’t pay anymore the 400 reis of land tax”<sup>69</sup> would be heard, such as this example from Pahí; there, the marketgoers simply refused to pay the municipal taxes.<sup>70</sup> Nor did they want the

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de Araujo, Dec 30, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Police Commissioner of Atalaia Lourindo Peregrino Bandeira de Mello, to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 20, 1875. Note that this same writer, Bandeira de Mello, could very well have been both the commander of the infantry as well as police commissioner, writing both times under different titles.

<sup>68</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Deputy commissioner of the village of Jardim Clarindo, Villard Silva-Santos to Provincial Police Chief Luiz Ignacio de Mello Barretto, Dec 9, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Mello Filho to Lucena, Dec 19, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Silva-Santos to Barretto, Dec 9, 1874.

<sup>69</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 29, 1875.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

census law read. The peasants saw in the government census an attempt to increase taxation and “enslave” the peasants (see Chapters Two and Four, respectively): in the settlement of Barregudo, a group appeared before the church to impede its reading before taking to the streets to break the weights and measures.<sup>71</sup>

On December 18, a group of 200 or so men were meeting a few leagues from the town of Santa Anna de Mattos (today Santana dos Mattos), planning to enter the town on the nineteenth to break the weights and measures, burn the archives of the town council and that of the tax collector.<sup>72</sup> On that day, however, the group was discovered and the county judge immediately organized a force of one hundred men from the community to defend it from attack. Upon seeing the defensive measures, reported the county judge, the force retreated and the town’s inhabitants were able to resume life as normal on the twentieth.<sup>73</sup>

### ***Taxes and the Metric System***

Peasants were rioting above all to prohibit the continued implementation of new provincial and municipal taxes, taxes which were simply too great for the vast majority of poorer northeasterners. However, as the name of these riots imply, the implementation of the metric system was also especially important. And, as quickly became obvious, merchants were targeted for special hatred by the peasants. The peasants had relied on these merchants to purchase many of their goods. But, as will be more thoroughly discussed in subsequent chapters, in order to use this new metric system the merchants

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<sup>71</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 29, 1875 and Feb 5, 1875.

<sup>72</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Substitute County Judge of the municipal district of Sant’Anna de Mattos, Antonio Cabral d’Oliveira Barros to Mello Filho, Dec 21, 1874.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 28, 1874.

had to of course purchase them, and then to confirm the weights and measures to official standards a municipal tax would have to be paid. In general, the weights and measures were on average 10% smaller than the traditional ones. To make up for taxes that now had to be paid, they retained the same prices—for fewer goods. Thus, following the destruction of the weights and measure at the market, rioters destroyed those of the merchant houses.<sup>74</sup>

From the very beginning, rioters destroyed weights and measures that used the metric system. On November 7, 14, and 21, in particular, at the market of Fagundes, Paraíba, the destruction of the new weights and measures became especially pointed.<sup>75</sup> On November 21, the rioters subdivided into small groups of between 50 and 200 in order to search for and destroy the weights and measures of the new metric system, forcing the police commander to not only sign an agreement to end the taxes, as stated above, but to also end the application of the new weights and measures.<sup>76</sup>

The town of Ingá and Areia, both in Paraíba, experienced the destruction of their weights and measures on November 21, as also occurred at Campina Grande (Paraíba) at least seven times between November 14 and December 5.<sup>77</sup> Generally, the rioters simply destroyed the weights and measures, but on a few occasions, they did more: in Alagoa Grande, Paraíba, they broke and threw not only the weights, measures, and scales of the

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<sup>74</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 30 and 33.

<sup>75</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, May 21, 1875 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 42 and 45

<sup>76</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 24

<sup>77</sup> *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Quarta Sessão da Decima Quinta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Sertario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Dr. Manoel Antoni Duarte de Azevedo* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1875), 2 (hereafter *Relatorio Apresentada á Assembléa Geral* [1875]) and Horácio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1958), 136 and de Almeida, “Dom Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” 165 and *Relatorio Apresentada á Assembléa Geral* (1875), 3; “Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante,” 115.

metric system into the forest, but also tables, benches, and everything else from the market.<sup>78</sup>

Pernambuco's rioters as well, similar to those in Paraíba, focused on the destruction of the weights and measures. There, the first uprising occurred on November 21. As would be the case in many other cities, towns, and settlements as well, the rioters first attacked the sellers at the market that were utilizing the new weights and measures. For example, on December 20, in Vitória, when thirty rioters armed with pistols, knives, and clubs destroyed the weights and measures at the market.<sup>79</sup>

But they then proceeded on to the businesses in the town where they destroyed the weights and measures there as well.<sup>80</sup> Elsewhere the peasants attacked taverns, which were also utilizing the new metric system, such as occurred on November 30 at the town of Pedros de Fogo, a Pernambucan town neighboring Paraíba, and on December 5 at the market of Santo Antonio in the county of Goaninha, Rio Grande do Norte.<sup>81</sup> In many areas, the focus of attack was the butchershops, such as in Angelica and Bezerras (Pernambuco), and Goaninha, Rio Grande do Norte, as this represented an increase in the price of foodstuffs.<sup>82</sup> They decided, as President Lucena, provincial president of Pernambuco, stated, to stop the merchants from using the weights and measures to either

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<sup>78</sup> *A Provincia*, 2 Dec 1874.

<sup>79</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874. The weights and measures of the metric system was also first destroyed at the markets before business. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>80</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>81</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Silva Braga to Lucena, Nov 30, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 4, 1874.

<sup>82</sup> For Angelica see AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Police commissioner of Municipal district of Nazareth, Barão de Tracunhãem to Lucena, Dec 7, 1874 and Dec 9, 1874, for Bezerras see AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, d'Albuquerque Nascimento to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874. For Goaninha see AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 4, 1874.

buy or sell, often threatening to return and wreak additional havoc if the use of the metric system continued.<sup>83</sup>

Of course, town and city officials themselves were targeted as causes of the implementation of the metric system, as occurred on December 19 at Alagoa dos Gatos when a group of 300 rioters invaded the city, destroyed the weights and measures, and then demanded all models for the scales from the justice of the peace. Or in Garanhuns, when fifty to one hundred individuals demanded that Captain Pedro de Rego Chaves hand over his weights and measures. Captain Chaves, however, stood his ground and refused to hand them over, as a result of which the group attacked his house. Officials quickly arrived, including Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Victor Correia and the vicar Pedro Pacifico de Barros Bezerra, to convince them to desist. And they did, but not before five were killed and six wounded.<sup>84</sup>

Sometimes the merchants refused to hand over their weights and measures. In Alliança (Pernambuco), an Italian merchant who refused to hand over his decimal weights to the rioters, who proceeded to physically attack him.<sup>85</sup> And in Rio Grande do Norte, rioters went to the establishment of the Portuguese merchant Lourenço José Corrêa. Invading his business, they destroyed the weights and measures and then

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<sup>83</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, District judge of the municipal district of Caruarú, Antonio Paulino Cavalcante d'Albuquerque to Lucena, Dec 23, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, da Silva Vieira to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Duarte to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874.

<sup>84</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correia de Silva to Lucena, Dec 22, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correa Brazil to Lucena, Dec 20, 1874, and *A Provincia*, Dec 22, 1874.

<sup>85</sup> *A Provincia*, Dec 2, 1874.

proceeded to horribly beat him as well as his son who was working as a salesclerk at the same establishment.<sup>86</sup>

With the father in danger of losing his life, the family and, according to Police Chief Luis Ignacio de Mello Barreto, the entire district, was in a state of panic. Fearful that the rioters would return, they were preparing to leave Macahyba and abandon the commercial establishments.<sup>87</sup> Nobody, therefore, was supposed to leave his house that night. The son, along with the brother-in-law, were both seventeen years old and had their sleeping quarters in the warehouse. That night, the dogs were especially noisy, which provincial president Mello Filho credited to a group of malcontents living next door. Nonetheless, the son crept out to see why the dogs were making so much noise and his father's brother-in-law, mistaking him for a returned rioter, shot the son with a blunderbuss (*bacamarte*).<sup>88</sup> The key residents of the city were now willing to help the government to restore order and President Mello Filho sent them twenty-five arms and ammunition.<sup>89</sup>

In Alagoas, Imperatriz was the part of the province where the officials felt most vulnerable to attack.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, just prior to this uprising, the deputy commissioner of the district had ordered the block inspector (*Inspetor de Quaterão*) Manoel Rodrigues da Silva, to go to the house of a friend Justin Guedes, and help to defend his establishment. So, along with twelve people from his block, da Silva set off to ensure that the

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<sup>86</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 15, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Mello Filho to Lucena, Dec 15, 1874.

<sup>87</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Mello Filho to Lucena, Dec 15, 1874.

<sup>88</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Barreto to Mello Filho, Dec 24, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 15, 1874 and Dec 18, 1874.

<sup>89</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Mello Filho, to Lucena, Dec 15, 1874 and Dec 18, 1874.

<sup>90</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 15, 1875.



establishment would not be robbed. While he was there, however, a large group of rioters appeared at the door, demanding the weights and measures.<sup>91</sup> Da Silva handed them over; they were promptly destroyed.<sup>92</sup> Resistance to the rioters occurred at the market of Quebrangulo, Rio Grande do Norte, as well, when a group of 300 men attacked on January 3. Here, many of the merchants and sellers resisted the invaders, although in the end they were unsuccessful; the weights and scales were destroyed and ten people were killed with many more wounded.<sup>93</sup> Thus resistance to the implementation of the metric system occurred throughout the northeast. Along with the *imposto do chão*, this made up the anti-tax aspects of this movement.

### **Recruitment**

When the rioters attacked Paraíba in early November, particularly beginning with the November 14 attack on Fagundes, they denounced the implementation of the new law of recruitment.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, one reason the town records were destroyed was to eliminate records of those that were eligible for recruitment into the armed forces according to a new law passed in September of 1874. Not all riots included this as their complaint, (the *main* complaints remained related to taxation), but the vast majority included the voicing of such grievance. Even when the officials did not report this as their key complaint, records appear clear that this was an unstated cause of the Quebra-Quilos movement.

The city council papers destroyed by the rioters on November 21 in Areia, Paraíba, to the

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<sup>91</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Interrogation of block inspector Manoel Rodrigues da Silva by Antonio Eduardo da Silva, Substitute exercising district judge, on the Engenho de Boa Esperança, municipal district of the town of Assembléia, Jan 15, 1875.

<sup>92</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, President of Rio Grande do Norte João Capistrano Bandeira de Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Feb 5, 1875.

<sup>93</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Telegram from district judge of the village of Atalaia to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 3, 1875, and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 15, 1875; *A Provincia*, Jan 8, 1875.

<sup>94</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875., 45, 51, 65, 74, and 79.

accompaniment of a music band, included records necessary to carry out this new law,<sup>95</sup> at nearly every uprising throughout the state of Paraíba included this element of impeding the implementation of the law of recruitment.

All other states which participated in the Quebra-Quilos movement experienced this same phenomenon. In Timbaúba, on November 21, after the treasury officials were beaten by the rioters, they then focused their grievances on the papers of the office of the scribe of the deputy commissioner as well as those of the justice of the peace, as the justice of the peace held in his archives the list of all those eligible for the military recruitment.<sup>96</sup>

In Bezerros, in Pernambuco, on December 12, a group of roughly one hundred destroyed all of the books and papers of the tax collector, and then went to the county building to find any papers. But by this time, nearly three weeks had past since the uprising had started, and nearly everywhere it occurred, records were destroyed. Thus unable to find any papers, the rioters forced an employee to tell them where the papers were hidden. They were told that the papers were hidden in the chapel of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, went to it, discovered the papers, and destroyed them.<sup>97</sup> Likewise, when the rioters attacked the town of Cimbres on December 23 they found the town and municipal

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<sup>95</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 33.

<sup>96</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>97</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-quilos*, 142. AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Cavalcante to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874, and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, District judge of Bezerros, [Illegible] d'Albuquerque Nascimento to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874 and APEJE, Códice "Offícios Diversos," 1874-1879, MS 96, From town councilman of the village of Bezerros, João Francisco de Vasconcellos to Lucena, Dec 15, 1874.

archives had all be hidden away, but this time were unable to discover their whereabouts.<sup>98</sup>

The last of the major Pernambucan uprisings occurred on December 25. On this day, a group of 400 to 500 rioters attacked the house of the district judge in Villa Bella in order to procure the town records. Although they were able to destroy many weights and measures, they were unable to find any records since those that had not been previously burned in earlier, smaller riots, had been secreted away.<sup>99</sup>

In Alagoas and Rio Grande do Norte rioters also destroyed records for purposes of impeding the recruitment process, such as when the records of the justice of the peace were destroyed in São Bras, Alagoas on January 1, 1875 and likewise those of the papers of the municipal district of Jardim (do Seridó), in Rio Grande do Norte on December 5, 1874.<sup>100</sup>

### ***Religion***

An additional aspect which found its way into these uprisings was that of religion. On one hand, the increase in prices and combined increase of taxes on both goods and weights and measures served as major causes of these uprisings. On the other hand, an element of ideological justification entered many, though not all, of these uprisings as well. The following narrative will be more fully analyzed in Chapter Three below.

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<sup>98</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Barros Barreto to Lucena, Dec 18, 1874.

<sup>99</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 347, District judge of County of Villa Bella Francisco Luiz Correa de Andrade to Lucena, Dec 28, 1874.

<sup>100</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 15, 1875, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Police Chief of Maceio, Joaquim Quedes Correia Gondim to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 1, 1875, and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Police Commissioner Arthur Henrique de Figueiredo Mello to Correia Gondim, Jan 1, 1875; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Deputy commissioner of the village of Jardim Clarindo, Villard Silva-Santos to Provincial Police Chief Luiz Ignacio de Mello Barretto, Dec 9, 1874.

When the rioters attacked the town of Ingá, east of Fagundes, they began shouting “long live religion and death to Masons”.<sup>101</sup> And on this same Saturday, rioters in the city of Areia, the principle of interior city of Paraíba, demolished the theater of the city, considering it, officials would later argue, a Masonic house.<sup>102</sup> They succeeded in destroying all of the “Masonic” objects here and then proceeded to the city council building (*câmara municipal*). There they knocked a picture of Dom Pedro II off the wall and cut it up, blaming D. Pedro II for arresting the two leading bishops of northeastern Brazil (the subject of Chapter Three).<sup>103</sup> They also attempted, although they were stopped, to dig up the mortal remains of the deceased district judge Francisco de Araújo Barros because, they argued, he was buried in sacred ground and had belonged to Masonry.<sup>104</sup>

And when the vicar of Campina Grande, Father Nóbrega, requested and received the assistance of eighty people from nearby Quemados to protect the town on November 22 after rumors arrived that the jail would be attacked, they responded by coming and addressing their concerns with the taxes, but also stated that they were opposed to Masons which, they stated, they wished to deal with “like meat at the butchershop” (*como se corta carne no açougue*).<sup>105</sup> Soon the jail was indeed attacked by Manoel de Barros and his family. On November 29, the same group led by Manoel de Barros

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<sup>101</sup> *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Quarta Sessão da Decima Quinta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Dr. Manoel Antoni Duarte de Azevedo* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1875), 2 (hereafter *Relatorio Apresentada á Assembléa Geral* [1875]) and Horácio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1958), 136.

<sup>102</sup> de Almeida, “Dom Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” 165; *Relatorio Apresentada á Assembléa Geral* (1875), 3.

<sup>103</sup> de Almeida, “Dom Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” 165.

<sup>104</sup> *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral* (1875), 3 and Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 33.

<sup>105</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 81.

returned once again to the house where the Masonic society *Segredo e Lealdade* held its meetings. They discovered books as well as a crucifix, and together brought them to the church of the vicar where they handed them all over to the priest.<sup>106</sup> Barros then left a part of his men with the priest and took the other part with him to the house of Placido Ferreira. Once there, they surrounded the house and captured his son, who they planned to force to wed a certain *beata* (a religious lay person, often a healer).<sup>107</sup> One can only speculate as to why this would be. If the son had somehow sexually violated the woman, then the son would normally be arrested and/or recruited into the military. But forced marriage, especially if the woman was pregnant, was also not unheard of. Taking the two to the vicar to perform the wedding, he at first refused on the grounds that the groom was a Mason,<sup>108</sup> but in due course relented and performed the wedding. Perhaps, then, the group was less forcing the son to marry the *beata* than forcing the priest to officiate in a desired wedding, even if a Mason was involved.

In another instance, at Itambé, Paraíba, when a large group attacked the city, district judge Silva Braga sent Reverend Friar Venancio, the Capuchin priest, to calm down this group. Usually, Silva Braga states, the townsmen would listen to this priest.<sup>109</sup> But not this time. This time, when the priest arrived, the groups refused to listen. They even accused Friar Venancio of being a Mason, citing as proof that he (the priest) had the

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<sup>106</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 27 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, "Paraíba Minister Dispatch", 21 May 1875; *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléia Geral* (1875), 3, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, President of Paraíba to Minister of Justiça Duarte de Azevedo, 10 March 1875, 27 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, "Paraíba Minister Dispatch", 21 May 1875.

<sup>107</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, "Paraíba Minister Dispatch," 21 May 1875.

<sup>108</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 30 & 38.

<sup>109</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, district judge of the county of Itambé João Francisco da Silva Braga to Lucena, Nov 30, 1874.

cross of Jesus hanging over his chest, but leaning to the left.<sup>110</sup> (No evidence could be found to substantiate the importance of this misaligned cross).

In Pernambuco, a group of rioters entered the municipal district of Limoeiro on December 11, met at a church, and then, with a flag of white with blue and green and effigies of the Virgin Mary and Christ on the Cross (*a Senhora e Jesus Christo Crucificado*), proceeded to convince marketgoers to refuse to pay any more taxes or use the metric system.<sup>111</sup> Other rioters would also band around this same flag as well in support of this uprising.<sup>112</sup> Still others utilized the church as a meeting place, such as when the group of approximately 300 attacked Santo Antonio, Rio Grande do Norte, in early December. They met at the church, gave “vivas” to the patron saint, and then proceeded to destroy all records they could find.<sup>113</sup> Another group, however, arrived at Caruarú (around December 12) shouting “to liberty, to religion, to public order, and the beloved authorities of the people,” but failed to keep public order and burned the archives of the city council.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874 and Idem, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>111</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874, Dec 31, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Police Commissioner Joaquim Appidio Rosa da Costa of the Municipal district of Limoeiro to provincial police chief Antonio Francisco de Correia de Araujo, Dec 19, 1874; Idem, and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874. Note that it is not entirely clear whether they met at the church and then went to the market, or met at the market and then went to the church.

<sup>112</sup> The attack by a group of sixty at Vertentes on December 19 is a good example. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>113</sup> Records state that this particular uprising occurred on December 5. Since the letter for this was written on December 4, it is evidently in error. AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 4, 1874.

<sup>114</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Letter from District judge José Antonio Correa da Silva to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874 and *A Provincia*, Dec 19, 1874.

## ***Leadership***

A key issue in the revolt is the lack of general leadership. When the local officials wrote to the provincial presidents reporting the riots and requesting assistance, the one request made by the presidents was to hunt down the leaders. Letters make plain that the provincial authorities could not conceive of an uprising caused and led by the peasants themselves. Yet authorities soon discovered that there was simply no overall leader for the movement. Chapter Three on religion looks at one particular group to receive the blame: the clergy. But in reality, who led the groups rioting across four provinces? The answer is, of course, local, small leaders.

One of the most important of the small-local leaders was João Vieira, a caboclo (mixture of White, Black, and Indian), or “cabra escuro,” (lit. “dark goat”) known as João Carga d’Agua. Carga d’Agua was accused by those later arrested as having not only participated in the November 14 uprising against Fagundes, but of having boasted of killing the police commissioner that came to suppress the rioters.<sup>115</sup> These accusers claimed that Carga d’Agua had been leading groups of agitators from the early stages of the uprising in October, although firsthand accounts by officials did not identify him leading a group until Saturday, November 21. On this day, Carga d’Agua lead a group of approximately fifty armed individuals to the market of Campina Grande. Upon arrival, they began destroying all the weights and measures of the new metric system they could find. Carga d’Agua then led them to the house of the vicar Calixto da Nóbrega. It is at this point that witnesses’ accounts diverge; some argued that d’Agua then invaded the vicar’s house, and others claimed that the vicar was in cahoots with Carga d’Agua and

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<sup>115</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875., 18 and 32, 33.

this group went there merely to hand over the weights and measures and other papers to him.<sup>116</sup>

Between November 25-27, the group led by João Carga d'Água reentered the city of Campina Grande.<sup>117</sup> Throughout the investigative reports, dates are frequently in conflict, although two items are certain. One, João Carga d'Água entered the city twice between November 25-27, 1874, and two, each time he returned he was accompanied by approximately eighty followers, largely from the area of Varzia Allegre.<sup>118</sup> Additional witnesses claim as few as thirty men accompanied d'Água, although most respondents questioned merely reported "about eighty."<sup>119</sup> Being the second time this group attacked Campina Grande, they once again went to the market of Campina Grande. And once again d'Água and his group entered the market and destroyed the new weights and measures of the metric system, which by now had become a symbol of their grievances.

From investigative reports, it appears as if João Carga d'Água and his group was but one of many groups. On November 28 alone, Manoel Piaba, Manoel (Neco) de Barros, José Esteves, Antonio Martins de Souza, and one simply known as Marcos de tal, all lead group of rioters against Campina Grande.<sup>120</sup> Early, on November 21, it was decided that there were actually *no* leaders, but that the rioters divided into groups of

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<sup>116</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, President of Paraíba to Minister of Justiça Duarte de Azevedo, 10 March 1875, 12, 18, & 77; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, "Paraíba Minister Dispatch", 21 May 1875.

<sup>117</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 91; this source argues that it was the March 25-26, although other sources state March 27).

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>120</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 19, 38, and 31.



between fifty and 200 men in order to destroy the weights and measures and city records.<sup>121</sup>

One exception arises, however: Antonio de Barros or one of his sons, Manoel or José de Barros, led an uprising on November 22 in Campina Grande. It may be equally accurate, however, to simply lay blame, as many officials did, on “the entire Barros family.”<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless, as stated above, João de Barros from Baixa-Verdes, was being held in the prison of Campina Grande on charges of homicide, having been convicted by the deputy commissioner of Fagundes.<sup>123</sup> João de Barros’ brother, Antonio de Barros, along with João’s son, Manoel de Barros (frequently referred to as simply Nico or Neco), resolved to break him out of prison. They did so, leading a group of eight to ten men and attacked the prison that night, succeeding in breaking João de Barros out of jail.<sup>124</sup>

Upon forcibly entering the jail, Barros and his men released nearly all of the twenty or so male prisoners who were found (but apparently leaving some female prisoners).<sup>125</sup> Witnesses reported that all of these prisoners joined the Barros group, although a select few reported having refused to join. One, a Pedro José Ambrira, had been in prison with João de Barros. However, upon being released, instead of joining the

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<sup>121</sup> de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*, 137—he argued that each group has its leader and acts alone, but within a general plan. Horácio de Almeida agrees: See de Almeida, “D. Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*. Vol. 323 (Abril-Junho, 1979): 165.

<sup>122</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 25.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 52 and “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do comandante,” 115.

<sup>125</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, May 21, 1875. However, according to *Relatório Apresentado à Assembléia Geral* (1875), 3, there were seventeen prisoners released, although according to a letter that the district judge sent to Colonel Fonseca, there were twenty-two. See “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do comandante,” 115.

Barros group, he went to visit his mother where on December 13 he was arrested, returned to jail, and subsequently interrogated.<sup>126</sup>

The group that attacked Caruarú, Pernambuco, was made up of 200 to 400 men,<sup>127</sup> President Lucena stated, was led by Vicente and Manoel Tenorio, both from the municipal district of Brejo, and João Barradas from the city of Caruarú.<sup>128</sup> And the group that attacked the settlement of Mundahú-meirim in the municipal district of Imperatriz, later trial records would confirm (or at least accuse) the head of the group to be the cotton merchant Ensign Antonio Thomaz de Aquino from Breja-Grande along with his brother Manoel Thomaz. Along with the Thomaz brothers rode Joaquim Thomas as well as João Torres, Manoel Nico and his brothers Euclides and João.<sup>129</sup> Nonetheless, it soon became obvious that Antonio Thomaz was the true leader, although after his arrest by the police commissioner of the municipal district of Imperatriz, Captain Floriano Vieira de Melo, the investigation would “verify that Antonio Thomaz de Aquino was, if not the leader, at least one of the heads of the sedition that on December 26 last rose up against the settlement.”<sup>130</sup>

The well-armed group of 100 rioters that descended on the town of Bezerros, Pernambuco, was led by Lieutenant Bernardo José Brayner. Both Lieutenant Bernardo José Brayner as well as his son, José Brayner, were credited as being the leaders of this

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<sup>126</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 52.

<sup>127</sup> The district just from Caruarú, João Francisco Duarte, claimed there were 200 rioters, whereas the county judge from the municipal district of Brejo de Madre de Deus stated there were 400. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, da Silva to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, From district judge of the municipal district of Brejo de Madre de Deus, João Alvares Pereira da Lyra to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874.

<sup>128</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>129</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Manoel Martins de Mirand to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 7, 1875.

<sup>130</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, First Substitute of the District Judge Firmino Rebello de Torres Maio to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 17, 1875.

sedition here.<sup>131</sup> At Bom Conselho, Pernambuco, two of the leaders of the 400 rioters “were discovered and arrested,”<sup>132</sup> although after the 300 rioters attacked Alagoa dos Gatos on December 19, twelve were later identified as being leaders and three arrested at the time of the rioting.<sup>133</sup>

In Alagoas, the settlement of São Bras was attacked by a number of rioters who were beaten back. The deputy commissioner reported he was able to arrest “in the act” João Paulo da Silva, João Antonio da Silva, and Valentim José Alves.<sup>134</sup> Rio Grande do Norte was similar: rioters attacked the municipal district of Jardim (do Seridó) on December 5, led by, Manoel Marcelino de Medeiros, Manoel Pereira de Nobrega, and Alexandre Manoel.<sup>135</sup> Later, however, at the market of Santo Antonio, in the county of Goaninha, Rio Grande do Norte’s provincial president, Mello Filho, stated that Benedito Saldanha and Serafim Raposo served as “protectors” of this group, but it was impossible to discover who the leaders may have been.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> “To the promotor público de Bezerras, 24 Dec 1874,” in *Boletins do Expediente do Governo, APEJE, 1874*. (Pernambuco: Typ. De Manoel Figueiroa de Faria e Filhos, 1875), 340; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, police commissioner of the municipal district of Bezerro, João Francisco Cavalcante to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874.

<sup>132</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Ceciliano dos Santos Barros to Lucena, Dec 20, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874; and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 347, District attorney of the County de Bom Conselho Vieira Torres Granjeiro to Lucena, Dec 26, 1874.

<sup>133</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Telegram, Estrada de Ferro, Recife to São Francisco, Dec 21, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>134</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Martins de Miranda to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 7, 1875, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 6 1875 and Jan 15, 1875.

<sup>135</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Mello Filho to Lucena, Dec 19, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Silva-Santos to Barretto, Dec 9, 1874.

<sup>136</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 4, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Barretto to Mello Filho, Dec 24, 1874. AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 4, 1874.

## **Conclusion**

In seeking to understand an uprising of this magnitude—and particularly one with no overall leadership and what often appears to be sporadic uprisings—one is tempted to gloss over the details. This seems to have been one reason as to why historians are familiar with this uprising, mention it, but rarely discuss or explore it. For this very reason I have sought, in narrative fashion, to present as much of this uprising as could be pieced together through analysis of the primary evidence.

By thus narrating the events, one can now step back and see the larger picture: the uprisings began in the interior northeastern settlement of Fagundes, in Paraíba, spread to the city center of Campina Grande, and then spread out, encompassing much of the rural areas throughout the province before taking on the two adjacent provinces of Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Norte and then further south into Alagoas. Soon, nearly all of the rural towns and settlements in all four of these provinces would experience uprisings such as these discussed above: destruction of the weights and measures of metric system, refusal to pay the *imposto do chão*, destruction of tax and notarial records, etc.

If the uprisings throughout the months of November and December of 1874 and January and February of 1875 are worthy of detailed exploration, then perhaps the causes and results merit even more focus. After all, poverty-stricken peasants do not simply riot or rebel against a system in which familiarity causes a state of acceptance (and dependence), but one in which the opposite is the case: traditional mores had been challenged and in return, the peasants voiced their discontent. One of the greatest instigators of this challenge of the traditional peasant system came from the declining economic situation of the region, the weight of which was laid on the backs of the

peasants. For this reason the following chapter focuses on the economic collapse in northeastern Brazil immediately preceding and during this revolt.

## CHAPTER 2

### ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

#### ***Introduction***

Throughout the months of November and December 1874 and January 1875, Quebra-Quilos uprisings occurred repeatedly throughout the Northeast. Although some uprisings would emphasize the burning of archival or tax records, and others would emphasize the destruction of weights and measures of the new metric system and still others the new recruitment system or the “Religious Question” regarding Masonry and the imprisonment of bishops Vital Maria de Oliveira and Antônio de Macedo Costa, a common theme linked *all* the uprisings together: their stated refusal to pay any more taxes. After these uprisings died down, many eyewitnesses would attest that “[t]he cause was the decree of new taxes by the provincial assembly of Parahyba in its session that year.”<sup>137</sup> Some even sought to demonstrate that “the Quebra-Quilos movement was not a religious nor political protest and was solely born from the terrible situation of the population of the interior that, deprived by the crisis in the countryside (*crise da lavoura*) of the way to earn a living, reacted against the various vexing taxes.”<sup>138</sup> This chapter will focus on these hated taxes. These burdensome levies were the direct result of the economic crisis engulfing the northeastern region of Brazil throughout the 1870s and in particular immediately preceding and during the Quebra-Quilos movement.

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<sup>137</sup> Geraldo Irineo Joffily, “O Quebra-Quilo. A Revolta dos matutos contra os doutores (1874)”, 188.

<sup>138</sup> Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 95.

### ***Regional and Geographic Overview***

The geographical region of northeastern Brazil from Bahia to Maranhão is made up of about 1,542,271 square kilometers (about 958, 322 miles) and is divided into three major zones: the *zona da mata*, the *agreste*, and the *sertão*.<sup>139</sup> The *zona da mata* is about fifty miles wide and makes up approximately 5% of the best land in the northeast. This region experiences a great deal of rainfall and, combined with rich black soil and closeness to the ports, made an ideal sugar-producing region throughout the colonial period. This zone can be further divided into three regions: tablelands, dry mata, and wet humid mata. On both the tablelands as well as the dry mata, sugar can be grown relatively well, although it is in the humid mata which has the most rain (up to 2.5 meters annually) and therefore has the ideal fertile clay soil known as massapê.<sup>140</sup> It was from here that the first sugar was sent to Lisbon as early as 1526, although it was not until 1533 that Martim de Sousa put the first sugar mill was put into operation São Vicente (São Paulo).<sup>141</sup> By the mid-sixteenth century, enough sugar was being produced in the region of the northeast to merit forty-five shiploads each year transversing the Atlantic.

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<sup>139</sup> Manuel Correia de Andrade, *The Land and People of Northeast Brazil*, Trans. by Dennis V. Johnson. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980), 9-14.

<sup>140</sup> Peter L. Eisenberg, *The Sugar Industry in Pernambuco: Modernization Without Change, 1840-1910*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974, 121-123.

<sup>141</sup> Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the formation of Brazilian society: Bahia, 1550-1835*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 16-17.



**Map 6: Geographic Zones.** Source, Kit Sims Taylor, *Sugar and the Underdevelopment of Northeastern Brazil, 1500-1970*. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1978), 6.

The second geographic zone in the Northeast is the *agreste*. This region begins roughly fifty miles inland and, although there is often adequate rainfall for sugar cultivation, conditions are not as optimal as the *zona da mata* and therefore cattle, especially since the mid-seventeenth century, has come to dominate the region.<sup>142</sup> The *agreste*, like the *zona da mata*, was about 5% of the land in the northeast.<sup>143</sup>

The final and largest zone consists of 90% of the land of the northeast: the *sertão*. The inhabitants of this region, the *sertanejos* made up an average of 20% of the

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<sup>142</sup> Andrade, *Land and People*, 111-140.

<sup>143</sup> See Kit Sims Taylor, *Sugar and the Underdevelopment of Northeastern Brazil, 1500-1970*. (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1978), 5-6.



population of the Northeast. However, unlike the two zones closer to the coast, this region frequently suffers from drought, about once every decade on average, defined as rainfall insufficient to effectively grow crops. Sugar, therefore, could not be grown here, but cattle, sisal, corn, and cotton.<sup>144</sup>

From just before the mid-sixteenth century to roughly 1650, Brazil experienced a huge sugar boom and dominated the global sugar market. But then the British and French West Indies as well as Dutch New World possessions began to pull ahead of Brazil as mercantilist doctrine encouraged these countries to purchase sugar from their own colonies and thereby began a process of squeezing Brazil out of the market. Of course, decline for Brazil was gradual, and sugar remained Brazil's key export throughout the colonial period, accounting for a total of 56% of all Brazilian exports.<sup>145</sup>

Around 1680, a century of depression and stagnation took hold of the sugar industry, although the discovery of gold and then diamonds in Minas Gerais helped to remedy the Portuguese crown's decline of revenue from sugar. Together, the gold and diamond exports accounted for 31.7% of Brazil's exports throughout the colonial period, in comparison with sugar's 56%. But, having been exported in less than half the time, this accounts for a tremendous increase in economic importance for the center-south region of Brazil.<sup>146</sup>

In the last quarter of the eighteenth-century a temporary reprieve came to Brazil's sugar industry as the American Revolution disrupted trade between the Caribbean and

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<sup>144</sup> Taylor, *Sugar and the Underdevelopment*, 6 and Andrade, *Land and People*, 119.

<sup>145</sup> Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, table 1, p. 4.

<sup>146</sup> See C.R. Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695-1750*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), particularly 35-38 and Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, table 1, p. 4.

Europe.<sup>147</sup> This in turn caused an increase in sugar prices in the 1780s. Then, in 1791-1804, the Haitian slave revolt and subsequent independence movement destroyed the sugar industry on that island, and the world once again turned to the Brazilians to make up this sugar deficit. The price of sugar would also subsequently rise, particularly between 1805-14, as Napoleon affected a continental blockade in Europe.<sup>148</sup>

Meanwhile, cotton had also come into the picture, particularly towards the end of the eighteenth century. The Companhia de Pará e Maranhão, chartered by the Marquis de Pombal in 1755, had sought to encourage the production and export of cotton (along with other goods) in the Brazilian north. But it would not be until the American independence movement (1775-1783) that Brazilian cotton made any significant headway. From 1781-1792, for example, the average annual export figures from Portugal to England of cotton jumped from 300,000 lbs to 7,700,000 lbs. Subsequent American relations with Great Britain also continued to be beneficial for the Brazilian cotton industry: the Embargo and Non-Intercourse Acts of 1807-10 and the War of 1812 (1812-1815) both deprived Great Britain of much of its American cotton, and Brazil was quick to take up the slack.<sup>149</sup> Cotton and sugar, then, were the two principal export crops of the Brazilian Northeast. And both were at the mercy of American-British relations and the global market by the end of the colonial period; they both continued to decline. By the 1850s, Brazil was

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<sup>147</sup> B. J. Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint: Sugar, Tobacco, and Slavery in the Recôncavo, 1780-1860*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 33.

<sup>148</sup> Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, 7.

<sup>149</sup> Leslie Bethell, ed., *Colonial Brazil*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 277-278, Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, 124; F.S. Nascimento, *Fundamentos do Nordeste Agrário*. (Fortaleza: Imprensa Universitária, 2003), 50-51.

producing a mere 10% of the sugar consumed on the foreign market and revenues were hurt by a simultaneous decrease in prices.<sup>150</sup>

By 1850, coffee exports in Brazil had also increased. Coffee had begun to dominate Brazil's export market as early as 1830. By that decade—1831-1840—coffee made up 43.8% of Brazil's exports and sugar had declined to 24% and cotton to 10.8%.<sup>151</sup> For the rest of the century, coffee's meteoric rise would mirror sugar's collapse. Sugar growers in Brazil's northeast, however, continued to plant and export sugar at ever-decreasing prices, hoping a market upswing would occur. One reason for this is the relative difficulties involved in making quick transitions from cane to other crops. Sugar cane would be replanted every eighteen months and would take about twelve to fifteen months to mature. During this time, weeding made this a labor-intensive crop.<sup>152</sup> Then, at the end of the rainy season, in August or October, harvest would begin as slaves quickly cut the cane, transported it to a mill to be crushed and then processed, all within a forty-eight-hour period lest the quality of the sugar begin to decline.<sup>153</sup> In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, prices were continually falling, and with the exception of a minority of cane-growers that also began to grow cotton, they failed to switch crops.<sup>154</sup> Two things occurred: one, coffee took over as the key export commodity in Brazil, and two, the political and economic importance of the

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<sup>150</sup> Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 39-40, especially quadro A.

<sup>151</sup> Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, table 1, p. 5.

<sup>152</sup> Mary Ann Mahony, "The Local and global: Internal and External Factors in the Development of Bahia's Cacao Sector," 174-203 in Stephen Topik, Carlos Marichal, and Zephyr Frank, eds., *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500-2000*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 183-4.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-4 and Barickman, *Bahian Counterpoint*, 35-36.

<sup>154</sup> Horacio Crespo, "Trade Regimes and the International Sugar Market, 1850-1980: Protectionism, Subsidies, and Regulation, 147-173, in Topik, Marichal, and Frank, 149.

coffee-growing region of the center-south was therefore solidified. After all, in the period 1845-6, the coffee region of the center-south was bringing in 56% of the government's revenue, whereas the northeast was bringing in only 31%.<sup>155</sup> In some northeastern provinces, such as Paraíba and Pernambuco, coffee began to flourish, but never to the extent of the center-south.<sup>156</sup>

Both industries, by their very nature, necessitated a good deal of borrowed money—both as initial investment for planting as well as for advances for the planter for other necessities under the promise of repayment once the crop had been harvested and sold. The loans given to coffee growers would rarely exceed 10-12% interest, whereas the sugar-growers (and cotton-growers, although cotton-growers received fewer loans) rarely received less than 18-24% interest rates.<sup>157</sup>

Beginning around 1850, sugar exports and prices entered into a new stage of spiraling depression. There are three key reasons for this: the first is an increase in world production in the second half of the nineteenth century, causing prices to drop. As stated above, Brazilian sugar producers attempted to increase production to make up for the declining sugar prices. Then, sugar beet cultivation began to spread to northern Europe. One reason for this was that it produced better because sugar beets allowed for crop rotation. Brazil's production of 10% of the world's sugar consumption in 1840 decreased

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<sup>155</sup> Nathaniel H. Leff, *Underdevelopment and Development in Brazil. Volume II: Reassessing the Obstacles to Economic Development*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 7 and Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, table 1, p. 4. For a more detailed look at one valley in Rio de Janeiro, see Stanley J. Stein, *Vassouras, a Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

<sup>156</sup> Andrade, *Land and People*, 123.

<sup>157</sup> Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *O Norte Agrário e o Imperio: 1871-1889*, 2nd Ed., (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1999), 104.

to 8% in 1850, and then to 4% in the 1880s, 2% in the 1890s, and less than 1% in the early 1900s.<sup>158</sup>

The second reason for this decline was a lack of technological development. Simply put, sugar was selling for less, so in order to make a profit, production costs also needed to be reduced. Sugar producing countries such as the United States and Cuba began to use technological advances such as railroads to transport the cane to the mill, and once there, the mills would utilize steam power to speed up the time and reduce the efforts spent in processing the cane. Brazil, in contrast, began to develop and employ new technology very late. British investors financed the construction of railroads in the 1850s and 1860s in Pernambuco to help reduce transportation costs, but of 440 mills examined by Eisenberg which shipped sugar by way of the Recife and San Francisco Railway Company, only 6% of these mills utilized steam power.<sup>159</sup> The technology adopted by Brazil was thus too little, too late.

The decline in sugar in Brazil's northeast thus signified increased debt among the planter-class. With increasingly high interest loans, northeastern sugar growers began to sell their slaves to the southeastern coffee planters.<sup>160</sup> Coffee, as was the case with sugar, utilized a great deal of slave labor throughout the nineteenth century. And although many attempted to replace slave labor with free labor, particularly through the formation of immigration companies, the coffee-growers consistently found they needed more slaves. In 1831 the imperial government fulfilled treaty commitments with Great Britain and banned the transatlantic slave trade. However, this was a law "para ingleses ver"

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<sup>158</sup> Leff, *Underdevelopment and Development*, 11-12.

<sup>159</sup> Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, 38.

<sup>160</sup> Stein, *Vassouras*, 65-66.

(to show the Englishmen) and was rarely enforced, leading the British in 1845 to pass the Aberdeen Act, declaring all vessels transporting slaves to be pirate ships and to be dealt with as such. Therefore, in 1850, the Brazilian government once again declared the slave trade abolished, this time doing so in deed as well as in word.<sup>161</sup> With the transatlantic labor supply cut off for the coffee-growers, many sugar-growers began to sell their slaves south as a way to pay off part of their debts. Pernambuco, for example, would sell between 1,000 and 1,500 slaves south annually. Beginning in 1852, the provincial government in Pernambuco capitalized on this as a source of revenue and began to tax all slaves sold. That year, and until 1859, a 100\$000 tax had to be paid for each slave leaving the province, and was raised to 200\$000 after 1859. Official records state that an annual average of 760 of these slaves were legally sold, meaning that, based on Eisenberg's estimates, about half would be smuggled to avoid paying the tax.<sup>162</sup>

During the first decade of the nineteenth century, Brazilian cotton was supplying about 20% of Britain's raw cotton. This figure would fall to 13% in the 1820s, and 3% in the 1840s.<sup>163</sup> At the same time, cotton from the American South was producing 70% of European (not just British) cotton imports.<sup>164</sup> When the U.S. Civil War caused cotton from the American South to be cut off from Europe, Brazil—as it had during the American Revolution and War of 1812—jumped at the opportunity to put its cotton back into the international market. Thus from 1861-65, exports from the port of Recife alone

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<sup>161</sup> See Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question, 1807-1869*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) and Jeffrey D. Needell, "The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade in 1850: Historiography, Slave Agency, and Statesmanship," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 33:4 (November 2001), 681-711.

<sup>162</sup> Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, 156.

<sup>163</sup> Leff, *Underdevelopment and Development*, 11.

<sup>164</sup> Armando Souto Maior, *Quebra-quilos*, 13

jumped from 2,000 to 19,000 tons.<sup>165</sup> But unfortunately, this euphoric rise then experienced a decade of decline. According to F.S. Nascimento, the 5,301,305 kilos sold in 1869/70 would then, in 1874/75 fall to 67,629.<sup>166</sup> Most of the cotton came not from the sugar producing *zona da mata* but from small farmers in the *sertão*—fifty or so miles inland from the coast. These small farmers practiced a great deal of subsistence agriculture and also grew and sold cotton for the money needed to buy imported goods. They would sell their cotton to merchants who would then gin it and send it to the ports for export.<sup>167</sup>

By the early 1870s, then, peasants in the *sertão* in particular were coming to depend on selling their cotton for goods they could not produce at home. As described above, Brazilian sugar growers were slow to incorporate new technologies into their industry. But for them—as well as for the cotton growers—transportation was one of the key costs affecting their profits. Therefore, by the end of the 1860s, they had begun to build railways to facilitate this shipment. Although most contemporary planters argued that this was not enough, Eisenberg's analysis of the Pernambuco region noted that by 1870, the railways had caused a reduction in transportation costs. However, he continues, with the reduction of these transportation costs, also came the decline of daily wages for unskilled rural laborers, possibly as a result of increased numbers of

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<sup>165</sup> De Mello, *O Norte Agrário*, 255 and Roderick J. Barman, "The Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined: The Implications of the Quebra-Quilo Revolt, 1874-1875," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Aug, 1977: 401-424), 410. Also see Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 13.

<sup>166</sup> F.S. Nascimento, *Fundamentos do Nordeste Agrário*. (Fortaleza: Imprensa Universitária, 2003), 55.

<sup>167</sup> Barman, "Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined," 414 and Joan Ellen Meznar, "Deference and Dependence: The World of Small Farmers in a Northeastern Brazilian Community, 1850-1900," (PhD dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1986), 195. Also see Leff, *Underdevelopment and Development*, 20.

unemployed muleteers.<sup>168</sup> Millet, however, a *senhor de engenho* (sugar plantation owner) and economist, wrote in 1875 that there were simply not enough railroads and therefore most cane was still being transported by oxcart.<sup>169</sup> As the wages in the sugar industry were declining in the early 1870s, many began to take up the planting of cotton.

### ***Regional and Geographic Overview***

Economic catastrophe toppled this precarious situation. In 1873, a world economic depression engulfed the region. It only worsened with the infamous drought in the northeast from 1877-1879 and then eased in the 1890s as the international depression ended in 1896.<sup>170</sup> In October of 1874, one *senhor de engenho* noted that the cost of sugar production was estimated to be 2\$160. This was also the market price, meaning in the rare case that the plantation owner had no debt, he would still just break even. But prices continued to drop: in November they dropped to 2\$000, and ended in December at 1\$500. Indeed, sugar prices had fallen to two cruzeiros per arroba in the 1870s.<sup>171</sup>

Along with the collapse in prices came a decline in exports. In Paraíba, for example, 700 arrobas of sugar were being exported in the beginning of 1874. But by 1875 it had declined to 50,000 tons. Throughout the entire period, only 169,337 annual tons of sugar were exported (11.8% of Brazil's total exports) compared with coffees 216,120 annual tons (52% of total exports). The immediate result of all this was a large

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<sup>168</sup> Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, 60.

<sup>169</sup> Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 18.

<sup>170</sup> See, for example, Marco Antonio Villa, *Vida e morte no sertão: histórias das secas no Nordeste nos séculos XIX e XX*. (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 2000), F.S. Nascimento, *Fundamentos do Nordeste Agrário*. (Fortaleza: Imprensa Universitária, 2003), and S.B. Saul, *The Myth of the Great Depression, 1873-1896*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Hong Kong: 1985).

<sup>171</sup> Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 62 and Taylor, *Sugar and the Underdevelopment*, 69.



number of unemployed workers, and those that did work, received extremely low wages.<sup>172</sup>

The emphasis on the collapse of sugar should highlight, among other things, the need for the large group of un- or underemployed workers to rely on subsistence crops bolstered by the sale of cotton. Cotton, from 1750-1940, was the only crop to challenge sugar's dominance in the northeast, competing for both land and labor. The American Civil War caused a brief rise in cotton prices, but in 1865 the war ended and Reconstruction began. Prices hovered for a couple of years as Reconstruction got underway, and then threatened to collapse, but did not do so as Brazil entered the Paraguayan War in 1865. The need to provide uniforms and other textile goods for that war temporarily staved off collapse. Millet argued that this war caused artificial prices which in turn caused the impending crisis to be postponed. In 1858, the port of Recife shipped 83,000 arrobas of cotton. And in 1866-67, it shipped 1,096,000 arrobas.<sup>173</sup>

Domestic use cotton requires processing in a cotton mill, and in 1866 only nine existed in Brazil and of those only six were located in the northeast (five of the six in Bahia).<sup>174</sup> These, as well as the three others in Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, did indeed help to stimulate the cotton industry during the American Civil War. And by 1885, this number had increased to forty-eight, and then mostly in the center-south. Thus, considering the need for textiles in Brazil as well as the production of cotton in the northeast, one would expect *no* decline, but this simply was not the case. Barman does

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<sup>172</sup> Meznar, "Deference and Dependence," 147; Eisenberg, *Sugar Industry in Pernambuco*, 8, and Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 17.

<sup>173</sup> Andrade, *Land and People*, 118, 117-126, Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 13-14, Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 95.

<sup>174</sup> Taylor, *Sugar and the Underdevelopment*, 62.

note that a “boom” in the early years of the 1870s, however, did bring exports up to 78,000 tons.<sup>175</sup>

In 1874, simultaneous with the collapse of sugar, cotton also collapsed. Prior to the US Civil War, according to Millet, cotton exports through Recife (during the years 1858-9) were at 83,000 arrobas.<sup>176</sup> The figures for Pernambuco show that in 1865-66—before the decline in cotton—Pernambuco exported 15,532,912 kg (15 tons) of cotton for 16,784:00\$950, whereas in 1874-75, exports decreased to 11,147,166 kg, but prices declined even further to 4,929:924\$292.<sup>177</sup> In Paraíba, events were not dissimilar, although figures are not as readily available. Eliete de Queiróz Gurjão, in demonstrating that the coronelismo in the Northeast during the Republic had roots in the Empire, noted the collapse of cotton in that state as well, particularly following the end of the American Civil War.<sup>178</sup> Even the cotton mills were reduced; whereas in 1866 six of the nine in Brazil were located in the Northeast, by 1875 this had reduced to only four while throughout Brazil in general the number had risen to thirty.<sup>179</sup>

In short, by the last third of the nineteenth century, the economic situation in the Brazilian northeast had become especially devastating. As sugar declined and coffee outstripped the economic usefulness of the Brazilian northeast, slaves were sold south, wages declined, and many peasants turned to cotton to supplement their meager incomes. Unfortunately, the global depression, beginning in 1873, corresponded with this

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<sup>175</sup> Meznar, “Deference and Dependence,” 144, Taylor, *Sugar and the Underdevelopment*, 62, and Barman, “Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined,” 414.

<sup>176</sup> Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 42.

<sup>177</sup> Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 41-42.

<sup>178</sup> Eliete de Queiróz Gurjão, *Morte e Vida das Oligarquias: Paraíba (1889-1945)*. (Paraíba: Editora Universitária/UFPB, 1994), 18-22.

<sup>179</sup> Leff, *Underdevelopment and Development*, 10.

economic collapse, depleting provincial coffers, already disastrously low to nearly empty. The result would be a turning to the peasants and the taxation of the principle staple good to make up for this shortfall. This, and the peasant rejection of the new taxes, is the theme of the next section.

### ***Tax Increase***

Evidently, the state of the economy on the eve of the Quebra-Quilos Rebellion was extremely depressed and continued to decline throughout the period of agitation and beyond. This situation was largely exacerbated by the fact that the majority of government revenues—central as well as provincial governments—came from tariffs placed on exports and imports. With exports and, as a natural result, imports declining, so too did provincial income. In general, scholars estimate that provincial income in the northeast decreased by around 30% in the middle years of the 1870s—the height of the Quebra-Quilos Revolt.<sup>180</sup> A *Provincia* claimed that the province of Paraíba, by the end of 1874, was in debt more than 800:000\$000<sup>181</sup>, much of this money having been borrowed from banks in Rio de Janeiro. Thus public works had stopped and employees were not being paid.<sup>182</sup> And Rio Grande do Norte, to cite another example, spent nearly twice as much as it receive from its income earnings throughout those same years.<sup>183</sup> Between 1872 and 1878, taxes collected diminished by one-third in Pernambuco.<sup>184</sup> Millet argued that the average Brazilian, in comparison to the average British citizen, had traditionally

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<sup>180</sup> De Mello, *O Norte Agrário*, 256.

<sup>181</sup> Or roughly \$392,000 in 1871 US equivalent

<sup>182</sup> A *Provincia*, 3 Dec 1874.

<sup>183</sup> De Mello, *O Norte Agrário*, 256.

<sup>184</sup> Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 48.

paid very little in taxes, an average of 3\$000/person in 1842 (about US \$1.47) compared to British estimates of 24\$000/person (about US \$11.76).<sup>185</sup> But now, with this economic decline, the figures for the average Brazilian rose to 13\$500 (about US \$6.62), or some of the highest in the world.<sup>186</sup>

To remedy this lack of income, a series of new laws was passed. Pernambuco, for example, had created fourteen new taxes between 1863-9. But as the economic crisis worsened, the provincial government created, from 1870 to 1875, thirty-two additional taxes. As for the pre-existing taxes, the government simply increased them: in the period 1863-69, seventeen taxes were increased and the period 1870-75, twenty-nine taxes increased.<sup>187</sup> The situation in the other northeastern states proved equally disastrous. A *Provincia* claims that Carneiro da Cunha, the president of Paraíba, created so many taxes that, as a result, “Sr. Silvino [Carneiro da Cunha] has converted the people of Parahyba into slaves.”<sup>188</sup>

The increase in taxes that led to Quebra-Quilos Rebellion were of two main types: provincial and municipal. Often it is not entirely clear—either to the tax collectors or those paying the taxes—who was imposing these taxes, the municipal or provincial authorities. In the provincial assemblies of that year, particularly Paraíba as noted by Millet, new taxes were passed, principally targeting foodstuffs as they were the staple

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<sup>185</sup> 1842 marks the reintroduction of the British income tax, although P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins argue that, in comparison with neighboring European countries, Great Britain was “lightly” taxed. See P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688-2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., (London: Pearson Education, 2002), 136 and 142. Another useful comparison can be found in Ronald Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Lanham, MD: Barnes & Noble Books, 1993).

<sup>186</sup> Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 48-51. Note that Millet contrasts this with public expenditures; in 1864, Brazil spent 7\$333 per person compared to 20\$795 per person spent in Great Britain. See page 49.

<sup>187</sup> Monteiro, *Revolt do Quebra-Quilos*, 18. Also see Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 131 and Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 50-51.

<sup>188</sup> *A Provincia*, Dec 3, 1874.

items which guaranteed at least a degree of income. Both provincial as well as municipal taxes had to be passed by the provincial assemblies. Beef jerky, codfish, and manioc flour, all very important to the peasant, were the key foodstuffs targeted for taxation.<sup>189</sup> The provincial government also targeted tobacco, which had traditionally been a key source of income for the northeastern provinces and had always been taxed quite highly. But with the crisis of the 1870s, the government raised the tax by 50% ad valorem and then, in 1874, raised it again, soon reaching 200%. As a result both specialty shops and cigarette-making factories closed their doors.<sup>190</sup> Naturally, sugar was also taxed. But since sugar was already declining and thus provincial income, the tax of 23 ½ to 28 ¾% did little to offset the income crisis.<sup>191</sup>

In general, the taxes levied by the provincial assembly of Pernambuco in 1874 taxed national, non-staple goods at 30%, and foreign goods at 10%, or else 30% if they were attempting to protect a similar product in Brazil.<sup>192</sup> Import and export taxes, however, probably proved less egregious to the peasants directly, since they were more concerned with the taxes on staple goods. Those which affected the peasants the most were collected through the *imposto do chão*. Paraíba's provincial assembly had voted this tax into being as early as 1873, and this municipal tax was then passed by the provincial legislatures on behalf of the city councils.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Irineu Joffily, *Notas sobre a Parahyba*, 188.; de Mello, *O Norte Agrário*, 248, 257; Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 132-4.

<sup>190</sup> De Mello, *O Norte Agrário*, 247.

<sup>191</sup> De Mello, *O Norte Agrário*, 116.

<sup>192</sup> De Mello, *O Norte Agrário*, 257.

<sup>193</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 37 and Mezner, "Deference and Dependence," 197 and Horacio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*, 136.

This new tax, as was the case with nearly all taxes collected at the municipal level, was collected at the market. And of all the taxes, it was the *imposto do chão* that would cause the most grumbling. Weekly markets, organized and set up early in the morning, could not begin until the municipal officials and the tax collectors arrived. Once this occurred, the tax collectors would then go around to the stalls and collect the taxes.<sup>194</sup> A poor man, Colonel Fonseca said in his inquiries into this uprising, will bring 2\$000 worth of manioc flour to a market. As soon as he put his sack on the ground, he had to pay a tax. However, if for any reason he had to move to a new place, he had to pay the tax again—had to pay every time he moved so that sometimes without having sold what he had brought, he ended up paying the tax collector twice the value of the goods he had brought to sell. In another example, according to Colonel Fonseca, the tax collector of Pedras de Fogo, upon seeing a man at the market who had brought a small amount of fruit worth 160 reis to sell was avoiding paying the *imposto do chão* by not putting down his basket. The tax collector entered into a conversation with him and offered him a cigarette. Upon putting down his load to accept the cigarette, the tax collector promptly charged him 200 reis.<sup>195</sup>

For each load brought from to the market, on average, one *tostão* (100 reis) would be collected.<sup>196</sup> However, as becomes evident from the official correspondence following the Quebra-Quilos uprising, the amount charged at each market would vary from place to place, based on both province as well as county. The market-goers of Fagundes, where

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<sup>194</sup> Barman, "Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined," 415.

<sup>195</sup> "Quebra-Quilos: Relatorio do commandante," 120.

<sup>196</sup> Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 136 and Barman, "Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined," 415 and Gerald Irineo Joffily, "O Quebra-Quilo," 91. de Almeida, 136; Irineo Joffily, 91. Note that a *tostão* could either be gold or silver, but were both worth 100 reis. See Boxer, Appendix VII, 354-357.

the uprising originated, were paying 100 reis per load of goods sold by volume and 200 reis on goods sold by weight.<sup>197</sup> In Rio Grande do Norte, however, the rioters at the market of Pahi, were reported (by the police commissioner) as shouting, at the height of the uprising at the market, “no more paying the 400 reis of subsidy taxes,” implying that in some regions the tax was more.<sup>198</sup> Moreover, it was confusing. In Alagoa do Monteiro, the inhabitants were paying 40 reis tax on each load as opposed to 60 per measurement. And in Independencia, the taxes were based on the *types* of goods: if the load was sugar, coffee, or rapadura (brown sugar), it was 320 reis. If it were beans, farinha (meal flour), or corn it was only 100 reis, but if it were aguardente, it was 500 reis.<sup>199</sup> The most obvious explanation for this—aside from different provinces mandating different collection sums—is that tax farmers were commonly used to collect taxes. This caused a good deal of consternation as they were, according to Henrique Millet, being improperly collected—one person would purchase the right to collect taxes and sell it to another, who would in turn sell it to a third party. The result would be a large difference between the amount of taxes collected on the one hand and the amount received by the government on the other.<sup>200</sup>

The peasants hated the *imposto do chão* because they were suffering from economic decline but had to pay more taxes than ever before. Since the most egregious

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<sup>197</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 9, 31-32. This was confirmed by Meznar on her research on Campina Grande as well. See Meznar, “Deference and Dependence,” 197.

<sup>198</sup> “não se pague mais os quatrocentos reis do imposto denunciado subsidio.” AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, President of Rio Grande do Norte João Capistrano Bandeira de Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 29, 1875.

<sup>199</sup> “Quebra-Quilos: Relatório do commandante,” 156.

<sup>200</sup> Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 13-18 and Geraldo Irineo Joffily, 106-7. Note that Joffily is citing a Francisco Retumba who, in 1886, sent this as an official report (ostensibly to Rio de Janeiro, but never stated).

to them was this *imposto do chão*, nearly *all* of the uprisings included a refusal to pay these taxes, a statement that they would not pay them in the future, and the destruction of any and all tax records they could find. In some instances, either a list of taxes to be paid and/or a list of those delinquent in paying them had been posted in a public place—usually the door of the church. In these instances, they, too, were targeted by the rioters, ripped down, and destroyed.

### ***Regional and Geographic Overview***

As early as 1850, most of the income for the municipal governments came from placing taxes on goods sold at the market. This, then, would be the major target of the rioters. Fagundes, near the interior city of Campina Grande, was the first to erupt. It was here that cotton had made the most headway and therefore where they experienced some of the worst effects of the economic decline. Whenever new taxes were decreed or old ones raised, the the authorities published and posted them at a public location, such as the door of a church. At Fagundes, the list of provincial taxes was posted on the door of the butchershop. As early as August and September, the *imposto do chão*, one of these many taxes, had been being collected at the markets, although in reality this municipal tax had been established the previous year (1873).

Evidently, a good number of marketgoers were delinquent in paying this tax; when the group led by João Nunes attacked the market of Fagundes, they found the list of those who were late in paying their taxes, tore down the list, and ripped it up. For nearly all of those later tried for participation in the movement or as witnesses testifying against the rioters, this movement “was caused because of the creation of the tax *imposto do*



*chão*” and because, according to the merchant Bento Gomes Pereira Luna who witnessed the uprising, the inhabitants of Fagundes opposed the payment of municipal taxes.

Another leader of a group which invaded Fagundes was a Marcelino de tal, who came from Piabos with a group of men, shouting “that the *imposto do chão* should not be paid.”

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While the *imposto do chão* may have been the most hated of all the taxes, it was far from being the only one. As outlined in Chapter One, the uprisings in Fagundes were followed by those at Campina Grande. There, the individual groups all came (in addition to destroying weights and measures of the metric system), to impede the collection of provincial and municipal taxes, these “taxes which the rioters felt were excessive.”<sup>202</sup> A *Provincia* argued that the “heavy” taxes in Campina Grande included 2 reis for the exchange of horses, 30 reis/liter for alcoholic beverages; for dead cattle, the butcher will pay 3 reis if it is a bull, 4 reis for a cow, and pay an annual tax of 500 reis for killing them.<sup>203</sup>

Other taxes included the “personal tax”<sup>204</sup> as well as a tax on the metric system, to be discussed in a separate chapter. Still others began to fear that the addition of taxes would continue to encompass every aspect of their lives. By the time the uprising had reached Pernambuco, rumors had spread nearly out of control. In the beginning of December (as reported on December 5), rumors reached Bom Jardim that a tax had been passed on women who combed their hair or had let their hair grow long.<sup>205</sup> A week and a

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<sup>201</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 12, 17.

<sup>202</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, 21 May 1875.

<sup>203</sup> A *Provincia*, Dec 2, 1874.

<sup>204</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Araujo Galvão to Lucena, Dec 5, 1874.

<sup>205</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874.

half later, this rumor reached Bom Conselho, adding that this tax on the combing of women's hair would be one of 5 mil reis, and another that, according to the district judge writing to President Lucena, "due to decency I will not refer to your excellency."<sup>206</sup>

On that occasion the district judge may not have told the whole rumor to President Lucena, but Lucena would state it—or one similar to it—to the minister of justice in Rio de Janeiro. In his report, he noted that peasants were upset that a new law had been passed stating that marriages would only last four years. Additionally, peasants were going to have to start paying a tax of 10 mil reis for each child, and to ensure its collection police authorities would attend all births. Taxes would be charged to harvest crops, women would have to pay 10\$000 for the places they hung their laundry to dry, and would have to pay 100 reis for each chicken they possessed. And, with regards to women's hair, Lucena reported, the peasants believed that if women desired to use either oil or braids in their hair, they would have to pay a tax of 2\$000.<sup>207</sup> While Lucena stated that he found it incredible that anyone could believe these rumors, he nonetheless implied that they were key causes of these revolts.

Thus in short, first in Paraíba and then in Pernambuco, Alagoas and Rio Grande do Norte, rioters and their leaders "counseled people not to pay the municipal tax" and demanded "an end to the new taxes," attacking both markets and cities "because of taxes."<sup>208</sup> According to one newspaper, in Paraíba "The weight of the taxes and the barbarous way of collecting them and the extortions of every type done to the people to gratify the insatiable whirlpool that is called *public* necessity, finally exhausted the

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<sup>206</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Ceciliano dos Santos Ramos to Lucena, Dec 16, 1874.

<sup>207</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>208</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 50; idem, 88. Also see *A Provincia*, Nov 28, 1874.

patience of them, and sent them on the road to revolt...The government of the Emperor wants to kill the people of hunger, the people did not find recourse in their representatives.” Or, in short, these people, then, were just “defending their lives.”<sup>209</sup> Therefore, like the Ensign Antonio Thomaz de Aquino, who attacked Mundahú-meirim, the rebels would invade neighboring markets as well as their own in order to impede the collection of these taxes.<sup>210</sup>

The rioters were not only upset at the taxes, but also at those that collected the taxes. Although very few tax collectors were killed, most were targeted by the rioters. In Alagoas, at the end of December, 200 or 300 invaders descended on Imperatriz, sought out the office of the justice of the peace where, after burning his papers, evidently discovered a key document they were searching for—the title of the municipal tax collector—which they tore up.<sup>211</sup> In Bezerros, Pernambuco, the group of 400 invaders targeted the tax collector for verbal insults.<sup>212</sup> Although tax collectors were rarely killed, one exception occurred in mid-December when a group of 400 attacked Bom Conselho, broke into the office of the tax collector and then assassinated his scribe.<sup>213</sup> This was, however, the exception rather than the rule.<sup>214</sup>

More than simply tax collectors, however, the rioters targeted their offices where tax records were kept. Those who were delinquent on their taxes wished to destroy all

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<sup>209</sup> *A Província*, Nov 28, 1874.

<sup>210</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 25, 1875. Also see AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Barros Barreto to Lucena, Dec 16, 1874, and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Araujo Galvão to Lucena, Dec 5, 1874.

<sup>211</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Mello to Vieira de Araujo, Dec 27, 1874.

<sup>212</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>213</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Ceciliano dos Santos Ramos to Lucena, Dec 16, 1874.

<sup>214</sup> See, for example, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correia de Silva to Lucena, Dec 22, 1874, in which merely a “discussion” occurred between the collector of municipal taxes and three men.

records of such tardiness. It is true, more importantly, they were attacking all tangible evidence of the tax in the hope that by destroying the tax records, they could then be, in effect, destroying the taxes. Therefore, after first attacking the markets and refusing to pay their taxes, principally the *imposto do chão*, and then convincing other marketgoers of the same, they either confronted the tax collector or attacked the city/town offices where tax receipts and records were held. These would be pulled out of the buildings in which they were found and flung into the streets, either to be burned or ripped to shreds.

Thus on his way to invade Campina Grande, Carga d'Agua not only expressed his intentions at going to the city "to burn the tribute papers," but also sought to round up as many people as possible to assist him.<sup>215</sup> One such person was Paulo Professor de Maria, who would, at the time of his investigation, claim that on the occasion of the uprising he was indeed at home when Carga d'Agua rode up on horseback. However, as can be expected by one under interrogation, de Maria stated that he could not go with Carga d'Agua because he was sick.<sup>216</sup> Nonetheless, the principle invitation had been given to him, he argued, to burn the collection records.<sup>217</sup> Once he arrived in the city, Carga d'Agua and his group burned the archives of the city council and then burned those of the general and provincial tax collectors. Any other papers which appeared of value were then destroyed, such as the registry of mortgages.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo March 10, 1875, 57.

<sup>216</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo March 10, 1875, 57 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, "Paraíba Minister Dispatch", 21 May 1875.

<sup>217</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, "Paraíba Minister Dispatch", 21 May 1875.

<sup>218</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo March 10, 1875, 47.

Antonio Martins de Souza, upon seeking to round up recruits for his invasion, also planned to “get rid of the tribute papers.”<sup>219</sup> Likewise, the group that invaded Caruarú, Pernambuco, were joined by the marketgoers and then proceeded to the offices of the tax collector to “rip up all the papers and books” that could be found therein.<sup>220</sup> Upon leaving, this same group promised to return with more people if the collection of the taxes continued.<sup>221</sup>

That same week, December 19, the tax collector’s office in Bonito was also destroyed. This event was reported by the police commissioner who arrived too late to witness the actual destruction, seeing the door and all the windows had been broken to pieces, as the rioters had broken them all in order, he stated, to reach the archives of the provincial tax collector.<sup>222</sup> At Jardim, Rio Grande do Norte, rioters met and began destroying the metric system, planning to attack the tax collection offices “with the intent to avoid paying taxes.”<sup>223</sup> For some reason, they failed to do so, planning to return on the ninth.<sup>224</sup> Interestingly, although numerous officials separately reported their intentions (to attack) to the provincial president, they never seem to have gotten around to the destruction, as was the case in Santa’ Anna de Mattos on the twentieth.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, May 21, 1875.

<sup>220</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Duarte to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Pessoa de Cunha to Lucena, Dec 20, 1874.

<sup>223</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 19, 1874.

<sup>224</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Silva-Santos to Mello Barretto, Dec 9, 1874.

<sup>225</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Cabral d’Oliveira Barros to Mello Filho, Dec 21, 1874. Also see AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Silva-Santos to Mello Barretto, Dec 9, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, district judge from the town of Jardim José Rufino Pessoa de Mello to Mello Filho, Dec 7, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Bandeira de Mello to Lucena, Dec 19, 1874.

### **Conclusion**

Multiple factors contributed to the Quebra-Quilos uprising of 1874-75. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, all complainants suffered from the economic crisis caused by the decline of sugar, cotton, loss of slaves due to the coffee boom, and world depression of 1873. Government attempts to compensate for decreased provincial revenues led to the passage of new taxes and the increase of existing ones, focusing on the taxing of staple goods, as was the case with the *imposto do chão*. The peasants, already suffering from economic crisis, saw these taxes as wholly unacceptable. And while other reasons will be cited in subsequent chapters as having caused or at least justified the Quebra-Quilos uprising, *all* rioters included this one ingredient, citing it as just cause for their uprising.

## CHAPTER 3

### ROLE OF RELIGION

#### ***Introduction***

After the market at Fagundes gave birth to the Quebra-Quilos movement on October 31, 1874, shouts of “long live religion” and “death to Masons” (“viva a religião” and “morra os maçons”) could be heard with each attack, particularly in the Paraíba and Pernambuco uprisings.<sup>226</sup> Indeed, both the provincial as well as the central government in Rio de Janeiro would blame “religious fanaticism” and the Religious Question for the Quebra-Quilos movement.<sup>227</sup> And they were partly correct, as the Religious Question, in addition to the issue over taxation, served to justify in many instances the movement itself.

Horácio de Almeida, in his studies of both the Religious Question and the Quebra-Quilos Movement has argued that the sole cause of this uprising was the church-state controversy then encompassing the Empire. He goes to great pains in his attempts to discredit all other possibilities, arguing the cause to be simply “religious fanaticism.”<sup>228</sup> De Almeida, however, has always remained the sole proponent of this view. In 1875, the dispatch from the chief of police of Paraíba, Caldos Barreto, was forwarded on to Rio de Janeiro in which he found it “obvious that the religious question

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<sup>226</sup> *Relatório Apresentada á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Quarta Sessão da Decima Quinta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Dr. Manoel Antoni Duarte de Azevedo.* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1875), 2 and Horácio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*. (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1958), 136.

<sup>227</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 65.

<sup>228</sup> Horácio de Almeida, “D. Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*. (Vol. 323—Abril-Junho—1970: 160-168), 166-167 and *Brejo de Areia*, 139-142; 139.

played a large role in the disturbances” but that the increase of taxes, adoption of the metric system, and military enlistment also played key roles.<sup>229</sup> Nearly all historians, de Almeida notwithstanding, have agreed with Chief of Police Barreto regarding the complex nature of the uprising. And whereas the complexities of the uprising are more than de Almeida believed, he was correct in his assessment that the Religious Question was extremely important.

I stand on the side of the majority in attesting that Quebra-Quilos was not merely a result of the Religious Question. However, the importance of both the Religious Question and role of the clergy in Quebra-Quilos, give us a better understanding of this movement as well as the life of nineteenth-century rural peasantry and the high politics of the time.

### ***Development of the Brazilian Church before the Quebra-Quilos Revolt***

The Roman Catholic Church was by far the most important social organization in colonial Brazil. During this period (1500-1822), the Church became a branch of the Portuguese Crown, having come under this control through a series of concordats with the papacy. These agreements were commonly referred to as royal patronage (*padroado real*). This meant, in short, that the crown appointed the high-level ecclesiastics, collected the tithes, paid the clergy, and approved all communications with Rome.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, 21 May 1875. This is also confirmed by de Almeida, “D. Vita e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” 166.

<sup>230</sup> Eduardo Hoornaert, “The Catholic Church in Colonial Brazil,” in Leslie Bethell, ed, *The Cambridge History of Latin America. Volume I: Colonial Latin America*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 550. Also see João Fagundes Hauck, “A Igreja na Emancipação (1808-1840)” in *História Geral da Igreja na América Latina, Tomo II/2, História da Igreja no Brasil, Segunda Época*. (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes Ltda, 1980), 81.



The colonial Church served economic, social and political, as well as religious functions. Economically, the clergy maintained their own sources of income in the form of farms, plantations, cattle ranches, etc. As was the case in Spanish America as well, this enabled the clergy to become a major source of loans for the colonists, playing a large economic role in society.<sup>231</sup> But in addition to their economic role, they played a social and political role, serving to legitimize existing institutions, such as when the Church was called upon to uphold the institution of slavery.<sup>232</sup> Education, administration of the sacraments, cemeteries—every facet of life and death revolved around the Church and the clergy. Even politics saw a great deal of clerical participation.<sup>233</sup>

Towards the end of the colonial period, during the reign of Dom José I (1750-1777), Portugal's leading minister, the marquis of Pombal, saw the need to reform the Portuguese Empire, not unlike the Bourbon Reforms then being instituted in the Spanish Empire. Fearing the power of both the Church and the nobility (groups that sometimes overlapped), he targeted the Church for reform, as it was one of the most important and stable aspects of Portuguese society throughout the Empire. He thus instituted such measures and age limits for entrance into religious orders and the suppression of religious houses.<sup>234</sup> Pombal especially targeted the Society of Jesus for reform, being his greatest

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<sup>231</sup> Hoornaert, "The Catholic Church in Colonial Brazil," 544 and 549. This clergy not only upheld slavery as an economic function, but also became invested in the institution. The Jesuits, for example, became one of the largest landowners and slave-owners in Brazil. Every sugar-producing captaincy would have at least one Jesuit plantation, and Bahia had five. They also owned large cattle ranches, such as those in Marajó and Piauí, and vast trading networks. See Dauril Alden, "Late Colonial Brazil, 1750-1808" in Leslie Bethell, ed., *The Cambridge History of Latin America, Vol. II: Colonial Latin America*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 613.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 552-4.

<sup>233</sup> AN, Diversos Códices (Código do Fundo NP, Seção de Guarda SDE), Código 127. This particular collection names ecclesiastics to political positions.

<sup>234</sup> Manoel da Silveira Cardozo, "The Modernization of Portugal and the Independence of Brazil," in A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *From Colony to Nation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975),

enemy as well as the most controversial of all the clerical orders in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>235</sup> He succeeded in expelling the order from the Portuguese Empire in 1759, secularizing the missionary *aldeias* (villages). This also damaged the educational institutions in Brazil as nearly a dozen Jesuit schools were closed.<sup>236</sup> He thereby succeeded in bringing the Church more tightly under the control of the Crown.<sup>237</sup>

Ironically, the Pombaline Reforms and expulsion of the Jesuits succeeded in spreading liberal doctrines throughout Brazil. Since only one seminary existed in Brazil after the Jesuit expulsion (until a second was founded in 1800), those students not able to attend the University of Coimbra or another such European institution, had to receive their education through these seminaries or through catechism. The influential Seminary of Olinda, established in 1800, was founded by Bishop José Joaquim da Cunha de Azeredo Coutinho, in which he introduced many liberal ideas of the European

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190; José Sánchez, *Anticlericalism: A Brief History*. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), 74.

<sup>235</sup> According to Sánchez, the Jesuits were disliked because of their supposed regicidal tendencies, their political influence and business enterprises giving them undue amounts of power and wealth, and, above all, their loyalty to the papacy and ultramontaniam. Sánchez, 74-5; 69. Also see Riolando Azzi, *A crise da cristandade e o projeto liberal*. (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1991), 205.

<sup>236</sup> A.J.R. Russell-Wood, "Preconditions and Precipitants of the Independence Movement in Portuguese America," in A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *From Colony to Nation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 20; Stuart B. Schwartz, "The Formation of a Colonial Identity in Brazil," in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds., *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 37-38. The Crown had planned to replace these schools with aulas régias (roughly royal classes), but these were never implemented. In 1772, however, the Crown imposed a new tax, the *subsídio literário* (literary subsidy) to pay for the salaries and costs of education, with which they appointed forty teachers of basic literature and fifteen instructors of Latin, Greek and Philosophy. Alden, "Late Colonial Brazil, 1750-1808", 20.

<sup>237</sup> Thomas C. Bruneau, *The Church in Brazil: The Politics of Religion*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 15 and Cardozo, "The Modernization of Portugal and the Independence of Brazil," 199. The importance of the closing of the Jesuit colégios and diocesan seminaries (of the eight in operation in the mid-eighteenth century, all but Rio de Janeiro and then later Olinda, would be closed). Therefore, any Brazilian wishing to receive an education, particularly a university education, would go to Europe. From 1772 to 1808, nearly 600 Brazilians enrolled at the University of Coimbra and nearly 350 graduated. Among these would be many of the clerics who would later participate in the Independence Movement in Brazil. See Azzi, *A crise da cristandade*, 95 and Katia M. de Queirós Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX: uma provincial no império*. (Rio de Janeiro, Editora Nova Fronteira, 1992), 304-5.

Enlightenment and classes in physical sciences, mathematics, chemistry, botany, and mineralogy. Many of the priests educated at this seminary would therefore leave imbued with liberal and scientific learning and seek to spread such perspectives both through writings and through preaching. Liberal ideas were clearly influential among important elements of the Catholic Church towards the end of the colonial period. This liberalism was not antimonarchical (as it was in many places in Europe) but quickly became anticolonial, attempting to loosen the colonial ties and mercantilist restrictions.<sup>238</sup>

Various priests participated in the conspiracies of Inconfidência Mineira of 1789 and the Inconfidência Bahiana of 1798. In the Revolution of 1817 that spread across the Northwest, so many priests participated—57 of them—that this has often been described as a “revolution of priests.” In 1820, the Liberal Revolution in Portugal sought to establish a constitutional monarchy and abolish clerical privileges, expropriate clerical property, and end the inquisition. This alienated more priests, some of whom became prominent revolutionaries seeking Brazil’s independence from Portugal. In 1824, not only did priests participate in the Confederation of the Equator, but the great hero and martyr of that movement was Friar Caneca.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> E. Bradford Burns, “The Intellectuals as Agents of Change,” in A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *From Colony to Nation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 217, 222-23; Azzi, *A crise da cristandade*, 29, 72-75, 79; Hauck, “A Igreja na Emancipação (1808-1840)”, 89, 97; Emilia Viotti da Costa, “The Political Emancipation of Brazil,” in A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *From Colony to Nation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 65 and Azzi, *A crise da cristandade*, 116; Da Costa, “The Political Emancipation of Brazil,” 65-6. Also see Azzi, *A crise da cristandade*, 99-101, 117, & 243. Also see Jeffrey C. Mosher, *Political Struggle, Ideology, and State Building: Pernambuco and the Construction of Brazil, 1817-1850*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), chapter one.

<sup>239</sup> Azzi, *A crise da cristandade*, 67 and 107; In the Inconfidência Bahiana, there were eight Frades Bentos, fourteen Franciscans, three barbudinhos, and fourteen Terésios. In all there were at least 48 clerics. See Azzi, *A crise da cristandade*, 109-111; Da Costa, “The Political Emancipation of Brazil,” 65. Fathers Roma, Miguelinho, Tenório, and Pereira de Albuquerque were all executed when this uprising was put down, and Father João Ribeiro committed suicide. Friars Caneca and Coureiro would both remain imprisoned until 1821. See Neill Macaulay, *Dom Pedro: The Struggle for Liberty in Brazil and Portugal, 1798-1834*.

### ***Empire of Brazil***

With the proclamation of Independence in 1822, two key events occurred. First, the liberal clerics united around the idea of the recently founded country of Brazil. And secondly, the Portuguese prelates were being replaced by Brazilian bishops, carefully chosen by the imperial government as bulwarks of the established order.<sup>240</sup> Both of these items are especially important. With the first, many priests were elected deputies and had a notable presence in the provincial assemblies and in the General Assembly throughout the First Empire and period of the Regency. Second, many of the clerics assisted Dom Pedro I in consolidating the supremacy of the state over the Church. After dissolving the constituent assembly of 1823, claiming it was moving too slowly in voting into effect the articles of the constitution, Dom Pedro stated he would write a constitution “twice as liberal” as that which would have been produced. The result was the Constitution of 1824, which, while establishing a centralized system, enshrined basic elements of a

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(Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), 60-61 and Azzi, *A crise da cristandade*, 19. In all, there were 57 priests sent to be judged. For the anticlerical reforms of the Liberal Revolution, see Sánchez, *Anticlericalism*, 163. Of the prominent clerical revolutionaries, see Bruneau, 15. Note, however, that loyalist, anti-independence clerics also existed. The vicar general of the diocese of Pará and future archbishop of Bahia, Dom Romualdo Antônio de Seixas, declared to the Cortes of Lisbon to be against Independence in 1821. See Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX*, 305. In another example, the archival records in Rio de Janeiro notes one (unnamed) priest accused of preaching against Brazilian Independence at the pulpit, demanding his congregation join in in defense of the colonial order (“a favor do Partido Português”), and even for joining in the fight himself. See, AN, Mesa de Consciência e Ordens, Caixa 314, Envelope 1, Document 13. For good overviews of these uprisings in general, see the following: For 1789, Kenneth R. Maxwell, *Conflicts and Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal 1750-1808*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), for 1798, see István Jancsó, *Na Bahia, Contra o Império: História do Ensaio de Sedição de 1798*. (São Paulo: HUCITEC and Salvador: EDUFBA, 1996), for 1817, Glacyra Lazzari Leite, *Pernambuco 1817: estrutura e comportamentos*. (Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco & Massagana, 1988), Carlos Guilherme Mota, *Nordeste 1817: estruturas e argumentos*. (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1972), and Jeffrey C. Mosher, *Political Struggle*, chapters one and two.

<sup>240</sup> Azzi, *A crise da cristandade*, 125, 162. Also see Roderick Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798-1852*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), chapter four.

liberal political order. The charter retained Roman Catholicism as the religion of the empire, but it allowed members of other religions to worship insofar as they did so discretely.<sup>241</sup> Nonetheless, it was soon evident that the clerical hierarchy was becoming increasingly conservative as they were serving the regime.

Following the promulgation of Constitution of 1824, Dom Pedro I sent Monsenhor Francisco Correia Vidigal to Rome to obtain recognition of independence. Although the constitution had granted patronage rights to Brazil, Monsenhor Vidigal was instructed to receive them officially from the Holy See.<sup>242</sup> In May of 1827, therefore, Pope Leo XII issued the bull *Praeclara Portugallia* which recognized Brazilian Independence and transferred to Dom Pedro all of the patronage rights previously granted to the Portuguese monarchs. Interestingly, however, the General Assembly rejected the bull, arguing that since “it tries to confer certain rights on the Emperor of Brazil which he already possesses by virtue of his nobler [sic] titles.”<sup>243</sup>

The vast majority of the priests favored reform, particularly reform of the clergy. They can be divided into two reformist camps. On the one hand, there were the radical

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<sup>241</sup> From 1821-22, 23 of the 80 Brazilian deputies to go to Portuguese for the Cortes were clerics and, in the Brazilian Constituent Assembly, 16 of the 90 delegates were clerics. See Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX*, 307, Hauck, “A Igreja na Emancipação (1808-1840)”, 86, and Macaulay, 145; Mary Crescentia Thornton, *The Church and Freemasonry in Brazil, 1872-1875: A Study in Regalism*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1973), 65 and Macauley, 157; Article 5 of the Constitution of 1824; For a recent interpretation to the significance of the constitution, see Jeffrey D. Needell, *The Party of Order: The Conservatives, the State, and Slavery in the Brazilian Monarchy, 1831-1871*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

<sup>242</sup> More specifically, Dom Pedro wanted to receive the military order of Christ. It was through the grand mastership of the Order of Christ that the Portuguese monarchs had received the ecclesiastical tithe in Brazil. Therefore, this was vital in receiving patronage rights. Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX*, 305 and Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 60, note 13.

<sup>243</sup> C.F.G. de Groot, *Brazilian Catholicism and Ultramontane Reform, 1850-1930*. (Amsterdam: CEDLA (The Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation), 1996), 16. Also see Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX*, 305 and note that this meant that patronage as grand master of the Order of Christ as well as patronage received through the office of monarchy were granted.

regalists.<sup>244</sup> Banding together under the unofficial leadership of Father Diogo Antônio Feijó, who became regent in 1835, and Manuel Joaquim do Amaral Gurgel, they sought to reform the Church by creating a national church.<sup>245</sup> This way, the clergy could be reformed in ways that Rome would not countenance. For example, Feijó wished to attack what he saw as a moral laxity of the clergy by advocating the abolition of celibacy and the elimination of religious orders. In short, radical regalists argued that the Church was subordinate to the state.<sup>246</sup>

Moderate (or modern) regalists also sought to reform the Church. Banding together behind such conservatives as Dom Romualdo de Sousa Coelho and D. Romualdo Antônio de Seixas, they opposed the abolition of clerical celibacy and religious orders and advocated a renewed dedication among the clergy to spiritual, rather than political concerns. Emphasizing renewed teaching of the broad masses through catechisms, they tended to lean towards ultramontanist in arguing the church should be independent of the state.<sup>247</sup> However, unlike the ultramontanists (to be discussed below), they argued that all ecclesiastical acts must first receive the imperial *placet* before implementation, including bulls coming from the Holy See. Thus the state, for the

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<sup>244</sup> Also known as ultra-regalists and ardent regalists.

<sup>245</sup> On May 3, 1838, Diogo Feijó announced that this separation of Brazil from Rome would be through a national council. See João Fagundes Hauck, "A Igreja na Emancipação (1808-1840)" in *História Geral da Igreja na América Latina, Tomo II/2, História da Igreja no Brasil, Segunda Época*. (Petrópolis, Editora Vozes Ltda, 1980), 129.

<sup>246</sup> For a good overview of Feijó, see Alfredo Ellis Júnior, *Feijó e a primeira metade do século XIX*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (São Paulo: Campanhia Editora Nacional, 1980). Also see Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX*, 305-313; Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 17. Also see Octavio Tarquino de Sousa, *Diogo Antônio Feijó*. (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1942).

<sup>247</sup> Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX*, 307-8. Note that she states that *some* of the clerics were ultramontane, but by no means all of them. Also see Thales de Azevedo, *Igreja e estado em tensão e crise: a conquista espiritual e o padroado na Bahia*. (São Paulo: Editoria Ática, 1978) and Candido da Costa e Silva and Rioldo Azzí, *Dois estudos sobre D. Romualdo Antonio de Seixas, Arcebispo da Bahia*. (Salvador: Universidade Federal de Bahia, 1981).

moderate regalists, would still control many aspects of the Church, such as finances, schools, etc.<sup>248</sup> During the First Empire (1822-1831) and Regency (1831-1840), the Church was itself divided over the issue of royal patronage and state control of the Church versus simply Church independence. With the Second Empire (1840-1889), however, the cleavage between the state and the church would develop until it reached a breaking point over the Religious Question and contributed to the outbreak of the Quebra-Quilos revolt.

By the time the central government crushed the Praieira Revolt in 1848, marking the last of the federalist/regionalist revolts, the Church in Brazil had already begun to be squeezed out of politics. Whereas the Fourth Legislature (1838-41) of the General Assembly had twelve ecclesiastics as deputies, three of whom were bishops, by the Tenth Legislature (1857-60) there were only seven priests, and from the Eleventh to the end of the Empire, there were an average of only two to three priests at the General Assemblies.<sup>249</sup> Thus after the 1840 beginnings of the Second Empire, an increased “Romanization” of the Brazilian church began to occur, characterized as being less national, more conservative, and opposed to modern and liberal ideas.<sup>250</sup> Lest one think the Church was homogenous, it can now be divided into three main types of Catholics: traditional, tridentine, and ultramontane.

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<sup>248</sup> Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 17.

<sup>249</sup> Hugo Fragoso, “A Igreja na formação do estado liberal (1840-1875)” in João Fagundes Hauck, et al, *História da Igreja no Brasil: Ensaio de interpretação do povo. Segunda Época, A Igreja no Brasil no Século XIX*. Tomo II/2. (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes Ltda, 1980), 213.

<sup>250</sup> Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX*, 315, Riolando Azzi, *O altar unido ao trono: um projeto conservador*. (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1992), 36, and Fragoso, “A Igreja na formação do estado liberal (1840-1875)”, 182-3.

Traditional Catholics gave emphasis to such items as the worship of saints and were now seen as backwards and in need of reform. Thus the Tridentine Reformers, placing emphasis on sacraments and the clergy, sought to reintegrate the clerics into the daily lives of their parishioners, bringing them to mass and the confessional. As an increasing number of clerics adopted the tridentine reforms, this Romanization in turn increased. Increasingly, in instituting these reforms, the Brazilian church began to emphasize the hierarchical Church over popular Catholicism; it began to control the education of the clerics more stringently, depend on foreign clergy to assist them in promulgating such reforms, and, most importantly for our purposes, began to subordinate the Brazilian Church to the authority and fidelity of the Roman pontiff.<sup>251</sup> Thus it should come as no surprise that Tridentine Catholicism blended with the third form of Catholicism: ultramontanism, which looked to Rome rather than Rio de Janeiro as head of the Catholic Church in Brazil.

Ultramontanism, however, is more frequently defined as a subordination of human reason to faith, philosophy to theology, and natural to the supernatural, or simply a movement which emphasized papal authority and opposed modernity in its many forms (scientism, liberalism, socialism, etc).<sup>252</sup> To reiterate the above-mentioned chronology, ultramontane Catholicism began to gain adherents after the dust settled from the Praiera Rebellion and as the church became “Romanized.” In 1854, the dogma of Immaculate Conception was propounded, 1867 saw the celebration of the deaths of the apostles Peter and Paul, and from 1869-70, the First Vatican Council (Vatican I) was held in Rome. At the Vatican Council, the Brazilian episcopacy came out openly in defense of pontifical

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<sup>251</sup> Azzi, *O altar unido ao trono*, 30 & 76; 36.

<sup>252</sup> Azzi, *O altar unido ao trono*, 116 and Groot, *Brazilian Catholicism and Ultramontane Reform*, 6.



infallibility. These developments demonstrate a denationalization of the Brazilian Church.<sup>253</sup> By the 1860s, many clerics began to openly resent state participation in clerical matters. Dom Macedo Costa complained in 1863 that the government was controlling the church and in 1866 that “[t]he government involves itself in everything, and wants to make decisions about everything...hence the notices, the decrees, the cults of the secular magistrates slowly replacing the canons of the Church.”<sup>254</sup>

### ***Freemasonry and the Religious Question***

Freemasonry was in reality not the cause of the Religious Question; the above analysis should serve to demonstrate that the issues in Brazil were much more complex than traditional Masonic-Catholic enmity has suggested, and more complex than traditional historiography has recognized. Nonetheless, the dispute over Masonry would indeed serve as the spark igniting this Religious Question. And the Religious Question, combined with the Military Question, abolition, and republicanism, contributed to the overthrow of Dom Pedro II and the promulgation of the Republic. Therefore, the Freemasonry controversy is important for understanding the transition from empire to republic.<sup>255</sup>

Historians often emphasize the importance of Freemasonry in the independence movements in the Americas.<sup>256</sup> This was also the case for Brazil. Masonry tended to flourish in the larger cities, and was opposed to the old regime. Having been founded in

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<sup>253</sup> Many Liberal politicians now saw the Church in Brazil with increasing hostility as it came closer to the Holy See.

<sup>254</sup> Quoted in Fragoso, “A Igreja na formação do estado liberal (1840-1875)”, 185.

<sup>255</sup> See, for example, da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire*, 9, 37-38.

<sup>256</sup> Cardozo, “The Modernization of Portugal and the Independence of Brazil,” 204.

the eighteenth century as a secret upper middle class aristocratic organization whose aim was to spread the ideals of deism, freedom, and rationalism, Freemasonry was also one of the chief vehicles of political anticlericalism . But it was not necessarily anticlerical, however, and when it was, this did not mean clerics did not participate. In fact, one fourth of all French Freemasons in 1789 were clerics who apparently saw no incompatibility between their priestly office and membership in the condemned society. Philosophes, regalists, and even members of the upper clergy were known to join Masonic orders.<sup>257</sup>

In Brazil and Portugal, Masonic lodges had existed since at least the time of Dom João VI. Masonic Lodges became socially as well as politically important as many of the king's conservative ministers and councilors of state joined. And, as was the case with French Freemasons, many liberal clerics joined as well. Masonic lodges soon became the focal points for movements against the crown, and thus Dom João decided to put an end to Masonic activities, ordering the closing of all lodges on March 31, 1818.<sup>258</sup> However, by the time D. João returned to Portugal (1821), they were up and running once again.

By May or June of 1822 José Bonifácio, often known as the patriarch of Brazilian Independence, was serving as Grand Master in the Grande Oriente (Great Orient), and by July, Dom Pedro himself had been initiated into this lodge, becoming the Grand Master on September 14, 1822. As Emilia Viotti da Costa writes, whereas Freemasonry's

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<sup>257</sup> Sánchez, *Anticlericalism*, 83 and 97.

<sup>258</sup> Freemasons were in the forefront of those who were pushing Dom Pedro towards parliamentarianism as well as declaration of independence. See Macaulay, 120 and da Costa, "The Political Emancipation of Brazil," 61-63. Also see Célia de Barros Barreto, "Ação das Sociedades Secretas" in Buarque de Holanda, ed., *História Geral da Civilização Brasileira*, Tomo II, 1º Volume. (São Paulo: Difel, 1962).

traditional role in Europe had been to work to overthrow monarchies and oppose royal institutions, in Brazil the prince himself became the grand master.<sup>259</sup>

Even important clerics joined Masonic societies, such as José Caetano da Silva Coutinho, the bishop of Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1833, Francisco de Paula Cavalcanti de Albuquerque, Dom Manuel do Monte Rodrigues de Araújo, count of Irajá and bishop of Rio de Janeiro, Bishop Azeredo Coutinho, who established the Seminary of Olinda, Miguel Joaquim de Almeida, professor at the Seminary of Olinda, João Ribeiro Pessoa, also professor at the Seminary of Olinda, Joaquim do Amor Divino Caneca, a Carmelite Friar and a leader of the 1824 Revolution, and many others.<sup>260</sup> Masonry in Brazil was associated with liberalism, but not anticlericalism. It was when clerics became less political and less liberal that they ceased to join Masonic lodges. Not only that, but Rome was beginning to condemn Masonry, and the more “Romanized” the Brazilian church became, the more anti-Masonic its rhetoric got.

In 1864, Rome issued the encyclical *Syllabus of Errors* in which eighty errors were outlined, and an addendum to this encyclical, *Quanta Cura*, outlined the papacy’s opposition to Masonry. Then, at the First Vatican Council (1869-70), Rome defined the dogma of papal infallibility, leading Brazil to secularize cemeteries, require civil registration for births and deaths, and even begin recognizing civil marriage.<sup>261</sup>

Thus an atmosphere of antagonism was in the air when the Viscount of Rio Branco passed the Law of the Free Womb in 1871, emancipating all slaves born after that

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<sup>259</sup> da Costa, “The Political Emancipation of Brazil,” 84. On October 27, 1822, Dom Pedro was convinced by José Bonifácio to suspend all Masonic activities. However, masonry continued to function in secret and, upon Dom Pedro’s abdication in 1831, the Grand Orient was reestablished with José Bonifácio himself reelected to position of Grand Master. See Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 34.

<sup>260</sup> Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX*, 339 and Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 28, 37-48.

<sup>261</sup> Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 110.

day, with the provision that at the age of eight they serve their mother's master until the age of 21, when they would become free. The Vicount of Rio Branco was, at this time, a grand master of one of the two masonic grand lodges in Rio de Janeiro, which held a reception in his honor. During that reception, Father Almeida Martins, himself a Freemason, gave a discourse in his honor. As a result, Bishop Pedro Maria de Lacerda ordered Father Almeida to renounce Masonry. Since Masonry was never condemned by the State, and since none of the papal encyclicals renouncing Masonry had received the imperial placet and were therefore not to be instituted in Brazil, Father Almeida refused. Bishop Lacerda, therefore, suspended Almeida's right to preach and hear confessions. In turn, Almeida appealed to the Council of State.<sup>262</sup>

With the lodge in Rio de Janeiro meeting to defend Father Almeida (April 16, 1872), the newly appointed bishop of Olinda, Vital Maria Gonçalves de Oliveira, a Capuchin friar, traveled to Olinda to begin his work. Once there, he received word that on June 29 a mass would be held in celebration of the founding of a local Masonic order. Issuing the circular *Reservadíssima*, he ordered that no mass be held. The Masonic press responded by publishing the names of all Masons, including many clerics. In response, Vital ordered all clerics to abjure Masonry and all brotherhoods to expel any member who refused to do so. The Brotherhood of Our Lady of Solitude refused to do so, and Dom Vital suspended this brotherhood (on January 5, 1873). Another, the Brotherhood of the Most Holy Sacrament was also ordered to abjure Masonry. After a series of letters failed to convince them, and an ultimatum on January 13 went unheeded, Dom Vital

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<sup>262</sup> See Fragoso, "A Igreja na formação do estado liberal (1840-1875)", 186-7, and Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 100.

levied an interdict on them as well. And, as had occurred in Rio de Janeiro, they appealed to the capital.<sup>263</sup>

Meanwhile, the bishop of Pará, Dom Antônio de Macedo Costa, had chosen to take a similar stand. On March 25, 1873, he issued a pastoral in which he, too, condemned Masonry and stated that all Masons who refused to abjure Masonry would be expelled from their brotherhoods, in particular aiming his remarks at the Third Order of Our Lady of Monte Carmo, (given on March 25, 1873).<sup>264</sup> No fewer than five religious associations would be suspended. In May of 1873, the papacy issued the encyclical *Quamquam Dolores* to Dom Vital giving its support. This encyclical, according to Nilo Pereira, published without the imperial placet, would be one of the final straws. The minister of the interior, João Alfredo Corrêa de Oliveira, had sent a letter to Dom Vital in February stating that “according to our law, bulls which do not receive the *placet* cannot be executed in the empire,” and yet Dom Vital was continuing to issue encyclicals without imperial approval.<sup>265</sup> In June of 1873, the Council of State ordered that Dom Vital lift the interdict placed on the brotherhoods within thirty days.

Thirty days passed and Dom Vital had not lifted the interdict. According to Law No. 609 of August 18, 1857, article 1, “the archbishops and bishops of the Empire of Brazil in causes that are not purely spiritual will be processed and judged by the Supreme

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<sup>263</sup> A good overview of this paragraph can be found in Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 100-129. The letter of interdiction can be found reprinted in Nilo Pereira, *Dom Vital e a questão religiosa no Brasil; Prefácio de Newton Sucupira*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1986), 35.

<sup>264</sup> *Annexos do Relatório do Ministério do Império apresentado em maio de 1875, (Relatório do ministério dos negócios do império, 1875. Anexo E, Questão do Bispo de Pará)*. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Nacional, 1875), 1-2.

<sup>265</sup> Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 141; Nilo Pereira, *Dom Vital*, 26; Rio de Janeiro, 15 Feb 1873. Reprinted in Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, Appendix B, Document I.

Tribunal of Justices.”<sup>266</sup> Later that year, on December 12, the Tribunal of Justice therefore charged Dom Vital with violating article 96 of the criminal code and ordered his immediate arrest. Dom Antônio de Macedo Costa would likewise be charged, on March 24 of the following year. Dom Vital was naturally the first to be arrested, receiving his order of imprisonment on December 22, and was taken by the arresting officers to the naval arsenal in Recife and then sent to Bahia, arriving there on January 13. Coming before the Supreme Tribunal on February 18 and 21, Dom Vital was sentenced to four years hard labor. Dom Antônio de Macedo Costa was likewise tried, on the 27 of June and July 1, with a similar sentence.<sup>267</sup> Both sentences were commuted to simple imprisonment by Dom Pedro II, and both would serve about one and a half years, receiving general amnesty from Dom Pedro II on September 17, 1875. But by this time, Quebra-Quilos had erupted, in part, in support of the imprisoned bishops.

### ***Quebra-Quilos***

On November 21 or November 26, 1874, according to one report, one month following the initial Quebra-Quilos agitation in Fagundes, Paraíba, rioters attacked the interior city of Areia.<sup>268</sup> In 1859, the town had built a theater, replete with ten theater boxes, 100 chairs, and a gallery.<sup>269</sup> This theater, the rioters believed, was in reality a Masonic temple, proof of which came from, it was claimed, that “in it there was a blue

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<sup>266</sup> As quoted in Nilo Pereira, *Ensaio de História Regional*. Prefácio de Luiz Delgado. (Recife: Editora Universitária, 1972), 30. This quote is repeatedly used to justify ecclesiastical arrests. See APEJE, Códice promotor público, PJ9, 1874-1875, MS 242-244, From promotor público do County de Olinda to Delfino Augusto Albuquerque, District judge do County de Olinda, Dec 8, 1874.

<sup>267</sup> Thornton, *Church and Freemasonry in Brazil*, 178-182, Nilo Pereira, *Dom Vital*, 27, 115-117.

<sup>268</sup> “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do commandante,” 117.

<sup>269</sup> Geraldo Irineo Joffily, “O Quebra-Quilo. (A Revolta dos matutos contra os doutores),” *Revista de História*, 54 (Jul-Sept, 1976), 72.

book against the Church.” Consequently, the rioters began to demolish it.<sup>270</sup> Once this was accomplished, they proceeded to the city council where a picture of Dom Pedro II had been hanging. Knocking it off the wall, they proceeded to slash it, blaming Pedro II for the arrest of bishops Dom Vital and Macedo Costa.<sup>271</sup> They also attempted, in this instance, to dig up the body of the district judge, Francisco de Araújo Barros, stating that since he was a practitioner of Masonry, he should not be buried in sacred ground.<sup>272</sup>

The above example should lead the reader to the sense of anti-Masonic sentiment as well as support for the imprisoned bishops. The bishops, in the Religious Question, had ordered all religious brotherhoods and clerics to abjure Masonry upon pain of dismissal and eventual excommunication, leading to the bishops’ arrests. The peasants then used this as justification of their uprising; tax revolts receive a great deal of moral justification through appeals to religion. In other words, an appeal to the pocketbook largely caused this revolt, but religious reasons gave the peasants moral incentive to resist its payments and break the law.

But just as the increase in taxes were caused in large measure because of the economic decline in the northeast, the trial and police investigation transcripts make evident that the use of religion in this uprising was quite common, particularly through missionary movements and preachings by local priests against Masonry and in support of

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<sup>270</sup> *Relatorio Apresentada á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Quarta Sessão da Decima Quinta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Dr. Manoel Antonio Duarte de Azevedo.* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1875), 3. Also see David Gueiros Vieira, *O Protestantismo, a Maçonaria e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil.* (Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília, 1980), 364 and Horácio de Almeida, “Dom Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” (*Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*. Vol. 323—Abril-Junho—1979), 1650. Note that Colonel Fonseca stated that although they had planned to destroy the theater, they did not do so as some people talked them out of it. See “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do commandante,” 116-117.

<sup>271</sup> Almeida, “Dom Vital”, 165 and “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do commandante,” 116-117.

<sup>272</sup> Armando Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos: Lutas Sociais no Outono do Império.* (Campanhia Editora Nacional, 1978), 33.

renewed religious vigor and social welfare reform. In Granito, for example, Father Manoel Antonio de Jesus reportedly tried to incite the masses to rebellion, especially by preaching on the Religious Question and condemning the arrest of Dom Vital.<sup>273</sup> When seen in this light, the destruction of Masonic symbols and objects appears less out of the ordinary and the government response to “foreign priests” appears more in tune with contemporary events. In short, missionary movements, anti-Masonic preaching by local priests, Jesuit expulsion, and the arrest and accusation of local priests as Quebra-Quilos leaders all served as justification for revolt.

In the 1860s and 1870s, waves of missionary movements were prevalent in the Brazilian northeast. In particular, the missions of Father José Antônio Maria Ibiapina directly affected the Quebra-Quilos revolt.<sup>274</sup> Through his training as a lawyer and background in a dissident family, and then his experiences as a priest, Ibiapina was affected by the human misery in the northeast. He therefore began a series of missions throughout the region, focusing on the physical as well as the spiritual. Each mission

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<sup>273</sup> APEJE, Códice “Offícios Diversos,” 1874-1879, MS 27, district attorney from Granito, Alexandre Geraldo de Carvalho to Lucena, Dec 28, 1874.

<sup>274</sup> Born José Antônio Pereira in the northeastern state of Ceará on August 5, 1806 (supplanted Pereira with Maria in 1855, following his ordination to the clergy and decision to go into the sertão to commence his work among the peasants), Ibiapina was the third child of Francisco Miguel Pereira and Tereza Maria de Jesus. He began his studies at the Seminary of Olinda, in Pernambuco, in 1823, but his studies were evidently interrupted the following year with the eruption of the Confederation of the Equator Rebellion. Both his father as well as his brother, Raimundo Alexandre Pereira Ibiapina, participated, and, when the movement was crushed, his father was executed by firing squad and his brother sent to the prison on the Island of Fernando de Noronha, where he subsequently died. Returning to school, Father Ibiapina eventually received his diploma from the law school of Pernambuco in 1832, working as a lawyer until 1833 when he became general deputy from 1834-37 in Rio de Janeiro. In 1837, he moved back to Recife, put out his shingle and opened his law office. Having never married, Ibiapina chose to reenter the Seminary of Olinda, receiving his ordination on July 3, 1853. See Benedito Silva, *Padre Ibiapina*. (Fortaleza: Edições Demócrito, 2002), 61. João Alfredo de S. Montenegro, “Ibiapina e a História Regional do Nordeste,” in Georgette Desrochers and Eduardo Hoornaert, ed., *Padre Ibiapina e a Igreja dos Pobres*. (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1984), 29 and Silva, *Padre Ibiapina*, 28-30. Ibiapina had plans to marry a Carolina Clarensen when he originally began studying law, but when Carolina secretly began dating Ibiapina’s cousin, Antônio Sucupira and became engaged to him as well, Ibiapina abandoned all prospects of marriage and never again talked of it. See Silva, *Padre Ibiapina*, 36-37.



would last approximately twelve days or so and would target a specific town or village, bringing the population together to build hospitals, charity houses, cemeteries, churches, and irrigation dams.<sup>275</sup> In 1868, for example, he began his mission to Goaninha, Ceará and brought 110 people together, including twenty masons (pedreiros), thirty carpenters, and 200-300 people to work in building a dam, and somewhere between 10,000-12,000 others to assist in bringing materials and working on the construction of a church. This way, as he taught, he could convince the peasants to leave their mark on something that would benefit the community.<sup>276</sup>

Ibiapina also considered idleness to be a sin, and sought to bring people together to build houses of charity to benefit the poor. Between 1860 and 1872, Ibiapina built twenty-two such charity houses. One, built in Ceará in 1865, the charity house of Missão Velha, had rooms for orphans, for the sick, a flower garden with a cistern of water, and a room to educate children. In Paraíba, the heart of the Quebra-Quilos rebellion, ten were established. The first, the Casa de Santa Fé, was established in 1866 with a dam and a cemetery, and others in Pocinhos and Pombas. In other areas he built hospitals, such as one in Areia in 1862 and one in Alagoa Nova in 1869, which were both later transformed into houses of charity.<sup>277</sup> Nearly all of the villages that would later rise up in rebellion against Quebra-Quilos had previously been sites of Ibiapina's missions.

Ibiapina, however, did not limit himself to charity houses, but also preached directly to the poor. According to one witness, the notary public of Campina Grande,

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<sup>275</sup> Hoornaert cites 10-12 days and Silva cites 18 days. Eduardo Hoornaert, "Ibiapina e os Desclassificados," 77, in Desrochers and Hoornaert, and Silva, *Padre Ibiapina*, 66.

<sup>276</sup> Eduardo Hoornaert, "Ibiapina e os Desclassificados," 77-78, in Desrochers and Hoornaert, 77-78 and Silva, *Padre Ibiapina*, 63-66.

<sup>277</sup> Eduardo Hoornaert, "Ibiapina e os Desclassificados," 77-78, in Desrochers and Hoornaert and José Comblin, "Ibiapina, O Missionário," 123 in Desrochers and Hoornaert.

Father Calixto Correia de Nóbrega, vicar of Campina Grande, had been attempting to convince his parishioners, in light of the Religious Question, of the evils of Masonry.<sup>278</sup>

In fact, according to the historian Horácio de Almeida, at the height of the Religious Question, but before Dom Vital had been imprisoned, Father Nóbrega went and visited him in Olinda. Although no record of what they discussed seems to exist, Nóbrega, upon returning to Campina Grande, expelled all Masons from church membership.<sup>279</sup> Not dissimilar to the situations with Dom Vital and Macedo Costa, Nóbrega targeted the religious brotherhood *Segredo e Lealdade* for specific action. One businessman in Campina Grande, Raymundo Theodorico José Dornellas, belonged to this brotherhood. On July 13, 1873, Nóbrega denounced this secret society as Masonic and, on July 20, expelled Dornellas along with at least five other members of the society from the Church.<sup>280</sup>

Father Nóbrega then requested the assistance of Father Ibiapina to come and convince his parishioners to abjure Masonry. This he did, entering the city in early December. Opening his mission the following day, he began preaching that the people of Campina Grande did not have to obey the authorities in the city as they were all appointed by a Masonic government.<sup>281</sup> Another witness claimed that Ibiapina “raised his voice and clamored against the cursed sect [of Masonry] with so much courage that it

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<sup>278</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 13

<sup>279</sup> Horácio de Almeida, “D. Vita e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*. (Vol. 323—Abril-Junio—1979, 160-168), 164 and Horácio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*. (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1958), 139.

<sup>280</sup> Those expelled were Tenente Bento Gomes Pereira Luna, Capitão Pedro Americo de Almeida, Capitão Clementino da Costa, Alfores Raymundo Tavares Candeia, Estevão Alexandre José Dornellas, and Raymundo Theodorico José Dornellas. AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 17.

<sup>281</sup> See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 13 and 17, 21.

caused admiration,”<sup>282</sup> and another witness stated that after he opened his mission, Ibiapina, in addition to “counsel[ing] the people not to obey the government as it was Masonic,” that “it would be the same to kill a Mason as damned dogs (*cais damnados*).”<sup>283</sup> In Fagundes, a witness reported, Ibiapina preached “from the pulpit that the son should not obey the father if he were a Mason...the wife could abandon her husband...[and] that people did not need to obey the government.”<sup>284</sup> Colonel Fonseca, in his investigation, found this to be true as well, including that Father Ibiapina preached in Campina Grande that slaves could free themselves from servitude, “if your father, husband, or owner be a Mason.”<sup>285</sup> Nearly all of the above witnesses were either Masons expelled from this religious brotherhood or giving testimony under duress (or both), so these statements must be taken with a grain of salt. Nonetheless, it should come as no surprise that, according to research by Celso Mariz, that in the mission of Campina Grande, the Masons struck back and attempted to “sabotage the mission”.<sup>286</sup>

The *imposto do chão*, a principle target of the uprising, became commonly known among those who rose up in rebellion as a “Masonic law,” or at least one established by Masons, along with the weights and measures of the metric system.<sup>287</sup> Thus following the above-mentioned November 21 attack on Areia in which the town was sacked, the theater believed to be a “Masonic temple” was destroyed, the portrait of Pedro II cut up,

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<sup>282</sup> As quoted in Celso Mariz, *Ibiapina, um apóstolo do Nordeste*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., (João Pessoa, Paraíba: Editora Universitária, 1980), 78.

<sup>283</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 5.

<sup>284</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 12, 18, 77; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, May 21, 1875.

<sup>285</sup> “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do commandante,” 119.

<sup>286</sup> Mariz, *Ibiapina*, 141.

<sup>287</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 22 and Barman, “Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined,” 414.

and an attempt was made to dig up the body of a supposed Mason, the city of Campina Grande was then attacked. João Carga d'Agua, the leader of one of these groups, specifically sought out Father Nóbrega to hand over to him the weights and measures of the metric system—the “Masonic” measurements. Around November 29, when Manoel de Barros returned to the city with his men (after having broken his father, João de Barros, out of jail), he attacked the meeting place of the *Segredo e Lealdade* society. Taking the crucifix and books out of the meeting place, they then went to Nóbrega where they handed them over as well.<sup>288</sup> Around this same time, João Carga d'Agua also invaded the house of this brotherhood and seized books and delivered them up to Nóbrega.<sup>289</sup>

Fathers Nóbrega and Ibiapina were considered, for a time, as the chief leaders of the uprising. On the December 13, 1874, the provincial president of Paraíba wrote to the President Lucena of Pernambuco, that “Fathers Ibiapina and Calixto (vicar of Campina Grande) are the principal authors of this agitation.”<sup>290</sup> According to the Paraíba dispatch sent to Rio de Janeiro, “Father Calixto, as a public voice, became the origin and cause of the sedition against Masonry... [and] that it is common knowledge that the vicar of the

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<sup>288</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 27 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, May 21, 1875; *Relatório Apresentada á Assembléa Legislativa na Quarta Sessão da Decima Quinta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Dr. Manoel Antoni Duarte de Azevedo*. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1875), 3, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 27 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, May 21, 1875.

<sup>289</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 19 and Vieira, *O Protestantismo*, 364; Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 46.

<sup>290</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Carneiro da Cunha to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874.

parish of Campina is the person who everyone obeys.”<sup>291</sup> Nóbrega would therefore be arrested and tried as a leader of the Quebra-Quilos movement.<sup>292</sup>

The majority of the witnesses questioned with regards to Nóbrega were interrogated on January 27, 1874. However, defended by his good friend, the lawyer Irineu Jóffily, Nóbrega was soon absolved.<sup>293</sup> Interestingly, sometime soon after his interrogation, he was released on habeas corpus, but then provincial Police Chief Manoel Caldas Barreto reordered his arrest. He requested that Colonel Severiano, who was leading the government forces sent to crush the rebellion, carry out the arrest. Colonel Severiano stalled, afraid that his men would not carry out the arrest when ordered, due to Nóbrega’s popularity among the peasantry.<sup>294</sup> Perhaps he is right; Colonel Severiano had planned to order his lieutenant colonel police commissioner João Theodoro Pereira de Mello to carry out the arrest, but, fearing that Theodoro would not carry out the order (as he consistently defended Nóbrega), delayed carrying it out.

Murmurs were also spreading at this time that Ibiapina was the leader of this uprising. After his mission to Campina Grande, Ibiapina had retired to the first of his charity houses in Paraíba, Santa Fé, and was still there when word reached him that he was to be arrested. His response is reported to have been “I am willing to suffer what God wants,” but the arrest never came.<sup>295</sup> Perhaps Horácio de Almeida is right in

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<sup>291</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, May 21, 1875.

<sup>292</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Caldas Barreto to Carneiro da Cunha, Feb 13, 1875.

<sup>293</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 51.

<sup>294</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Caldas Barreto to Carneiro da Cunha, Feb 13, 1875 and *Resposta do District judge da County de Campina Grande Bacharel Antonio da Trindade A. M. henriques Ao Relatorio do Dr. Chefe de Policia manoel Caldas Barreto sorbet os movimentos rioters havidos n’esta Provincia, Apresentado ao Exm. Sr. Presidente da mesma Dr. Silvino Elvidio C. da Cunha. Em 23 de Fevereiro de 1875.* (Parahyba: Typ. Conservadora, 1875), 8-9.

<sup>295</sup> Mariz, *Ibiapina*, 144 and 147.

arguing that as a result of the prestige of his name among the people of the northeast, the government refused to arrest him. Indeed, Joffily argues that it would have been riskier to touch the “padre mestre” or Holy Father, than to arrest Dom Vital.<sup>296</sup>

### ***Jesuits and Capuchins***

On December 5, Henrique Pereira da Lucena, president of Pernambuco, sent a letter to the minister of justice arguing that in his province and that of neighboring Paraíba, he had pinpointed the cause of the Quebra-Quilos agitation: Jesuit priests siding with the bishops over the Religious Question. He states:

As you can see it is evident that this movement is provoked by the followers [*adeptos*] in support of the Religious Question, led by the Jesuit priests and their followers, and supported by the zealots [*exaltados*<sup>297</sup>] of the actual situation that are not satisfied with using the press to spread their subversive ideas to public order, flattering bad passions and suggesting to the people convulsive acts that have recently helped the hidden leaders of the movement already spread out in this city and Parahyba.<sup>298</sup>

For Pernambuco, authorities emphasized the Religious Question as the cause of the Quebra-Quilos revolt. Indeed, the Jesuits take the brunt of the attack as scapegoats for both the Religious Question and subsequent Quebra-Quilos revolt.

The Jesuits had been expelled from Brazil in the eighteenth century. According to Souto Maior, they returned to Recife under the guidance of Bishop D. Manuel Medeiros, but under the name of “fathers of São Francisco Xavier.”<sup>299</sup> The same day that Lucena

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<sup>296</sup> Horacio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*, 146; Joffily, “O Quebra-Quilos,” 136.

<sup>297</sup> Particularly during the First Empire, there was a group of politicians known as the *exaltados*: “ideologically radical, on the extreme fringe of Nativism, and openly advocated republicanism and federalism.” It is perhaps this ideology that President Lucena is referring to rather than zealous supporting of the Church during the Religious Question. See Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation*, 153.

<sup>298</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874.

<sup>299</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 73.

wrote his letter to Rio de Janeiro, his chief of police, Antonio Francis e Correia de Araújo, in turn wrote him a letter outlining his progress in rounding up Jesuit conspirators. The Jesuit Chaplain of the Colégio de Santa Dorothea, he wrote, lives in the house of João de Barros. There, night meetings had been held on certain days of the week. These meetings were held in secret requiring attendees to knock and be admitted, evidence, he implied, of conspiracy behind closed doors. Hearing of these “nocturnal meetings,” Correia de Araujo had his deputy commissioner from Boa Vista investigated, discovering that the vicar, Francisco Araujo, had been receiving visitors from Rio de Janeiro. This was evidently enough proof to merit a raid on the house, which was shortly carried out towards the end of November.

In the raid of the Jesuit house, a number of letters were discovered that “demonstrate the Jesuit influence in the Quebra-Quilos.” In particular, three of the letters had been written in Italian by the Jesuit superior of the province, Father Felippa Sotres, which “prove the Jesuits have powerfully influenced the Religious Question before the Roman Curia, which has sent from its order, as is evident in the letters from Bishop Dom Vital.”<sup>300</sup> On December 4, *O Diario* stated that these papers and letters reveal that the Jesuits “are the true directors of the bishopric of Olinda” and that most of the priests (from Olinda) have direct relations with them.<sup>301</sup> According to the chief of police, one of the letters was from Manuel José Xavier Ribeira to Father Ibiapina in which he wrote that “it” would be tomorrow. This “it,” was therefore understood to be the Quebra-Quilos rebellion, a direct link between Jesuit conspiracy and Father Ibiapina in Paraíba. In

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<sup>300</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 5, 1874.

<sup>301</sup> As reprinted in *A Provincia*, Dec 4, 1874.

addition to the raid on this Jesuit house, the school (*colégio*) located in São Lourenço da Matto was also raided, and letters seized there as well.

President Lucena, on December 21, 1874, the day before arrests of the Jesuits were to be carried out, had five letters printed that supposedly were “proof” of Jesuit subversion. Interestingly, the above-mentioned letter was not included, and of the letters included, very little if any evidence can be found. The evidence considered the most damning was the first letter published, dated May 7, 1874, by Jesuit priest Joseph Lasembly, written in Liverpool to the Jesuit priest Rocha, in which he writes that “Dom Vital has become a champion of the church.” In addition, he states, quoting directly from Rocha himself, that although the Brazilian government has commuted the sentence of Dom Vital to one without labor, the government is still committing a great injustice and has entirely lost its faith. The damning evidence: communication with foreign priests and criticizing the government with regards to the Religious Question.<sup>302</sup> The remaining four letters discuss mundane issues, with the exception of one from Dr. José Soriano de Souza to the Father Rector Sottova, dated June 1, 1874, in which he predicts that “One day it [the ministry] will fall.”<sup>303</sup> The accusations against the Jesuits were therefore made with very little evidence and, argues historian Souto Maior, all of the governmental attempts to prove that the Jesuits participated directly in Quebra-Quilos failed.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 23, 1874.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 80. Note that Souto Maior claims that there were actually ten letters presented as proof in the *Diário de Pernambuco* of Jesuit subversion, although in reality they focused on issues relating to missionary work. See pages 86-88.



Nonetheless, the arrest orders were issued for December 22.<sup>305</sup> Altogether seven key Jesuits were arrested, the first five arrests were carried out immediately: João Baptista Rayberti, Mario Aciani, Felipe Sottovia, Luis Capucci, Mazz e João Berti. There was also, according to the proceedings forwarded on by the police chief, a Father Silvestre José da Rocha Pinto, who was a Brazilian, unlike his companions who were all supposedly of Italian citizenship. He requested to “deny his citizenship and have the same destination as his companions,” but was refused such denial by the police chief. Interestingly, then, only foreign priests were arrested.<sup>306</sup>

The two final Jesuit priests, Antonio Aragnetti and Onoratti, were more difficult to capture. Father Aragnetti had been working as a missionary in Pernambuco until at least December 15.<sup>307</sup> When the arrest order was issued, he appears to have gone into hiding, although, according to the commander of the Infantry Company of St. Catherine who was searching for him, drawings had been distributed to help find him. Thus on January 4, Commander Caldas discovered Aragnetti in disguise (“even a leather hat, not having any clothes that would show him to be a priest”). When he began to interrogate the Jesuit however, Aragnetti refused to answer any questions and told his interrogator “that for the salvation of [his] soul he should not proceed.”<sup>308</sup>

Thus he was taken to the town of Pau d’Alho and handed over to the police commissioner under the guard of twenty-eight troops commanded by Lieutenant João

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<sup>305</sup> The investigation into the Jesuits was completed on the 21<sup>st</sup> which decided to expel all foreign Jesuits, although arrests did not commence until the following day. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 23, 1874.

<sup>306</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 23, 1874. Also see APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, no record number, town of Floresta to [illegible], Jan 5, 1875.

<sup>307</sup> Full name withheld from the records. APEJE, Códice “Offícios Diversos, 1874-79, ms 207.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

Francisco Guimarães, who then proceeded to deliver him to the capital.<sup>309</sup> On January 5, Lucena had still not received any news about either the capture of Aragnetti or Onoratti, and impatiently wrote to the town council of Triumpho, demanding his orders be carried out. When Lucena finally received word of the capture of Aragnetti, immense relief was evident in the letter he wrote to Captain Candido Alfredo de Amorim Caldas, congratulating him on his arrest.<sup>310</sup>

Father Onoratti was to take even longer to capture. He was discovered in the middle of the night on January 17, traveling with two baggage-carriers. They were evidently travelling from the town of Pajeú de Flores en route to turn themselves into the authorities in the capital. Upon leaving the town, a group of fifty townspeople, led by the Ensign of the National Guard, Silverio Paes de Souza, went after him, catching up to him on the road between Triumpho to Piranhas, pleading that he not go. They would defend him, they argued, and would not let him go to prison, as the government did not have enough forces to resist the people of their municipal district. Father Onoratti's response, however, was that he wished to present himself to the president to follow the same destiny as his companions.<sup>311</sup>

Upon arresting the Jesuit priests, beginning on December 22, President Lucena placed them on the corvette aptly named *Vital de Oliveira* in preparation for expelling them from the Empire, ordering the payment of 222 pounds sterling to be used to pay for

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<sup>309</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 347, Commander of the Line Infantry Company of St. Catherine, Candido Alfredo de Amorim Caldas to Lucena, Jan 4, 1875 and Idem, Jan 5, 1875. Here he states that Lieutenant Guimaraes only had twenty-six troops, however. Also see Idem., 4 Jan 1875.

<sup>310</sup> "To the town council of the town of Triumpho, 5 Jan 1875" in *Boletins do Expediente do Governo, APEJE, 1874-1877* (Pernambuco: Typ. De M. Figueiroa de F. and Filhos, 1877), 7; "To Captain Candido Alfredo de Amorim Caldas, 11 Jan 1875" in *Boletins do Expediente do Governo, APEJE, 1874-1877* (Pernambuco: Typ. De M. Figueiroa de F. and Filhos, 1877), 16.

<sup>311</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 347, Correa de Araujo to Lucena, Jan 25, 1875.

their first class passage and 600 reis daily to feed them.<sup>312</sup> Of course, the expulsion would be delayed until they could all be rounded up the following month, and letters quickly began to arrive for President Lucena denouncing the arrests. The bishopric of the Seminary of Olinda argued that the Jesuit priests had been living peacefully among them for nine years, zealously teaching the youth. Moreover, this letter states,

“you have not proven nor will you prove in any way the intervention of the Jesuit priests in the seditious movements that have appeared in some of the provinces of the north of the Empire, movements that I and all the diocesan clergy deplore.... The few priests of the Company of Jesus that reside in our pleasant country [“patria”], were incapable of raising the people against the legitimate constituted authorities, and therefore took no part in the happenings in the countryside.”<sup>313</sup>

Nonetheless, President Lucena and the government in Recife were adamant. In response to this letter, he stated that the Jesuits were “agents of fanaticism and of anarchy,” “foreign priests which have turned dangerous to the state.”<sup>314</sup> Colonel Fonseca would later argue that these seminaries had been spreading subversive ideas, having been provoked “by the imprisonment of the two principle representatives of the church in the Empire.”<sup>315</sup> Thus they were expelled from the Empire yet again.

### ***Loyal Priests***

Not all clerics, however, were blamed for the uprising. During the Religious Question, although the Jesuits generally sided with Dom Vital and Macedo Costa, the

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<sup>312</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 23, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 23, 1874.

<sup>313</sup> APEJE, Cod. Eclesiástico, AE 16, 1873-75, MS 146, Letter to Lucena from Governo do Bispado no Seminário d’Olinda, 24 December 1874.

<sup>314</sup> APEJE, *Boletins do Expediente do Governo*, 1874-77. (Pernambuco: Typ. De M. Figueiroa de F. e Filhos, 1877), ms 13.

<sup>315</sup> “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do commandante,” 119.

Capuchin missionaries, if not directly siding with the government (by taking a regalist stance), at least did not oppose the government and side with Dom Vital.<sup>316</sup> This in itself can be considered a bit of a contradiction, as Dom Vital himself had been a Capuchin priest before becoming bishop of Olinda. The Capuchins, much like Father Ibiapina, had also directed missions. In October of 1874, President Lucena had requested a report on the status of the Capuchin missions. On December 30, Fr. Venancio Maria de Ferrara responded that in 1874 twelve missions had been carried out in Pernambuco alone. These missions would bring between five and twelve thousand people together and “also sought to provide material benefits,” such as the new church in the city of Escada, and the new cemetery in S. Bento. In Bom Jardim, Fr. Venancio reported, the population was still burying their dead in the church, so the mission there was to build a new cemetery.<sup>317</sup>

The government in Pernambuco and Paraíba would turn to the Capuchin missionaries to repress the uprising. The minister of war wrote to President Lucena on November 29 stating that “I am writing to encourage you to continue to support those [Capuchin] missionaries in continuing to pacify the rioters of the province and that of Parahyba do Norte.”<sup>318</sup> When the town of Ingá, in Paraíba, was attacked on the twenty-first, “our distinguished friend” Reverend Vicar Bento José de Barros Medonça came before the people and counseled order, though he failed to receive it. On November 30, 1874, between 300-400 rioters attacked the town of Itambé in Pernambuco. The town officials turned to the Capuchin missionaries to convince the masses of the error of their ways. In this particular instance, Friar Venancio, a Capuchin missionary, was asked to

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<sup>316</sup> Barman, “Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined,” 420-21.

<sup>317</sup> APEJE (Arquivo Público do Estado de Pernambuco), Cod. Eclesiástico, AE 16, 1873-75, ms 266-272.

<sup>318</sup> APEJE, Códice Ministerio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 152-153, from Minister of Negocios e Guerra, J. M. Lopes da Costa, to Lucena, 28 Nov 1874.

address the masses and to restore order; he succeeded in the former but not the latter.

Upon addressing the group of rioters, they steadfastly refused to heed any of his advice, stating that since he was a Mason, they need not listen to him. They gave as proof of his Masonic affiliations the fact that the crucifix he was wearing was hanging over his chest, leaning to the left.<sup>319</sup>

On the nineteenth of November, a group estimated to have been at least 500-men strong attacked the town of Bom Conselho. When Bento Ceciliano dos Santos Barros, the district judge, received word that this group was approaching, he asked the Capuchin missionary Fr. José and the vicar of the parish to go out to meet them and, as Fr. Venancio had done in Itambé, convince them to return to their houses. But, not unlike Itambé as well, they ignored the two priests. This led to sending in the National Guard and the police and a bloody fight between the authorities and the group of five hundred, resulting in numerous wounded. Once again, the Capuchin priests were utilized, and once again, they failed.<sup>320</sup>

There were successes, however. In Garanhuns, the Reverend Vicar Pedro Pacifico accompanied officials confronting the rioters. Pacifico convinced the rebels to return to the market and not destroy the town records.<sup>321</sup> In other towns across Pernambuco, the events were similar, with the Capuchin missionaries aiding the

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<sup>319</sup> *A Provinica*, 27 Nov 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>320</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Ceciliano dos Santos Barros to Lucena, Dec 20, 1874. Fr. José and the vicar of the parish were specifically acknowledged for their assistance in Bom Conselho. See "To District judge of the county of Bom Conselho, Bacharel Bento Ceciliano dos Santos Ramos, 24 Dec 1874" in *Boletims do Expediente do Governo, APEJE, 1874* (Pernambuco: Typ. De Manoel Figueiroa de Faria e Filhos, 1875), 338.

<sup>321</sup> APEJE, Códice promotor público, PJ9, 1874-1875, MS 271-272, From district attorney of Garanhuns, Francisco Caracciolo de Freitas to Lucena, 26 Dec 1874.

government in attempted repression, though generally with little success.<sup>322</sup> Where the Capuchins were not convinced to face down the rioters, the authorities hid government records in churches, believing they would be safe from attack by the lower classes. In Bezerros, for example, the governmental archives were temporarily saved from destruction in the December 11 attack when they were hidden inside the chapel of Nossa Senhora do Rosário. Unfortunately, however, according to the county judge, when the rioters failed to find the papers, they forced the tax collector to tell them where they were and, when discovered, proceeded to the church and shred the archives.<sup>323</sup>

### **Conclusion**

It is evident, as the Viscount of Rio Branco, head of the Conservative cabinet in Rio de Janeiro stated, the cause of the uprising was in large measure support of the Church in the Religious Question: “The shout death to the Masons,” he wrote to Emperor Dom Pedro II on November 26, 1874 as the movement got under way, “shows that it [the cause] is the Religious Question.”<sup>324</sup> And indeed it was. The economic decline in the northeast of Brazil (Chapter Two) gave the impetus to rebellion, but the Religious Question gave moral justification. However, the Religious Question itself was not merely a dispute over anti-Masonic preachings by the clergy, but involved clerical reform, denationalization of the Brazilian Church, and above all, a change in the role of

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<sup>322</sup> São Benedito is another good example. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correa da Silva to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874. The vicar of Limoeiro (name withheld from the records) appears to have been at least temporarily successful in convincing five individuals to desist from destroying the weights and scales of the metric system. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>323</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, d’Albuquerque Nascimento to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874 and Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 142.

<sup>324</sup> As quoted in Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 65.

the Church in Brazil. A look at this question and the ways in which it assisted in the spread of the Quebra-Quilos rebellion is therefore vital to understanding the Brazilian peasantry in this period.

Where the Capuchin missionaries failed, the military would succeed. However, the military did not address issues such as economic decline, or attempt to improve the situation for the poor in the interior, the stated goals of missionaries such as Father Ibiapina. Thus the Brazilian peasantry continued to flock to clerics who promised to help them with their economic plight. Canudos (1895-1897) and the Contestado Rebellion (1912-1916), to cite the most frequently noted examples, were both manifestations of what could happen when the government failed to address the economic crisis of the Brazilian peasantry and the latter turned to religious leaders for guidance. In the Quebra-Quilos example, the peasants turned to the Church not for material help, but for moral justification in addressing the wrong created by international forces they saw as out of their control.

## CHAPTER 4

### LAW OF RECRUITMENT

#### ***Introduction***

On September 26, 1874, after decades of debate, the central government passed a new law meant to reform the recruitment system throughout the Empire of Brazil. Known as the Law of September 26, 1874, the “Lei de Recrutamento,” “Lei de Sorteios,” or “Lei de Cativoiro,” this law was finally posted in the interior of the northeast the following month.<sup>325</sup> On November 26, the Baron of Buique wrote a letter to the provincial president of Pernambuco, President Lucena, recounting a conversation he had had with his neighbor, Cesário. This neighbor had recently come to the baron and reported his experience at having gone to play a game (“o jogo,” presumably dominoes or something similar) in the neighboring town of Canhotinho. While there, he was invited to the table of a “celebrated” Lieutenant Colonel Luiz Paulino, where he was informed that this new law had just been posted in the town of São Bento. Paulino then invited Cesário to join him in openly defying the law.

Naturally, since this was being reported by the Baron to the provincial president, Cesário did not accept the Lieutenant Colonel’s invitation, but, said the Baron, this is a concrete example of the grumblings that have been spreading throughout Pernambuco in

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<sup>325</sup> *Lei No. 2556, Lei de 26 de Setembro de 1874, Colleição das Leis do Imperio do Brasil de 1874, Tomo XXXIII Part I, Vol. 1* (Rio de Janeiro: Typgraphica Nacional, 1875).



defiance of this new law.<sup>326</sup> The original Quebra-Quilos uprisings in Fagundes and Campina Grande did not include complaints of this law. However, by November, it became a key complaint in the uprisings. Nearly all officials reported this law as one of the major grievances of the peasants and instrumental for the uprising; President Lucena reported to the Minister of Justice in December that the peasants believed “that the law of recruitment was to capture the free” and therefore used it as a major excuse to attack the towns and destroy records.<sup>327</sup>

Not only did all officials agree that this new law added fuel to the fire of hatred (and “ignorance,” according to Lucena) causing this uprising, but so too did nearly all of the writers on this subject, with, once again, the exception of Horácio de Almeida, who argued that Quebra-Quilos was caused solely by religious fanaticism.<sup>328</sup> This new law threatened to overthrow the traditional patronage system of Brazil, particularly in the northeast, coming on the heels of economic crisis and the Religious Question. Thus an understanding of why the peasants rose up in opposition to this law, adding it as an integral part of the Quebra-Quilos rebellion, merits a closer look at the patronage as well as the military recruitment system put in place in the Empire of Brazil, particularly during the Second Empire (1840-1889).<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Barão de Buique to Lucena, Nov 26, 1874. Also see Peter M. Beattie, *Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864-1945*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 86 & 130.

<sup>327</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>328</sup> Horácio de Almeida, “D. Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*. (Vol. 323—Abril-Junho—1979: 160-168), 166-167 and *Brejo de Areia*. (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1958), 138.

<sup>329</sup> For the most comprehensive analysis of patronage in the empire, see Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

Implementation of this new law of recruitment failed because, above all else, it went against the “moral economy” of the peasants, to reiterate.<sup>330</sup> The failure to uphold the moral standards of the poor legitimated the uprising. Uprisings against violations of traditional *moraes* had already begun—riots against the *imposto do chão*, against provincial and municipal taxes, and against the metric system, including the taxes associated with them. The new recruitment system became another peasant grievance prompting peasant resistance. What made the new law of recruitment particularly threatening was that it undermined the protection afforded peasants by the patronage system.

### ***Creation of Political Power***

Throughout the history of Brazil, both during the colonial period as well as the Empire (1822-1889), there was tension between top-down centralization of power and local and regional resistance to such centralizing efforts, whether by consolidating power in private hands or through federalist movements during the Empire. The Quebra-Quilos movement must be seen in the context of this long-standing tension.

During the colonial period (1500-1822), no universities existed in Brazil. All higher education had to be obtained through the clergy (principally the Jesuits through their *colégios* until their expulsion in 1759) or abroad. The most important university for the Portuguese colonists was that of Coimbra in Portugal, an institution which trained large numbers of liberal professionals, especially lawyers. Political leaders and government officials were generally chosen from among this group, nearly all having a

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<sup>330</sup> On the concept of peasant “moral economy,” see Thompson, “Moral Economy,” 78-79.

common education at Coimbra. The first position in Brazil attained by these Coimbra-trained lawyers typically was that of a *juiz de fora*, or literally a judge from abroad. In the course of a very successful career in this centralized system, a *juiz de fora* might, after fifteen years, become a chief justice (*desembargador*) in a key port city somewhere in the empire; the most successful might rise the ranks to the coveted posts of *Casa de Suplicação* (roughly supreme court) or *Desembargador do Paço* in Lisbon.<sup>331</sup>

Following independence, however, a number of changes took place which directly affected the political makeup of Brazil. First, in 1827 two law schools were created to replace the necessity of having to go to Coimbra to receive an education: one in São Paulo and one in Olinda. Of utmost importance is that since these were the only two law schools in the Empire, and the professors were appointed by the central government, the education students received was uniform. Many graduates, armed with law degrees, entered governmental service. Thus a large number of public employees received similar education and training.<sup>332</sup> This becomes crucial for a dual system of top-down, bottom-up patronage structure of Brazil's government.

The Constitution of 1824 created the elected position of justice of the peace, which, by 1828, replaced the *juiz de fora*, or a non-elected municipal magistrate.<sup>333</sup> In 1832, the justice of the peace received both police as well as judicial functions. This period—1831-1838—marks the liberal era of the Regency following the abdication of D.

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<sup>331</sup> José Murilo de Carvalho, *A construção da ordem: A elite política imperial*. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Campus, 1980), 57-59, and 134.

<sup>332</sup> Both law schools were created in 1827 and opened their doors in 1828. That of Olinda was transferred to Recife in 1954. See José Murilo de Carvalho, "Political Elites and State Building: The Case of Nineteenth-century Brazil," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Jul., 1982), pp. 378-399.

<sup>333</sup> As per the 1832 Criminal Code. Peter M. Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864-1945*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 28.

Pedro I (1831), and saw many attempts at decentralization.<sup>334</sup> One such example is that of the creation of the National Guard. Fearing the Army could be used by a central government to suppress provincial liberties, they created this National Guard under the command of the minister of justice. They disbanded the colonial system of *Milícias e Ordenanças*, or a reserve force similar to the National Guard but with much more limited powers and functions and under the command of the minister of war.<sup>335</sup> The National Guard quickly acquired social and political importance, particularly during the agitation in the northeast leading up to and during Quebra-Quilos.

The goal of the National Guard was “To Defend the Constitution, the Liberty, the Independence, and the Integrity of the Empire; to maintain obedience to the laws, conserve or reestablish order and public tranquility, to help the Army of the Line in the defense of borders and coasts...”<sup>336</sup> Thus the National Guard served as a type of national police force, and could be called on by the justice of the peace, criminal justices, provincial presidents, and the minister of justice for service, a common occurrence during nineteenth century Brazil.<sup>337</sup> Guarding jails, patrolling towns and cities, and even hunting runaway slaves came under the jurisdiction of the National Guard.<sup>338</sup> The National Guard was then divided into two sections: active and reserve. Public officials, liberal professionals, students, ecclesiastics, military officials, public & hospital workers,

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<sup>334</sup> As stated in the Constitution of 1824, a three-man regency was to be elected to rule until Pedro’s eighteenth birthday. However, with the Additional Act of 1834, a sole regent—Father Diogo Antônio Feijó (1835-1837) was elected. In 1837 Feijó stepped down and the regency was turned over to Araújo Lima, serving as regent from 1838 to 1840, a period of conservative centralization known as the *Regresso*.

<sup>335</sup> Buarque de Holanda, et al, *História Geral da Civilização Brasileira. Tomo II, O Brasil Monárquico, Volume 6, Declínio e queda do Império*. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bertrand Brasil Ltda, 1997), 285 and 323.

<sup>336</sup> Article of 18 August 1831 law. See Holanda, *História Geral*, 324.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid., 324.

<sup>338</sup> That is, until 1873, when the police powers were removed, although we will discuss this below. See Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 63.

slaveowners (with fifty or more slaves), ranchers (with fifty or more head of cattle), were all granted reserve status, whereas lower-middle and lower classes—but not impoverished classes as there was still an income requirement, albeit quite low—served as active guardsmen.<sup>339</sup> To be qualified to serve in the National Guard, you needed 200\$000 annual income and be between 18-50 years of age.<sup>340</sup> Each year, the justice of the peace would organize a council (*Conselho de Qualificação*) which would make up lists of citizens qualified to be in the National Guard, noting this in the *Livro de Matrícula* (Matriculation Book). Selection of officers based on election meant that public officials, either in Rio de Janeiro or in the provincial capitals, could not appoint officers, reducing the total patronage positions for officerholders to distribute.

Initially National Guard officers, or leaders of this “citizen militia,” were elected.<sup>341</sup> Law No. 602 of September 19, 1850 reformed both the 1831 and the 1832 laws, removing officers from elected status. National Guard officers were now nominated and appointed by the provincial presidents or minister of justice.<sup>342</sup> By mid-century, both justices of the peace and National Guard officers, vital aspects for keeping the peace (and ensuring “public tranquility” as the official correspondence terms it) was centrally-appointed as a result of patronage—ensuring the public official would remain loyal to the central government.

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<sup>339</sup> Holanda, *História Geral*, 328.

<sup>340</sup> As per the 1832 decree. The original 1831 law stipulated that you must earn the same amount of income to be able to serve as an elector and the age limit was 21-60, although with less military exemption than the 1832 decree.

<sup>341</sup> Originally, the election to post was for four years, following which a reelection would have to occur, although an 1832 decree made the election permanent. See Holanda, *História Geral*, 327.

<sup>342</sup> Holanda, *História Geral*, 329.

The Second Empire began in 1840 with the ascension of Dom Pedro II to the throne. Dom Pedro II held executive powers along with the Council of State. Created in 1823, disbanded in 1834 (Additional Act) and reimplemented in 1841, there were twelve *conselheiros ordinários* (ordinary councilors) and twelve *extraordinários* (extraordinary), directly appointed by the emperor for life. In addition to the Council of State, there was a Council of Ministers which, after 1847, had a president to choose the individual ministers.<sup>343</sup> The ministers of justice, as well as the provincial presidents were both appointed centrally. They would in turn appoint National Guard officials and justices of the peace.

Below the elite council stood the Senate. There were fifty senators at the beginning of the empire and sixty at the end (based on population). In a popular election, three senators were elected from each province and the names submitted to the emperor. Dom Pedro II would then choose one of the three for life-time appointment; to qualify one had to be at least forty years of age and have an annual income of 800\$000.<sup>344</sup> Below the senate sat the Chamber of Deputies. To be a deputy (there were 100 in 1826 and 125 in 1886) you had to have an annual income of 400\$000 and be at least twenty-five years of age. The deputy post was an elected one, involving a two-tier set of elections. First, electors were chosen. Electors would be chosen by a committee headed up, again, by the justice of the peace, although at the local level a chairman of the local electoral board also existed. They would decide who had the required 100\$000 income annually to vote, who would in turn elect the deputies to their four-year terms.

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<sup>343</sup> Six before 1861 and 7 after.

<sup>344</sup> Carvalho, *Construção de ordem*, 47.

The emperor, advised by the Council of State, held the Moderating Power. That meant that the emperor could dismiss the Chamber of Deputies and call for new elections at any time. Between 1840-1889, Dom Pedro II dismissed the Chamber eleven times, meaning that a deputy rarely served his entire four-year term.<sup>345</sup> When the emperor dissolved the Chamber of Deputies, the prime minister, appointed by Pedro, was now in charge of ensuring that the political party desired in office by the central government (Dom Pedro, Council of State, and the party of the newly named prime minister) won the election. Tightly controlled elections made it possible for the central government to do this. This is where the two-tiered system of patronage becomes important. As demonstrated by Richard Graham in his pathbreaking book *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*, the government in Rio de Janeiro would appoint provincial presidents from the party desired. Dom Pedro II himself summed it up succinctly when he stated that “the presidents service principally to win elections.”<sup>346</sup> To do so, they would then maneuver the local public officials to ensure that *his* party was elected. The district judge (*juiz de direito*), and the county judge (*juiz municipal*) were both appointed by the minister of justice, which had just been appointed by the prime minister from the party desired. The provincial president would inform the minister of justice how best to arrange these judges to ensure the election results.

Then, the justice of the peace, in charge of meeting the electoral college to determine who was qualified to vote, and the county councilmen, in charge of tallying up the results of the electoral colleges (and in charge of registration appeals in the

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<sup>345</sup> Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 79-80.

<sup>346</sup> As quoted in Graham, *Patronage and Politics*, 82.

countryside) would also be moved around. For example, a justice of the peace could be moved to a position in which he would not have control of the elections or even be dismissed if necessary.<sup>347</sup> In this way, the central government ensured that the elections they desired would occur, producing a veneer of democracy in a constitutional monarchy. In a letter written in 1852 by José Soares de Sousa, later Viscount of Uruguay, he summed this up with the following: “The opposition struggled furiously in the election here, with lots of means. We defeated them completely because we’re in the government; if they were in the government they would have won completely.... That is the system.”<sup>348</sup>

This system of patronage also worked from the bottom-up. In a largely rural country, individual landowners had immense power over their peasants. According to the 1872 census, there were approximately 10 million people living in Brazil. Those that lived in cities generally lived in the provincial capitals, with the seven largest cities totally 617,428 people altogether, or roughly 6% of the population.<sup>349</sup> Most Brazilians, then, both free and enslaved, lived in the countryside. And among those, a system of patronage developed which would play an enormous role in this Quebra-Quilos uprising.

The larger the landowner, the more individuals he controlled. In the *zona da mata*, particularly before the crisis in sugar production in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, extremely large numbers of slaves were held by single landowners. With the decline in sugar and rise in coffee, immense numbers of slaves were shipped to the center-south. Since slaves were demographically in decline in the northeast, it should

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<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 81-86.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 16.



come as no surprise that these landowners congregated largely in this zone. In the *sertão*, or interior of the northeast, the peasant population was made up mainly of former slaves and poor peasants. These peasants were often referred to as either *moradores* or *agregados*.

In the prevailing system of patronage, the prime minister determined which party should win the elections and would, along with cooperating public officials, make it happen. From the bottom up, therefore, is where this happened. As the justice of the peace was in charge of choosing those available to be in the electoral college, it was to his benefit to ensure that the correct party be chosen for the electoral college. In exchange for allowing the peasants to live on his land, the rural landowners demanded loyalty, either in the case of armed uprising, or, more commonly, at election time. During elections, landowners rounded up their peasants and brought them to the justice of the peace, who determined whether they had sufficient income to be counted as electors. They would then go to the church where voting was conducted and vote for the candidate whom the landowner supported. Since there was no secret ballot, the landowner/patron would know if anyone disobeyed his wishes.<sup>350</sup>

Thus peasants were allowed to live on the land of the landowners in exchange for loyalty, such as voting the way the landowner wished. A patron-client bond thus developed, which frequently included closer, intimate relations, such as the patron also serving as god-parent to his clients' children. But, above all, the demand was loyalty. This was one of the key reasons for landowners allowing peasants to live on their lands.

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<sup>350</sup> For a good overview of the role of the clergy in elections, including use of parish churches, see Ana Marta Rodrigues Bastos, *Católicos e Cidades: A igreja e a legislação eleitoral no Império*. (Rio de Janeiro: Lumem Juris, 1997).

According to the son of Lacerda Werneck, a prominent landowner, “The large landowners consent to have *agregados* because our electoral system demands it.”<sup>351</sup> Likewise, a rancher in Ceará with sixteen square leagues of land controlled “360 *moradores* who pay no rent, but he says that when he needs workers they tend to lend a hand for free, only being given food, and that occasionally he gathers 200 or 300 men. At election time he delivers a load of 400 voters to Icó.”<sup>352</sup> Both sides—Conservative and Liberal landowners—brought their *agregados* to vote on election day, but whiel a landowner supporting the prime minister’s party had most of his *agregados* accepted as having the appropriate income to be able to vote, many of the *agregados* on the other side were disqualified from voting. Landowners from the opposition party frequently claimed electoral fraud when their *agregados* were denied the right to vote for lack of income requirements. County councilmen, whose elections could be undone by the provincial president, ruled in favor of the winning political party or found themselves out of a job.<sup>353</sup>

Landowner political power therefore rested in the ability to bring his *agregados* to the election and win elections. But that meant he must be a good patron, as his clients would leave him for an opposing landowner if he failed to grant patronage. And this is the system which came to play an important role in the Quebra-Quilos uprising: the system of recruitment. The ultimate form of punishment was not loss of a patron, although it might indeed be disastrous if a peasant failed to acquire another, and may result in recruitment into the armed services. Patrons granted their clients protection and land in exchange for loyalty and electoral support, but the opposite was also important:

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<sup>351</sup> As quoted in Graham, *Patronage and Politics*, 105.

<sup>352</sup> As quoted in *Ibid.*, 105-106.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, 105; *Ibid.*, 85.

punishment for disloyalty was being sent to or allowed to be recruited into the armed forces.

The demand for the patrons to do “their part” in retaining the loyalty of their clients often meant that in order to do so, laws would have to be broken. The example given in Chapter One of Antonio de Barros bringing his armed supporters to break his brother out of jail in the city of Campina Grande on November 22 demonstrated that patronage could be stronger than the law and the prison walls.<sup>354</sup> Richard Graham gives us the example of Joaquim José de Sousa Breves, a famous political leader in Rio de Janeiro in 1840. When some of his supporters ended up imprisoned, he resorted to organizing some men and breaking them out of jail; a patron must protect his clients at all costs if he wishes to retain political or social power.<sup>355</sup>

During the Quebra-Quilos revolt, Colonel Luiz Maranhão saw a number of peasants arrested and destined for recruitment. Presumably, they were his *agregados*, although they may have been those of another landowner who requested assistance from this colonel. Nonetheless, he rounded up his armed *capangas* (hired guns) and supporters and released all of those destined for recruitment. According to the newspaper *A Provincia*, many were killed in this escape before he and his supporters retreated back to his estate.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 30 and 33.

<sup>355</sup> Graham, *Patronage and Politics*, 126. Judy Bieber also gives an example of “forty armed outlaws, who released the draftees by force.” No leader, however, was reported to have taken credit; these outlaws simply returned the next day and returned the guns taken from the soldiers filled with mud and dirt. See Judy Bieber, *Power, Patronage, and Political Violence: State Building on a Brazilian Frontier, 1822-1889*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 139.

<sup>356</sup> *A Provincia*, Jan 6, 1875.

## **Recruitment**

During both the colonial as well as the national periods in Brazil, the vast majority of enlisted men were impressed into service. Hendrik Kraay, in *Race, State, and Armed Forces in Independence-Era Brazil*, noted that during one particular recruitment drive prior to independence, over 445 men were rounded up, including two priests, “without exception, all the white men that they could find.”<sup>357</sup> Once men were rounded up, officials then heard excuses as to why they could *not* be recruited into the army (known as the period of “examination”). For example, recruiters were told to “spare one son of each farmer, the cattle drivers who brought beef on the hoof to the cities, master artisans, fishermen, slave drivers, clerks,” and militiamen.<sup>358</sup> But more importantly, if someone rounded up for recruitment had an effective patron, the latter might be able to convince the authorities to release that person from incarceration. In this particular case, after all of the hearings had been heard, only thirty of the 445 ended up being recruited, most probably those without patrons (often labeled “vagrants and criminals”).<sup>359</sup>

The punishment of military life was extremely harsh. During the colonial period, the average conscript served sixteen years, although if he volunteered his sentence was reduced to eight, receiving only one meal a day and their insufficient salaries late if received at all.<sup>360</sup> After independence, although the time the recruit was sentenced to serve was reduced to between 6-8 years and corporal punishment slowly abandoned, little else seems to have changed; one British traveler reportedly stated that “many youths in good condition, that imagine what their lot would be if they purchased liberty, preferred

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<sup>357</sup> As quoted in Hendrik Kraay, *Race, State, and Armed Forces in Independence-Era Brazil: Bahia, 1790-1840s*. (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2001), 57.

<sup>358</sup> As quoted in Kraay, *Race, State, and Armed Forces*, 58.

<sup>359</sup> Kraay, *Race, State, and Armed Forces*, 57-60.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-63.

to remain slaves instead of having to serve in the military.”<sup>361</sup> Indeed, officials had to use “guns, chains, iron collars, and padlocks” to transfer recruits to various localities.<sup>362</sup> An 1822 imperial decree stated that all those living in “criminal idleness,” which in practice meant those that did not have an effective patron to protect them, should be targeted for recruitment.<sup>363</sup>

When Brazil went to war in the Banda Oriental in 1825, known as the Cisplatine War, the army grew from 6,000 to 20,000 within two years. Following the termination of the war, the size of the army did not decline to its former size, but grew to, by 1829, 33,276 soldiers. Following the abdication of Pedro I, the regency sought to reduce the size of the Army, reducing it to 4,642 troops by 1835 and then, as discussed above, creating the National Guard as an alternative to the army.<sup>364</sup> Those recruited could escape by offering a substitute or paying a fee of 400 milreis. As of 1852, each province had a yearly quota of men they would need to furnish for the military. This job was often relegated to recruiters who would, after 1858, receive 10 milreis for each forced recruit and 20 milreis for each volunteer.<sup>365</sup> Of course, they could not single-handedly round up all the recruits, so the brunt of the recruiting process was left to the National Guard.

Two items are of worthy of reiteration: patrons protected their clients from being recruited into the army or the navy, and patrons themselves sought positions as National Guard officers. As stated above, this was originally an elective office, but by the 1850s, these positions were named by the government as patronage to landowners in return for

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<sup>361</sup> As quoted in Holanda, *História Geral*, 283.

<sup>362</sup> Bieber, *Power, Patronage, and Political Violence*, 138.

<sup>363</sup> Beattie, *Tribute of Blood*, 29.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid*, 30-31.

<sup>365</sup> In order: Lei No. 45 of 29 August 1837, Decree no. 1,089 of 14 Dec 1852 and Decree 2,171 of 1 May 1858. See Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 100.

loyalty, particularly during elections. Thus once they obtained National Guard officer status, (or *coronel*, a term which soon came to refer to the system of patronage itself, particularly during the Republic [*Colonelismo*]), they would grant National Guard posts to their clients, which in turn exempted them from recruitment into the army or navy.<sup>366</sup>

Punishment for disloyalty was thus a cause for recruitment. However, recruitment was also a way of keeping society in check. Richard Graham gives a number of examples of recruitment. In one, the police chief of Rio de Janeiro had arrested a poor white: “being convinced he had stolen two bolts of silk from a French-woman on Ourives Street,...I decided to recruit him because there was not sufficient proof of his crime for me to begin judicial proceedings.”<sup>367</sup> Without any trial, this person was recruited into the military. In another example, a black “used to go around with a gun and on any pretext threatened shots, and on several occasions hid the slaves of others in the house where he lived, also according to public knowledge.” Perhaps more for assisting runaway slaves than for carrying a gun (although that was indeed illegal), he was recruited into the military. And finally, those “without trade” were recruited, as one mulatto, “without trade, very daring, when I surrounded his house, he loaded a gun and declared arbitrarily from within that he would resist.”<sup>368</sup> In short, for punishment as well as for a vaguely defined crime of vagrancy, these men were recruited into the military.

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<sup>366</sup> Bieber, *Power, Patronage, and Political Violence*, 137 and Beattie, *Tribute of Blood*, 32-33.

<sup>367</sup> As quoted in Graham, *Patronage and Politics*, 27.

<sup>368</sup> As quoted, Graham, *Patronage and Politics*, 27-28.

### **Paraguayan War**

In 1864, Brazil entered into the largest international conflict in South America: the Paraguayan War (1864-1870). Also known as the War of the Triple Alliance, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil came together in an alliance against Paraguay, which ultimately left 60% of the population of that country dead and the countryside in ruins.<sup>369</sup> For our purpose here, this war did two things: first, it postponed the collapse of the cotton industry in the Northeast. During the American Civil War (1861-65), Brazil experienced a rise in its cotton exports as it attempted to deliver to English manufacturers what the Americans could not. Upon ending the war in 1865, the Union blockade of the Confederacy was lifted and Southern cotton began to be exported once again. But although a decline in Brazilian cotton exports did occur, they did not collapse, as the Paraguayan War fueled a large demand for textile goods (such as uniforms, blankets, tents, etc). Thus for another five years, the inevitable was postponed. Secondly, it caused an increase in demand for manpower to fight this bloody war and in turn, once the war was over, caused the government to consider and then implement reform of the military recruitment system. Both items, combined—final collapse of cotton in the 1870s and reform of the recruitment system, were key causes of the Quebra-Quilos revolt.

Uruguay had for centuries been claimed by the Spanish and the Portuguese; the creation of an independent country as a buffer zone between Brazil and Argentina ended the Cisplatine War in the 1828. Nonetheless, the Brazilian government began to meddle in the political affairs of Uruguay, in part to protect Brazilian nationals living there and in part to side with the *colorado* faction against the *blancos*. The dictator/president of

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<sup>369</sup> Hendrik Kraay and Thomas L. Wigham, eds., *I Die with my Country: Perspectives on the Paraguayan War, 1864-1870*. (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 1.

Paraguay, Francisco Solano López, son of president Carlos López who had died in 1862, had been attempting to end Paraguay's isolation and sided with the *blanco* faction then in government, warning Brazil that they would not take lightly meddling in Uruguayan affairs.<sup>370</sup> Ignoring the demands of this smaller and weaker country, Brazil ordered its military to invade Uruguay in September of 1864, oust the *blancos*, and install the *colorados* into power. The dye had been cast.

When Brazil invaded Uruguay and ousted the *blancos* from power, Paraguayan Marshal López stayed true to his word and, following appeals from the *blancos* for his support, attacked Brazil on November 11, 1864 by seizing the *Marquês de Olinda*, a Brazilian steamer that had been sailing near Assunción and which had been carrying the new provincial president for the province of Mato Grosso, Colonel Frederico Carneiro de Campos. The following month, on December 23, López invaded the province of Mato Grosso itself, ostensibly, "to reconquer clandestinely territories taken by Brazil."<sup>371</sup>

Following the attack on Mato Grosso, López launched an offensive against Rio Grande do Sul. However, to get there, he needed to trespass through Argentine territory, and cross the Corrientes River, thus he requested permission to do so. Argentina denied Paraguay permission, so López simply declared war on Argentina, sending his Southern Expeditionary Army of 25,000 men under the command of General Vicente Robles to invade and occupy the town of Corrientes in mid-April, 1865. The response was the Triple Alliance Treaty, signed May 1, 1865, in which Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay

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<sup>370</sup> For a good overview, see Kraay and Wigham, *I Die with my Country*, 1-14 and Holanda, *História Geral*, 349-366.

<sup>371</sup> As quoted in Holanda, *História Geral*, 352.



openly agreed to remove López from power, ensure free navigation on the Paraná and Paraguay Rivers, and secretly claim territory for themselves from Paraguay.<sup>372</sup>

As the Paraguayan War began, Brazil had 18,000 soldiers, Argentina 8,000, and Uruguay 1,000. Paraguay, on the other hand, had 64,000 soldiers as well as a reserve force of 28,000.<sup>373</sup> Immediately, however, patriotic fervor engulfed the nation as thousands responded to the call to enlist. In January of 1865, the government in Rio de Janeiro created the “Voluntários da Pátria,”<sup>374</sup> in which thousands of volunteers signed on in exchange for enlistment bonuses, higher salaries than regular recruits, and even a promise of land and preferential treatment for civil service after the war.<sup>375</sup> Even all-black companies were created in both Recife and Salvador, the Zuavos, Couraças, and Sapadores, with over 1,000 men volunteering.<sup>376</sup> Reports even spread of landowners marching their clients to the capital do volunteer for military service.<sup>377</sup> By the time Brazil and the allies began their invasion of Paraguay (April 1866), the Triple Alliance had 66,000 men, including 38,000 Brazilians, 25,000 Argentines, and 3,000 Uruguayans. The Paraguayan force, by contrast, had diminished to 45,000.<sup>378</sup>

By April of 1866, the allied forces had begun to march into Paraguay. By September, fighting became increasingly fierce as the Paraguayans dug themselves in surrounding strongholds of Curuzú (September 3) and Curupayty (September 22), both the defensive perimeters of Humaitá, the center and symbol of Paraguayan resistance.

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<sup>372</sup> Kraay and Wigham, *I Die with my Country*, 9.

<sup>373</sup> Holanda, *História Geral*, 351.

<sup>374</sup> Decree No. 3,371 of 7 January 1865.

<sup>375</sup> Hendrik Kraay, “Patriotic Mobilization in Brazil: The Zuavos and Other Black Companies,” in Kraay and Wigham, *I Die with my Country*, 62.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>378</sup> Holanda, *História Geral*, 351.

For the next two years, thousands died in fierce fighting. Brazilians stopped enlisting voluntarily and officials reverted to the tried-and-true method of forcible recruitment, increased to a level never before seen in Brazil. On March 22 1867, the Lieutenant-Colonel Luis de Albuquerque Maranhão, later to become famous for leading government forces in the Quebra-Quilos movement, led a force of 200 armed men against the town of Pau d'Alho and attacked the prison, recruiting all of the criminals they found therein, but also killing three soldiers in the process.<sup>379</sup> Even slaves were recruited, although whether or not they were recruited for the sole purpose of cannon fodder is highly questionable.<sup>380</sup>

The National Guard, formerly more of an internal police force than an expeditionary one, was sent to the front as well, although traditionally those that had joined the National Guard were exempt from army recruitment.<sup>381</sup> This was the first time the National Guard ever fought outside of Brazil; 14,796 National Guardsmen were called up in January of 1865 alone, as well as 6,000 from the province of Minas Gerais and 3,000 from São Paulo. In October another 10,000 were called up and in 1867, another 8,000, thus leading to extreme forms of impressment into the National Guard.<sup>382</sup> The importance of the National Guard as an internal security force as well as a means of avoiding military recruitment through patronage came under attack. Thus once the war was over, the government sought to reform the threatened system.

In January of 1868, the Duke of Caxias received command of the allied forces and (perhaps coincidentally), soon after finally overran the stronghold of Humaitá, causing,

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<sup>379</sup> Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 95-97.

<sup>380</sup> In Holanda, *História Geral*, 292, for example, it argues that they were, and in Kraay and Wigham argue that no evidence to this end exists. Also see Kraay and Wigham, *I Die with my Country*, 18.

<sup>381</sup> Kraay, *Race, State, and Armed Forces*, 248 and Holanda, *História Geral*, 345-6.

<sup>382</sup> Holanda, *História Geral*, 345 and Kraay and Wigham, *I Die with my Country*, 10.

by July, the evacuation of the remaining Paraguayan troops. They retreated, but not without receiving crushing defeats by the allies in November. When the Triple Alliance finally entered Assunción in January of 1869, they saw an empty shell of a city as most inhabitants fled the oncoming soldiers. All that remained was a mopping up operation and the capture of Marshal López, left to the new commander of the allied forces (the Count of Eu, son-in-law of D. Pedro II). The troops finally caught up with López on March 1, 1870 who, after refusing to surrender, was mortally shot, ending this most devastating interstate war in South America's history.<sup>383</sup>

### ***Reform of Recruitment***

The Paraguayan War thus caused the recruitment system to come under attack. Traditionally, as stated above, recruitment was a form of punishment for vagrancy, criminality, disloyalty, or not having a patron. Peter Beattie gives the example of Braselino Antônio Dutervel Setubal, a manumitted slave who had been accused of molesting a boy and infecting a number of other boys with syphilis in Ceará. The police chief therefore sent him to Rio de Janeiro as an army recruit where, he would "not only have his bad habits corrected, but it would also serve as an exemplary punishment for his bad behavior."<sup>384</sup> Now, however, recruitment had increased as a result of war and not even the National Guard was exempt.

Reform began immediately. In 1871, João José de Oliveira Junqueira became the minister of war and launched a series of reforms. First, in 1873, he managed to convince

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<sup>383</sup> For the end of López see Harris Gaylord Warren, *Paraguay and the Triple Alliance: The Postwar Decade, 1869-1878*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 20-28. In general, this is a good source for the end of the War and rebuilding of the nation of Paraguay.

<sup>384</sup> As quoted in Beattie, *Tribute of Blood*, 51.

parliament to pass Law No. 2,395 of September 10, 1873 which reorganized the National Guard. Previously, the National Guard had (with the exception of the Paraguayan War), assisted in police functions. This removed police work from the list of national guardsmen responsibilities, with the exception of rebellions, seditions, insurrections, and in the case of external war. During times of peace, then, the National Guard would virtually disappear, emerging annually for review and receipt of instructions, and then disappear for yet another year of hibernation.<sup>385</sup>

Restructuring military education (1874), Junqueira also reduced the length of courses to study for combat officials to two years and five years for engineers. Additionally, he converted the old Central School into a polytechnical institution. Of key importance, however, was securing the passage of the Recruitment Law of 1874.<sup>386</sup> This law had two goals in mind: first, making military service less onerous by ridding it of the extremes of corporal punishment. As early as 1837 attempts had been made to reduce many of these physical excesses, but in reality, corporal punishment continued.<sup>387</sup> Legally (and traditionally), officers could employ such tortures as beatings with tree saplings or using the flat of a sword. Now, with the new reforms of Junqueira, less physical forms of punishment would be enacted, including incarcerations and exercises. Peter Beattie gives the example of the *marche marche*, a commonly used form of punishment, in which a soldier was forced to march back and forth quickly for two hours,

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<sup>385</sup> Holanda, *História Geral*, 347-8.

<sup>386</sup> Lei de 26 September 1874. See Holanda, *História Geral*, 295.

<sup>387</sup> Kraay, *Race, State, and Armed Forces*, 184.

carrying a backpack filled with clay tiles or other such heavy objects.<sup>388</sup> Not as brutal as whipping, but still an effective means of punishment.

Secondly, as the name implies, this law planned to reform the recruitment system. With this new system of military recruitment, all men, ages 18-30 had to register for the draft, with the following exceptions: priests, policemen, seminarians, and both medical and law students were exempt from the draft regardless of whether or not the nation was at war. During peaceful times, however, an additional number of people could avoid registering: “fisherman, merchant marines, managers of manufactories, railway and steamship machinists, employees of ‘important’ factories, a cowboy with more than fifty head of cattle, the owner, manager, or representative of a farm or rural business with more than ten employees, and the cashiers of commercial houses worth more than 10\$000 milréis were exempt from the draft.”<sup>389</sup> According to this new law, each parish would have a junta—known as a *junta parochial*—headed up by the justice of the peace, his secretary, police authorities, and the parish priest. When needed, a drawing could be held and those chosen would serve six years. Volunteers would also serve six years. This *junta parochial* became the target of those opposing the implementation of this law.

The Law of Recruitment proved to be one of the most important aspects of the Quebra-Quilos revolt. Immediately preceding the promulgation of this law, a large recruitment campaign had been undertaken; whether to forestall any future shortcomings of military labor or to obtain the forces necessary to crush any possible resistance cannot be deduced with certainty. Thus in August of 1874, the president of Paraíba, Silvino Elvidio Carneiro da Cunha, stated that his administration had imprisoned 250 individuals

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<sup>388</sup> Beattie, *Tribute of Blood*, 181.

<sup>389</sup> Beattie, *Tribute of Blood*, 74-75.

for recruitment, and of these, he sent fifty to the army, twelve to the navy, 150 to the police, freed two for having legal exemption, sixteen for being physically incapable, and freed twelve for unknown reasons. He sent two others to the infirmary and another seven to prison for having stolen horses.<sup>390</sup>

### ***Failure of the Law of Recruitment and Political Machinations***

The new Law of Recruitment failed. It simply was not implemented as a result of the Quebra-Quilos rebellion, and not until the overthrow of the Empire would implementation be reconsidered. Thus the importance of the Quebra-Quilos rebellion, once again, is much more vital to understanding the Empire and nineteenth-century politics than the literature has acknowledged. Inability to implement laws from the top down demonstrates a weakness in the imperial political system. The Quebra-Quilos revolt, says Henry Augusto Millet, writing in 1875, was a revolt against the system of the 1860s and 1870s, “with a system of recruitment in which the youth of the interior were hunted by the authorities and incorporated by force into the armed forces.”<sup>391</sup>

As demonstrated above, a good deal of power that the large landowners held over their clients in this rural form of clientage consisted of a dual form of protection and loyalty. Now, however, the new Law of Recruitment threatened to undermine the power of the patrons at a crucial time: economic depression (Chapter Two) and contestation of the power of the Church versus that of the state (Chapter Three). Although the peasants did not originally begin the Quebra-Quilos movement with resistance to the Law of

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<sup>390</sup> Geraldo Irineo Joffily, “O Quebra-Quilo. A Revolta dos matutos contra os doutores (1874)”, 87.

<sup>391</sup> Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 13.

Recruitment in mind, many landowners quickly seized the opportunity and lead their peasants in revolt against it.

On November 21, the sporadic uprisings which had begun three weeks earlier against Quebra-Quilos came together as 800 men, divided into groups of between 50 and 200 behind individual leaders (though no overall leader could be found) to attack the town of Ingá.<sup>392</sup> Historians have been largely unable to the identity these individual leaders. As President Lucena wrote to the minister of justice, “The rioters did not have any obvious leaders. They attacked with arms saying that they had a mission to fulfill.”<sup>393</sup> Many leaders were accused, but few convicted.<sup>394</sup>

The fact is simple: an intricate web of patronage linked so many of the large landowners and political officials in the countryside, and patrons themselves were clients of more powerful patrons, all the way up the patronage chain to Dom Pedro II himself. Conviction of powerful landowners meant officials lost potential clients; if the landowners were not convicted of leading their peasants in opposing these new taxes, measurements, and recruitment, then those officials then won a degree of loyalty from the landowners which in future situations, such as elections, would be especially important. It is understandable, then, that although many influential patrons were accused of being leaders, relatively few were convicted.

Politics were also important. Whenever a Chamber of Deputies was dismissed by Dom Pedro and the Council of State, whichever political party was dismissed, used the intervening period to discredit the new political party as much as possible to reduce the

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<sup>392</sup> and *Relatorio Apresentada á Assembléa Geral (1875)*, 2 and Horácio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*. (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1958), 136.

<sup>393</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874.

<sup>394</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

time before they in turn were ousted and the former political party could once again be elected into office. In 1868, Dom Pedro II dismissed the Liberal cabinet and formed a Conservative one. Conservatives were in power from 1868 to 1875. Liberals were accused of using this uprising as an attempt to discredit the Conservative government in power: “Politicians [from the Liberal Party] took advantage of the ignorance of the masses to convince them of the idea that the time had arrived to free themselves” from “revolutionary propagandas,” such as the Law of Recruitment.<sup>395</sup>

In Pernambuco, the Baron of Tracunhãem reported that in Bom Jardim and Nazareth Liberals had combined with Jesuits to incite the populace.<sup>396</sup> In Bom Conselho, “The Liberal Party from here was not unfamiliar with the seditious movement,” and if the leaders of the movement were not political leaders themselves, then “the known heads of the sedition are all intimate men of the Liberal party.” One, for example, fled to the house of a known Liberal leader, cavalry Major Antonio Guedes e Alcoforado, placing himself under his protection.<sup>397</sup> Liberal leaders, however, claimed that Major Alcoforado was not allying himself with the rioters by taking in the wounded, but that in doing so he was merely doing a “work of charity.” The Liberals had kept neutral, they argued, and in order to do so had remained in their houses, helping neither the authorities nor the rioters. Lieutenant Colonel Manoel Cavalcante d’Albuquerque Neco, a leader in the Liberal Party, “remained in his house and did not give even one word in favor of the government.”<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 134; AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 347, Monteiro Leite to Lucena, Dec 24, 1874.

<sup>396</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, [Illegible] to Lucena, Dec 6, 1874 and AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Luiz d’Albuquerque Maranhão to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874.

<sup>397</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 347, Vieira Torres Granjeiro to Lucena, Dec 26, 1874.

<sup>398</sup> *A Província*, Jan 8, 1875.



The Liberals, then, claimed they were being unfairly charged; Manoel Galdino of Nazareth was illegally imprisoned because the district judge, Dr. Hircano Alves Maciel, “is battling against Liberal lawyers,” and José Theophilo Monteiro de Farias was imprisoned, as well, as “his crime was of being Liberal.”<sup>399</sup> And when Buique was attacked “there could not be found among them a single noted Liberal.”<sup>400</sup> Likewise, in retaliation for the attack on Bom Jardim, Colonel Maranhão was accused of arresting “blind and infirm [sic] people, men important to the Liberal Party.”<sup>401</sup> But the reality is that Liberals were patrons and patrons sought to protect their clients from recruitment. They were aware who was imprisoned for these uprisings, and would note with satisfaction whenever their clients were not counted among them.<sup>402</sup>

Indeed, in Caruarú, *A Provincia* reported, groups of 300 to 400 were arriving from Ribeira de Capibaribe on December 12 to destroy all of the tax records, “by invitation of a member of the Conservative Party, Francisco José Florencio to set fire to the tax collection offices, town council building, etc.” Not only were all of the rioters from the Conservative Party, they stated, but the Liberal Party sought to assist the district judge in saving the papers. “This is the result,” they argued, “of a government that wants to enslave a province to satisfy a half dozen thieves.”<sup>403</sup>

One of the most important of the Liberal politicians accused of leading the masses was Antonio Thomaz, an Ensign and Liberal leader in the area of Mundahú-Meirim, where he was declared the leader of an uprising on December 26, 1874. He was therefore

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<sup>399</sup> Ibid., Dec 24, 1874.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., Dec 29, 1874.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., Dec 18, 1874.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid., Jan 26, 1875.

<sup>403</sup> *A Provincia*, Dec 17, 1874.

imprisoned and handed over to the officials at Garanhuns, Pernambuco.<sup>404</sup> In another example, Francisco d'Assis Bezerra had been sentenced in Canguaretama for some unstated criminal act and placed in the prison of São José de Mpubú. He managed to escape, fleeing to Managuapé and placed himself under the protection of the leader of the Liberal party of that city and his brother, Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Bruno Jacome Bezerra.<sup>405</sup>

The Liberals, then, having been out of office since 1868, took the opportunity to lead and protect many of the rebels in order both to discredit the Conservative Party and also to protect their loyal clients from what they saw as the degenerating effects of this new law. They reported in November that “We...are no friend of armed revolt [but] a people dying of hunger is a suicidal people.... The government of the Emperor [Conservative government] wants to kill the people of hunger.” The people then, were simply “defending their lives.”<sup>406</sup> The Conservative Party is merely blaming us, they complained, for the uprising.<sup>407</sup> But the Quebra-Quilos movement was, they also argued, “a violent and coarse form by which the ignorant people manifests against the government that oppresses and enslaves them.”<sup>408</sup>

The newspaper *Liberal* even stated that one of the Conservative leaders, Bacharel Miguel Archanjo Pereira do Rego, the county judge of the municipal district of Porto Calvo, had “deflowered” a woman by the name of Gabrielina de tal. The Conservative

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<sup>404</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Martins de Miranda to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 7, 1875 and AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 370 Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 6, 1875 and AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 25, 1875.

<sup>405</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 4, 1874.

<sup>406</sup> *A Provincia*, Nov 28, 1874.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan 9, 1875.

<sup>408</sup> *A Provincia*, Jan 15, 1875.

response, however, was simply that “Gabrielina is not an honest woman.”<sup>409</sup> The Conservatives used every excuse to turn the tables and blame the uprising on the Liberals and to claim every victory as “complete glory for the Conservative Party.”<sup>410</sup>

### ***Continued Resistance***

By March 8, Colonel Severiano Martins de Fonseca, general commander of the forces stationed in Paraíba, reported that the uprising had finally been crushed.<sup>411</sup> (This will be covered in much more detail in Chapter Six). However, this aspect of the Quebra-Kilos riots did not simply die out. Slowly the peasants paid their taxes and returned to using the metric system, but they refused to allow the new system of recruitment to continue. On July 1, 1875, 300 armed individuals (both men and women) attacked the settlement of Porto Real do Collegio, located in the county of Penedo, Alagoas, in order to stop the execution of this law of recruitment.<sup>412</sup> Accordingly, an *edital*, or poster, was to be tacked up in a public place (usually the door of the church) where everyone would see it, calling everyone between the ages of 18 and 35 to sign up for the draft (*alistamento*). In this settlement, the justice of the peace ordered that this be done by his scribe, Ladislão Felix de Oliveira, tacking up this decree to the door of the parish church, stating that, per chapter 5, article 13 of the *regulamento* law no. 2,556, everyone must obey and sign up. Immediately, the scribe was surrounded by this group of 300 men and

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<sup>409</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Martins de Miranda to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 7, 1875. The article was first published November 28, 1874.

<sup>410</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 347, Monteiro Leite to Lucena, Dec 24, 1874.

<sup>411</sup> “Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante, 123.

<sup>412</sup> According to a telegram sent by the minister of the Empire to the President of Alagoas, by way of Bahia, this occurred on July 1. See *Jornal das Alagoas*, July 7, 1875 and AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Calvalcante de Albuquerque to Duarte de Azevedo, July 7, 1875 and AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Dispatch from Jorge Moller to Vieira de Araujo, July 19, 1875.

women, some armed with 2 or 3 weapons each, the men with guns, daggers, knives, sythes, and clubs and the women with spits (*espetos*), and pointed knives, who proceeded to tear down the decree and attack the scribe.<sup>413</sup>

The group then proceeded to the house of the justice of the peace, Francisco Ferreira de Carvalho Patriota, and demanded that he “hand over the *lei de sorteio*” (law of lottery), which was all of the documents, he stated, that he had relating to this law. After leaving, promising to return on August 1, the uprising spread through the districts of Salomé and Igreja Nova as people refused to hand over names of their children eligible according to this law. They were supposed to hand over the names to the block inspectors, unpaid posts inferior to deputy commissioners, who were in turn responsible to the police commissioners. They simply refused to do so, according to the police commissioner of Penedo, and began meeting with arms in order to resist the collection of names. The provincial president sent a force of fifty soldiers of the line, ordering the district attorney to accompany them and the police chief to the settlements of Porto Real Collegio. It appears they were unsuccessful; although the leaders’ arrests were ordered, only three of several leaders were imprisoned and only six witnesses found. The president João Vieira de Araújo of Alagoas sent requests to both Bahia and Pernambuco for support, receiving twenty-five soldiers from Pernambuco. On August 6, the chief of police reported that charges had been brought against the leaders, ten were found guilty and five imprisoned.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> *Jornal das Alagoas*, 7 July 1875 and AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Dispatch from Jorge Moller to Vieira de Araujo, July 19, 1875.

<sup>414</sup> All were found guilty except for Antonio Mendes. AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Dispatch from Jorge Moller to Vieira de Araujo, July 19, 1875. Also see *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Primeira Sessão*

In Rio Grande do Norte, a similar event occurred on August 1, 1875 in the town of Papary and the settlements of Avez and Goyaninha. Churches, where elections were held, also served as meeting places. In all three locations, the parish churches were invaded. In the first two (Papary and Avez), the rioters were made up of only women (fifty in each location) and in Goyaninha, there were 200 men *and* women armed with clubs, knives, and swords.<sup>415</sup> In Avez, the community had gone to attend mass as was customary, but afterwards, fifty women remained in the main body of the church, where the *junta parochial*, led by justice of the peace and the parish priest, was at work determining those qualified to be drafted. The women, having remained after mass, proceeded to attack them, knocking over the table and tearing up the papers with which they were working. The priest, holding a piece of paper on which the law was printed on in his hands, had it ripped from his fingers by one of the women, after which “they all shouted that they did not want this law,” and forced the junta to suspend its work.<sup>416</sup>

The provincial president of Rio Grande do Norte claimed that the actions in both Papary and Avez were the consequences “of a hidden plan to impede the work of the parochial groups and neutralize the effects of the Law of September 26, 1874.”<sup>417</sup> He designated August 15 as the new date for which the board would resume its work, and he

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*da Decima Sexta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Conselheiro Diogo Velho Cavalcanti de Albuquerque.* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1877), 4.

<sup>415</sup> In the dispatch from the provincial president, he claimed there were only men, but in the letter from the district judge of Goyaninha, he reported that there were both men *and* women. See AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Dispatch of Mello Filho entitled “*Opposição Cupmrimento da Lei de 26 Setembro de 1874*,” no date and AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, From the district judge of Goaninha, Antonio Jose de Amorim to Mello Filho, Aug 6, 1875.

Also see *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Primeira Sessão da Decima Sexta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Conselheiro Diogo Velho Cavalcanti de Albuquerque.* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1877), 3-4.

<sup>416</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Dispatch of Mello Filho entitled “*Opposição Cupmrimento da Lei de 26 Setembro de 1874*,” no date.

<sup>417</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Dispatch of Mello Filho entitled “*Opposição Cupmrimento da Lei de 26 Setembro de 1874*,” no date.

ordered the police authorities to acquire new lists. The president also sent twenty troops to Papary and sent nine to Avez to reinforce nine that were already there.

But that still left Goyaninha and the 200 armed peasants that had, on the same day of August 1, also overturned the table, ripped up all the lists and other papers regarding the law and tore down all of the proclamations that had been tacked to the walls of the church (including a list of voters). He ordered twenty-three troops march to Goyaninha to support the seven already there, having been afraid to resist the rioters due to their small number.<sup>418</sup> Even with the additional troops, an uprising occurred again on August 31, leading the provincial president to send an additional twenty troops from Conguaretama with the interim chief of police. But, although he hoped this would be enough to reestablish order, the president's letter to the minister of justice had more than a hint of doubt that he could enforce this law, which "establishes the equality of all without distinction of classes."<sup>419</sup>

In the county of São José de Mpubú (also in Rio Grande do Norte), over fifty women attacked the church on August 1, while the priest and other members of the parochial board were working on compiling their lists. The women were reported to have walked up to the men where they were working, threw the papers that were on the table onto the floor and began to destroy them. The priest evidently refused to give up some of the papers, and as a result the women crushed his hand. Once again, the junta was forced

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<sup>418</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Jose de Amorim to Mello Filho, Aug 6, 1875.

<sup>419</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Sept 1, 1875 and *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Primeira Sessão da Decima Sexta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Conselheiro Diogo Velho Cavalcanti de Albuquerque*. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1877), 3-4.

to suspend its work and, once again, reported that they would reconvene on the fifteenth.<sup>420</sup>

Later that month, on the thirtieth, at the settlement of Varzia, Rio Grande do Norte, near the engenho of Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Bento, word began to spread that groups of men and women were again meeting, armed with clubs, scythes, pistols, guns, etc. The priest, João Jeronymo and Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Bento both tried to dissuade this group “for the love of God” to desist and return home. What happened next is not entirely clear. This group, which was reported to be 300 strong by this time, was attacked by government forces. When the soldiers were shot at, a firefight erupted, leading to two men killed, three women wounded, two men gravely wounded, and three soldiers “lightly” wounded.<sup>421</sup> The town remained in a state of agitation, and the peasants refused to allow recruitment to continue, promising to resist the soldiers.

Uprisings and attacks on the parochial boards spread as well to other northeastern provinces, such as Paraíba (Alagoa Grande, Alagoa Nova, Ingá, Campina Grande, and Pilar), Bahia (Camamú), and Ceará (Acarape, Limoeiro, Quixadá, Boa Viagem, Baturité, and Saboeiro). In the center-south, sympathy for the rioters could also be found, and opposition, even in the form of overt opposition, to the recruitment law also occurred.<sup>422</sup>

For example, In Rio de Janeiro, fifty armed men attacked the parish of Macabú on

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<sup>420</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, District judge from the county of São José de Mipubú to Mello Filho, Aug 7, 1875 and *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Primeira Sessão da Decima Sexta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Conselheiro Diogo Velho Cavalcanti de Albuquerque*. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1877), 3.

<sup>421</sup> AN, IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Dispatch of Mello Filho entitled “Opposição Cumprimento da Lei de 26 Setembro de 1874,” no date.

<sup>422</sup> For Quebra-Quilos sympathies see *Revista Illustrada*, Nov 30, 1874, *Jornal do Comércio*, Dec 12, 1874. Note, however, that to see the sympathies, a reading “between the lines” must be done. For revolts against the Lei de Recrutamento, see and *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Primeira Sessão da Decima Sexta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Conselheiro Diogo Velho Cavalcanti de Albuquerque*. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1877), 4-5.

August 20 to destroy the papers and force the committee to suspend their works, and in Minas Gerais, groups of over 200 men and women attacked parishes with this same purposes in mind (“to the point of disrespecting sacred images”). And in São Paulo, in the counties of Franca, Batataes, and Caconde over 100 men destroyed books of enlistment, as did eighty men in Carmo, and fifty in Santa Rita do Paraizo.<sup>423</sup>

Implementation of the Law of Recruitment seemed destined to fail. One of the very purposes of recruitment had been, for decades, a way of dealing with lesser or suspected criminals, vagrants, and recalcitrant members of the lower classes. Even though recruitment had now technically been replaced by this new law, it was clear that enforcement would not work. It was tremendously problematic to replace tried-and-true methods with alternative ones which posed even graver threats. In such circumstances, E.P. Thompson wrote, peasants will revolt against this imposition, which is exactly what happened here.<sup>424</sup> Ironically, when imposition of the Law of Recruitment failed, authorities resorted to their tried-and-true methods of recruitment as a means of punishment. The Quebra-Quilos rioters, therefore, were punished by being recruited into the military, *unless their patrons could succeed in securing the remittance of their service*.<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Primeira Sessão da Decima Sexta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Conselheiro Diogo Velho Cavalcanti de Albuquerque*. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1877), 4-5.

<sup>424</sup> E.P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the Eighteenth-Century Crowd,” in *Past & Present* 51 (May 1971), 78

<sup>425</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*., 183.



### ***Recruitment as Punishment***

As of September 26, 1874, the lottery, or draft system of conscription, replaced forced recruitment. However, neither clients nor their patrons wished it to be implemented. Neither did many government officials, as some of them were patrons, if one can take their actions to be more important than their words; they stated that they wished to implement it and that it was fair, but upon gathering up the participants in the Quebra-Quilos rebellion, nearly all were sent to the provincial capitals where, if qualified, they were shipped to Rio de Janeiro for enlistment. Chapter Six will describe the termination of this uprising in detail. However, a few examples of recruitment will be useful at this point.

When Colonel Fonseca was sent up to Paraíba with the army to crush the rebellion, he began by arresting any and all possible rioters. For example, along the road to the municipal district of Ingá, they reportedly arrested everyone they found within four leagues.<sup>426</sup> Then, in an order to his subordinate, Captain Antonio Carlos da Silva Piragibe, he ordered that the captain arrest all of the accused “and at the same time proceed with vigorous recruitment.”<sup>427</sup> Most likely, all lower-class citizens were rounded up, but not all would be recruited, as that would simply be impossible. Interim Minister of War João José Junqueira had written to the president of Pernambuco that only the heads of the uprising should be recruited and sent to Rio de Janeiro, so it is likely that similar orders were sent to the other provincial presidents, or at least to his commanders in the field.<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> “Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante,” 103-4.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>428</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 183.

The minister of war wrote to Lucena in December, spelling out the punishments: “Only the heads of the sedition or those that took active part in the sedicious movement” should be processed and tried. The rest of those arrested for having participated in the rebellion would be, “if they do not have exemptions of military service,” recruited into the military and sent to Rio de Janeiro at the first opportunity.<sup>429</sup> In Itambé, for example, the authorities arrested twenty individuals who had taken part in the movement, but only nine were seen as fit for military service and lacking legal exemptions and were therefore sent to the capital. Nine, either through exemption or otherwise, were released, and two were considered to be the heads, and thus retained in the prison for processing.<sup>430</sup> A week previously, the district attorney de Itambé reported that of those imprisoned in his county, only two remained, as heads of the movement. Many had already been sent for recruitment, but those that had not, were released, “not because they are innocent but are incapable of service in the military.”<sup>431</sup> A long steady stream of recruits were now sent by Police Chief Araújo throughout the remainder of the month.<sup>432</sup>

One of the most important aspects of recruitment, was that apart from acquiring personnel for the military, it was also a means of social control. Once a person was arrested and destined for recruitment, he would immediately attempt to prove he had

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<sup>429</sup> APEJE, Códice Ministerio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 152-153, From Minister of War, J.M. Lopes da Costa, to Lucena, Dec 16, 1874.

<sup>430</sup> APEJE, Códice Policia Civil 140, October-December 1874, MS 349-351, Police commissioner de Itambé João Pires Ferreira to Provincial (Pernambuco) chief of Police Antonio Francisco Correia de Araujo, Dec 8, 1874. Also see APEJE, Códice Policia Civil 140, October-December 1874, MS 352, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 12, 1874 and APEJE, Códice Policia Civil 140, October-December 1874, MS 363, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 16, 1874.

<sup>431</sup> APEJE, Códice “Officios Diversos,” 1874-1879, MS 49, district attorney of Itambé, Vasconcellos to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874.

<sup>432</sup> In particular, see APEJE, Códice Policia Civil 140, October-December 1874, MS 371, 372, & 376, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 18, 1874, Idem., MS 379, Dec 19, 1874, Idem., MS 414, Dec 21, 1874, Idem., MS 424, Dec 24, 1874, Idem., MS 426 & 429, Dec 26, 1874.

legal exemption. The easiest way to do this was to contact your *patron*, who would then (if you had been a loyal client) come to your rescue and “prove” that you had legal exemption. Everyone had a patron—up to the emperor, and therefore everyone was a client to a degree. The above-mentioned Feliciano José Bezerra, who reportedly participated in the Quebra-Quilos uprising would have thus done the same. His father-in-law, João Francisco de Mello, requested he receive exemption.<sup>433</sup> Of course, the very fact that he had a father-in-law (meaning he was married) should have been enough to exempt him, but this process of strengthening the bonds of patron and client was all-important and needed to be enacted.

Soon, as a result of such patronage networks, many other participants were also able to acquire legal exemption. The following are a few of the many letters written by Lucena as a result: “Release the recruit Lino José da Costa because he proved legal exemption.”<sup>434</sup> “Release the recruits José Francisco Moreira and Manoel José da Paixão.”<sup>435</sup> “Release the recruit Francisco Florencio Pereira who proved he was the only son of the widow Alexandrina Maria da Conceição de Jesus.”<sup>436</sup> Of course, not all of the peasants caught up in the web of recruitment had patrons to come to their defense. Thus

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<sup>433</sup> APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil 140, October-December 1874, MS 452, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 30, 1874.

<sup>434</sup> “To Exm. Brigadeiro commandante das armas, 12 Jan 1875,” in *Boletins do Expediente do Governo, APEJE, 1874-1877*. (Pernambuco: Typ. De M. Figueiroa de F. and Filhos, 1877), 17.

<sup>435</sup> “To Police commissioner do municipal district de Limoeiro, 12 Jan 1875), in *Boletins do Expediente do Governo, APEJE, 1874-1877*. (Pernambuco: Typ. De M. Figueiroa de F. and Filhos, 1877), 18.

<sup>436</sup> “To Brigadeiro Commandante das Armas, 18 Jan 1875” in *Boletins do Expediente do Governo, APEJE, 1874-1877*. (Pernambuco: Typ. De M. Figueiroa de F. and Filhos, 1877), 27-28. For another example, see “To Delegado de Policia do distrito municipal de Bom Jardim, 14 Jan 1875, in *Boletins do Expediente do Governo, APEJE, 1874-1877*. (Pernambuco: Typ. De M. Figueiroa de F. and Filhos, 1877), 21 and simultaneously “To the commandante de escolta que conduz presos e recrutas de Bom Jardim para a capital, 14 Jan 1875” in *Boletins do Expediente do Governo, APEJE, 1874-1877*. (Pernambuco: Typ. De M. Figueiroa de F. and Filhos, 1877), 21.

frequent orders were sent out to the officials to “Put all your recruits aboard the steamship *Pará*” or receive the recruits and send them on to the capital.<sup>437</sup>

The newspaper *Liberal* reported (as reprinted in *A Provincia*) that in Pernambuco all of those questioned by the authorities for having participated in the movement, would deliver up a name, “even if the person is innocent,” so as to avoid recruitment.<sup>438</sup> Thus in town of Nazareth in Pernambuco, two prisons were filled to the brim with individuals who were destined for the military.<sup>439</sup> Captain Piragibe, upon leaving Areia (headquarters of the military force in Paraíba), on January 23, left with instructions to go to S. João and recruit “and with the local authorities to capture the criminals there.” He was first to determine which ones were qualified to be recruited, or those without exemption, which above all meant those without patrons, or without powerful patrons, or could prove one of the many other exemptions. In this case, Piragibe brought back thirty recruits without any exemptions.<sup>440</sup>

It was up to the provincial authorities, not the local ones, to ultimately determine whether the recruit was fit for service before sending him on to Rio de Janeiro. The provincial police would often visit the prisons of the various municipal districts and verify the person’s guilt, then authorize their being sent on to the provincial capital for recruitment.<sup>441</sup> Citizens would attempt to explain to the authorities every step of the way that he was exempted from recruitment. In Rio Grande do Norte, for example, the chief

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<sup>437</sup> Ibid., 15 Jan 1875” in Idem, 27; “To the Police commissioner do municipal district de Panellas, Jan 15, 1875,” in Idem., 23.

<sup>438</sup> *A Provincia*, Jan 6, 1875.

<sup>439</sup> *A Provincia*, Dec 20, 1874 and Dec 24, 1874.

<sup>440</sup> Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante, 121.

<sup>441</sup> APEJE, Codice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875-Dec 1878, MS 11, police commissioner of municipal district of Limoeiro, Joaquim Rosa da Costa to Lucena, Dec 16, 1875.

of police, having accompanied the National Guard force of thirty troops through the countryside, brought back to Natal only those without the legal exemption.<sup>442</sup> Of course, he had been ordered to arrest all of the guilty he could find “as well as those [he] felt worthy of being recruited.”<sup>443</sup> But after the chief of police brought the president of Alagoas his recruits, President Araujo found that at least one had to be released because, for health reasons, this recruit was unfit for service.<sup>444</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Thus recruitment came full circle. The need to recruit to fill the ranks of the military was superceded by the need to keep clients from being recruited by their patrons, who desired to do so in order to retain political and social control over them. This control by the landowners over the lower classes in turn was needed to uphold the desires of the political party in power, lest top-down patronage decrease. Then came the Paraguayan War. As the war dragged on and became increasingly bloody, the “blood tax,” as recruitment was called, came to be demanded at increasing levels, leading to cries of abuse. Parliament therefore sought to reform the system, but in doing so, they failed to take into account the threat the new law posed to the patronage networks that were so embedded in the social structure of rural Brazil. And with that crisis, massive uprisings occurred.

This crisis over the recruitment reform law came right at a time of crisis over the economy, taxes, and the Religious Question. Thus demands to retain the traditional

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<sup>442</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 11, 1874.

<sup>443</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Barreto to Mello Filho, Dec 24, 1874.

<sup>444</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Mar 27, 1875.

system of recruitment became embedded in demands to retain other traditional systems in the economy and taxes (before the economic collapse), religion (before the Religious Question), and the metric system (before implementation). These demonstrations are therefore part and parcel of the Quebra-Quilos Rebellion. No contemporary author ever claimed otherwise. But whereas the other aspects of Quebra-Quilos had been crushed by March of 1875, anti-recruitment demonstrations continued, not only in the northeast, but in the center-south as well. At this moment, therefore, a look at what gave the movement its name—Quebra-Quilos—may help to understand these demands to go back to traditional methods, to a time when things were, simply put, “better.”

## CHAPTER 5

### MODERNIZATION

#### ***Introduction***

José Murilo de Carvalho has noted the importance of attempts at modernization implemented by the Imperial government of Brazil in the 1870s. Beginning with the gradual abolition of slavery, known as the Rio Branco Law (1871) and then the implementation of the metric system (1872) throughout Brazil, Brazil seemed well on its way to becoming a “modern” country. Popular uprisings, however, threatened to halt all modernization attempts. One of the most important was the Quebra-Quilos revolt.<sup>445</sup>

Throughout the rest of the century and into the next, masses of people would, with varying degrees, resist modernization. Canudos, Contestado, Joazeiro, and the anti-vaccination uprisings of 1904 were all anti-modernist. But again, Quebra-Quilos was the most important as it, according to E. Bradford Burns, succeeded in checking this modernization drive then gathering steam.<sup>446</sup> “Checking” may be too strong of a word. Slowing, delaying, or even sidetracking may be better descriptions. The metric system would, after all, be implemented following the quelling of this uprising, and taxes collected. Of course, the Law of Recruitment as discussed in the previous chapter was permanently derailed, but other modernization attempts were not. Abolition, in fact,

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<sup>445</sup> José Murilo de Carvalho, “Brazil 1870-1914. The Force of Tradition,” in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 24, Quincentenary Supplement: The Past colonial Experience. Five Centuries of Spanish and Portuguese America. (1992), 145 and 150.

<sup>446</sup> E. Bradford Burns, “Cultures in conflict: The Implications of Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Latin America,” in Virginia Bernard, ed., *Elites, Masses, and Modernization in Latin America, 1850-1930*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 62.

would be decreed in 1889, the epitome of what many modernists were clamoring for in Brazil.

This chapter looks at Brazil's attempts to modernize, particularly with regards to the implementation of the 1862 law decreeing usage of the metric system. This law had been passed in 1862, but a ten-year grace period had been allowed for implementation. The 1870s were therefore not the beginnings of Brazil's modernization attempts. Even earlier, in 1850, the closing of Brazil's ports to the trans-Atlantic slave traffic marked another key event in Brazil's drive to modernize. Brazil's modernization attempts, therefore, began long before 1870 and continued far into the twentieth century. The issue is the rural peasantry's attempts to stave off and thwart these modernization efforts. Chapter Three looked at their attempts to resist the modernization of Church-State relations, and Chapter Four looked at attempts to resist reform of the military enlistment system. This chapter focuses on the metric system with corresponding attempts to resist its implementation for both economic and, above all, social reasons.

### ***Quest for Modernity***

In Machado de Assis' novel, *Quincas Borba*, published in serial form in the women's magazine *A Estação* from 1886-1891, (and in book form in 1891), the protagonist, Rubião, finds himself in rural Minas Gerais caring for his good friend, Quincas Borba in his dying days. Upon his death bed around 1865, Quincas Borba willed all of his assets and belongings to Rubião, who immediately packed up and moved to the capital city of Rio de Janeiro. Upon boarding the train, Rubião met a couple who, returning to the city from their vacation, commented to him as to how boring the ride



was. Rubião agreed: “For someone used to muleback...the train was boring and uninteresting. One couldn’t deny, however, that it was progress.”<sup>447</sup> And thus a key theme of this book is presented to the reader: progress.

Upon arriving in Rio de Janeiro, Rubião, through the able pen of Machado de Assis, introduces the readers into the world in which culture and progress were the all-encompassing issues for the urban elite, including new elite members such as Rubião. Rubião’s friend, Sofia, notes the importance of keeping up with the latest fashion trends from France; when Sofia’s cousin came to visit from the countryside, Sofia insisted she learn to play the piano and learn French, as “it was indispensable for conversation, for shopping, for reading a novel.”<sup>448</sup> And when Sofia’s “country bumpkin” cousin consented, she quickly mastered the art of piano and French, and is soon not only ensconced in elite culture, but was to be married. (In contrast, the daughter of the Major Siqueira, who never becomes cultured and appears not to have mastered French, therefore never marries). As she rode the train to embark on her honeymoon to Europe, she figuratively brings the narrative of progress to its climax—from country, to city, to Europe.<sup>449</sup>

And thus was late nineteenth-century Brazil. The elites’ concern was, above all, the process of progress, of modernization. Rubião’s voyage from rural Minas Gerais to Rio de Janeiro symbolized the gulf which divided the rural lower classes from the few cultured members of the elite. Only with Europeanization could progress be attained. As Machado de Assis points out, elite women, including Sofia in his story, began working to

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<sup>447</sup> Machado de Assis, *Quincas Borba*, 29.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

spread their progress by assisting the poor of the northeast—the so-called Alagoas Committee.<sup>450</sup>

Two important points are to be made here. First, to the elites, European culture, language, and the example of industrialization in Northern Europe—France, Germany, and above all Britain—as well as that of the United States, were far superior to any others. (Mediterranean and Iberian cultures, on the other hand, were seen as backward, less modern).<sup>451</sup> Not only did the Brazilian elite desire to adopt industrialization and other forms of “progress” from Europe, but so too anything else to do with Europe. English butter, London cheese, English beer and ale, and European medicine and beauty aids were all the rage during the Second Empire.<sup>452</sup> The second key item is that if for the elite Europe and North America were “modern,” and if, as they argued, all things modern should be adopted in Brazil, then it was their duty to not only adopt, but impose modernity on the broad masses of people. The common people, however, saw little use for modernity, and much to dislike. As we shall see below, they will rise up in rebellion *against* modernity.

The elites wishing to incorporate modernity, those that Graham refers to as “modernizers,” sought to invite Europeans and their ideas into Brazil: “I know of no better way,” one member of the elite stated, “than to freely open the doors of the Empire to the foreigner.”<sup>453</sup> The theory was that, in Positivist fashion, both social evolution (with a Spencerian flavor) and progress were inevitable.<sup>454</sup> As José Murilo de Carvalho stated,

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<sup>450</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>451</sup> Burns, “Cultures in Conflict,” 11 & 15.

<sup>452</sup> Graham, *Britain*, 112-114.

<sup>453</sup> As quoted in Graham, *Britain*, 35.

<sup>454</sup> Burns, “Cultures in Conflict,” 16.

“Positivism saw the history of mankind as a continuous march towards progress, impelled by science.”<sup>455</sup> In other words, a line of progress developed. Some nations were on the beginning end, and others had reached the end—they had progressed, or had modernized.<sup>456</sup> Europe and the United States had arrived and it was now time for Brazil. The outward signs of progress now became those visible ones, such as the building of roads and rails (as Rubião in *Quincas Borba* noted). Progress could be measured.<sup>457</sup> By the 1850s, roads and railroads appeared the most visible and most important foci for modernization. And Brazil turned to foreigners, particularly the British, to take charge. London-based financiers, for example, raised 700,000 pounds to build a road system linking Petrópolis (home of D. Pedro’s summer palace) to Juiz de Fora (Minas Gerais).<sup>458</sup> Then, in 1852, the government passed a law granting 5% interest to investors in railway lines, on condition that the locations were pre-approved.<sup>459</sup> In 1864 the railway from Rio de Janeiro reached the Paraíba Valley (the train Rubião travelled on) and in 1868, the railway finally linked São Paulo with the port of Santos.<sup>460</sup>

The center-south, if we judge modernity on railroad construction, was quickly modernizing. The northeast, however, the site of Brazil’s wealth during the colonial period, was modernizing much more slowly. There, the British also took charge in railway building. In fact, the Recife and São Francisco Railway Company, Ltd was the first British railway company in Brazil, although the goal of connecting Recife to the São

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<sup>455</sup> Carvalho, “Brazil 1870-1914,” 158.

<sup>456</sup> Martha Knisely Huggins, *From Slavery to Vagrancy in Brazil: Crime and Social Control in the Third World*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1985), 1.

<sup>457</sup> Burns, “Cultures in Conflict,” 16-18.

<sup>458</sup> Graham, *Britain*, 26.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, 6. This was raised to 7% as a result of provincial support.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

Francisco River took decades to complete and was surpassed in importance and efficiency by those in the center-south. The Bahia and São Francisco Railway was also organized in 1852 and began operation in 1860, although like the Recife and São Francisco Railway it too would take an enormous amount of time and energy to complete, not reaching the São Francisco River until 1896. In Rio Grande do Norte, the British built the Nova Cruz, in Paraíba they built the Conde d'Eu, in Alagoas the Alagoas Brazilian Central; all, including the Great Western of Brazil, were built by the British.<sup>461</sup> But, according to an economist writing in 1876, these were not enough: more railroads needed to be constructed to connect the capitals with their provincial cities, coasts with the interior, etc.<sup>462</sup> By this time, however, the economic heartland of Brazil had effectively shifted to the center-south. Even the textile manufacturing shifted from Bahia to the center-south.<sup>463</sup>

The Brazilian elite, then, wished to modernize, and to do so they encouraged roads and rails, the most obvious outward signs. But Pedro II himself also sought to modernize Brazil. Roderick Barman, in his biography of Pedro II noted the following:

As Brazil's ruler and model citizen, Pedro II was the pledge and the promise not of what the young nation was but of what it could and should be. Because he embraced European culture and the new technology, he represented the future. The emperor now wished to turn the dream into a reality, to introduce into Brazil the benefits of progress. Railroads, electric telegraphs, and carriage roads were to be constructed.... The country would thus become the France of South America.<sup>464</sup>

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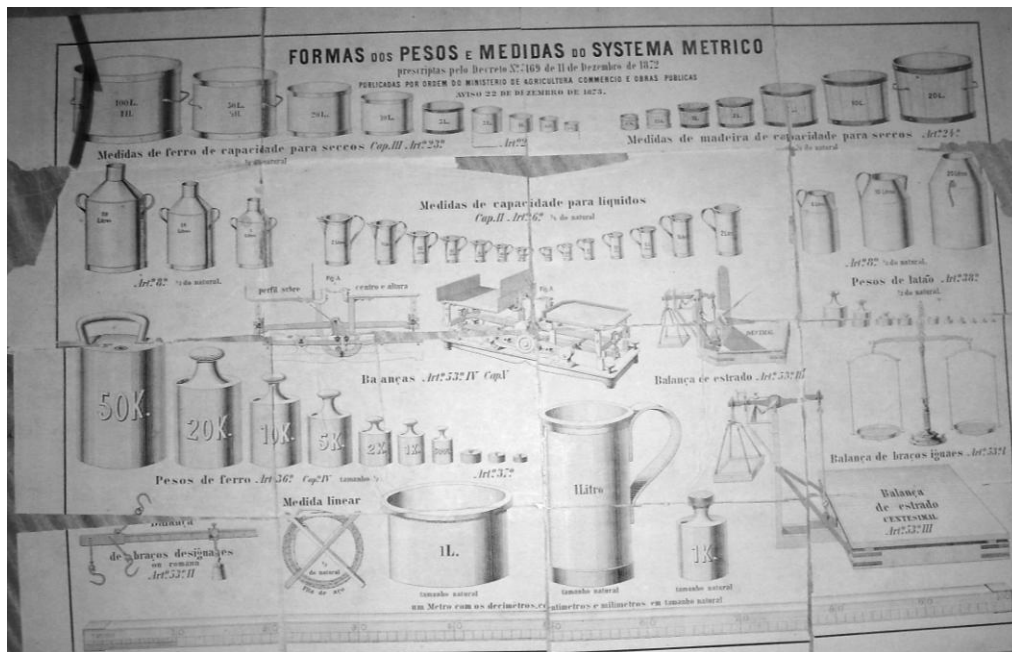
<sup>461</sup> Ibid., 51-72, especially 69-70.

<sup>462</sup> Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 18.

<sup>463</sup> Graham, *Britain*, 33.

<sup>464</sup> Roderick J. Barman, *Citizen Emperor: Pedro II and the Making of Brazil, 1825-1891*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 162-3

To do so, he sought to reform land tenure through taxation policies, encourage immigration, implement scientific farming methods, extend suffrage, and abolish slavery.<sup>465</sup> As the above quote describes, to bring Brazil into modernity and to demonstrate to the world that it had progressed, Brazilian elites turned to outward signs of progress: roads, railways, gas lights, etc. Brazil then sought to reform the metric system as a way to reduce corruption by merchants and the tax collectors, but also to stimulate Brazil's participation in international trade. It would be here that the lower classes attempted to apply brakes to the modernization campaigns.



**Image 1: Broadsheet of Metric System. Source, author photograph.**

### ***Metric System***

In the preceding sections I demonstrated how the Brazilian elite sought to adopt many European ideas and institutions—railways, gas lighting, steam engines, English food, French clothes and language, etc. A fine line had to be walked, however, as Brazil

<sup>465</sup> Graham, *Britain*, 41-2.

was still an export-oriented economy and still retained a monarchical form of government. They therefore had to be very selective as to which aspects of European modernity they would adopt. Thus the idea of reforming the system of weights and measures in Brazil had the appearance of benefitting all Brazilians without abandoning any of Brazil's cherished (and conservative) institutions.

As Enlightenment and rationalist ideals helped to encourage the French Revolution, French scientists created a measuring system based on the divisions of the decimal system. This new system, the scientists argued, would be "attuned to the twin ideals of the Enlightenment, Nature and Reason, and adhering to scientific principles and adjusted to scientific convenience, one, they believed, destined for universality."<sup>466</sup> Thus the Law of August 1, 1793 declared this new metric system obligatory after a period of eleven months. The main goal of this new system was to eliminate fraud and allow the free exchange of goods to flow with fewer impediments.<sup>467</sup> However, as many merchants and officials failed to adopt the system, Napoleon was obliged to grant permission on February 12, 1812, on the eve of his Russian Campaign, for the use of the "usual" measures.

With the defeat of Napoleon attempts to restore France to pre-Revolutionary times led Louis XVIII to outlaw the use of this system for ordinary transactions.<sup>468</sup> But then, nearby countries, such as the Dutch (1816-17) began to adopt this French system, leading France to re-adopt it in 1837, although allowing three years for implementation.

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<sup>466</sup> Edward Franklin Cox, "The Metric System: A Quarter-Century of Acceptance (1851-1876), *Osiris*, Vol. 13 (1958), 360.

<sup>467</sup> Ken Adler, "A Revolution to Measure: The Political Economy of the Metric System in France," in M. Norton Wiser, ed., *The Values of Precision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 54, 60.

<sup>468</sup> Adler, "A Revolution to Measure," 61.

In 1854, Portugal adopted (after a transition period) the metric system, and in 1861, the newly founded Italian Kingdom adopted it (with an eighteen month transition period). In 1862, the wave of adoptions reached Latin America, as Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Brazil, and Argentina all took steps to adopt this system. By now, adoption of this new international system “was part and parcel of the growing internationalism” and one which became associated with “progress” (though not all “progressive” nations, such as Britain or the United States, fully adopted it).<sup>469</sup>

Brazil, in its attempts to modernize, was swept into this wave of adoptions of the metric system. On June 26, 1862, Law No. 1,157 was passed. Accordingly, the traditional system of weights and measures were to be abandoned, though gradually over a period of 10 years. At the end of the ten-year period, 1872, those found in violation of this law could be imprisoned for up to one month and pay a fine of up to 100\$000.<sup>470</sup>

During the 1860s, it appears that very few, particularly in the rural areas, adopted this new system. Traditionally Brazilians used *braças* (an English fathom, or about 2.20 meters), *pés* (approximately one English foot), *palmos* (an English span, or about 0.22 meters), and *quintais* (about one yard).<sup>471</sup> The measures of the new system, kilos, liters, and meters, argues Roderick Barman, were about 10% smaller than the traditional ones.<sup>472</sup> But merchants had to either purchase or rent the new weights and measures and

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<sup>469</sup> Cox, “Metric System,” 361, 366-369 and Adler, “A Revolution to Measure,” 61.

<sup>470</sup> No. 1.157, Lei de 26 de Junho de 1862. *Coleção das Leis do Imperio do Brasil*. 1862. Tomo XXIII. Part I. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Nacional, 1862).

<sup>471</sup> See Zephyr L. Frank, *Dutra’s World: Wealth and Family in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), xv and Monteiro, *Revolta do Quebra-Quilos* (page?). In comparison, Ken Adler notes that in eighteenth-century France, there existed as many as 700-800 different metrical names, of which there were a total of 250,000 local variants. Adler, “A Revolution to Measure,” 43.

<sup>472</sup> Barman, “Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined,” 414-415.

then pay a tax to certify they were the correct weights or length. Thus they simply retained the same prices on goods while selling them in volumes of 10% smaller to make up for this new financial burden, passing payment of it on to the consumer.<sup>473</sup> In Independência (Paraíba), for example, the taxes were measured by weight, 320 reis (or 160 per half-weight) or by measurement at 160 reis (eighty per half measurement).<sup>474</sup> It is no wonder adoption was slow in coming.

Of course, another cause for failure to adopt this new system stemmed from the government's preoccupation with the long-drawn-out Paraguayan War, beginning in 1865. In 1868, D. Pedro II, exercising his moderating powers, dismissed the Liberal cabinet and replaced it with a Conservative, ineffectual one. Three years later, in 1871, he once again dismissed the cabinet, replacing it with another Conservative one headed by José Maria da Silva Paranhos, the Viscount of Rio Branco (known as the March 7 cabinet).<sup>475</sup> With the Paraguayan War over, Rio Branco oversaw a new period of reform in Brazil. He presided over education reform, gradual abolition, railway subsidies, the first national census, the laying of an intercontinental submarine telegraph, and the metric system, were all overseen by him.<sup>476</sup>

In September 1872, ten years after promulgation, Francisco do Rego Barreto, the Minister of Agriculture, published a decree ordering the metric system to be officially adopted. This was the "Instructions" (No. 5,089) published on the implementation of

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<sup>473</sup> Barman, "Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined," 414-415.

<sup>474</sup> "Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do Commandante," 156.

<sup>475</sup> Jeffrey D. Needell, *The Party of Order: The Conservatives, the State, and Slavery in the Brazilian Monarchy, 1831-1871*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 278-285 and Needell, "The Domestic Civilizing Mission: The Cultural Role of the State in Brazil, 1808-1930," *Luso-Brazilian Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Summer, 1999), 4-5.

<sup>476</sup> Needell, "The Domestic Civilizing Mission," 5.



Law No. 1,157, to be implemented July 1, 1873, although punishments for violation were reduced to five to ten days imprisonment and a fine of 10\$000 to 20\$000.<sup>477</sup> On November 9, the minister of agriculture once again sent a circular to the provincial presidents explaining the importance of these 1862 and 1872 laws, leading one to assume it was still not being universally accepted.<sup>478</sup>

### ***Quebra-Quilos***

With few exceptions (such as the attack on the prison in Campina Grande by the Barros family), the peasants targeted the weights and scales of the new metric system as symbols of their hatred and frustration: “The new weights, for this people, symbolized the increase in taxes, the tyranny of the government.”<sup>479</sup> Chapter One narrates the events of these popular revolts. What will be discussed below, however, in line with the struggles over modernization in the 1870s, is the specific targeting of merchants and those seen as profiting from this new “French” system and the attempts to convince fellow peasants to disavow any future use of such systems.

Many landowners did little to stop the rioters from destroying the weights and measures. Perhaps the reason is as stated by Roderick Barman: many landowners saw the implementation of the metric system as an attempt by the central government to reduce the powers of the local landowners while increasing that of the central

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<sup>477</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 22. “Instructions” given as of September 18, 1872, according to President Lccena of Pernambuco. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, “Palacio da Presidencia de Pernambuco, 17 de Dezembro de 1874. Circular ás autoridades policies e judiciaries da provincial.”

<sup>478</sup> *Revista Ilustrada*, Nov 30, 1874.

<sup>479</sup> Irineu Joffily, *Notas Sobre a Parahyba*. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia do “Jornal do Commercio” de Rodirgues e C. 1892), 188.

government in Rio de Janeiro.<sup>480</sup> The centrally appointed president of Pernambuco, President Lucena, argued that these new weights and measurements would help the economic situation by facilitating arithmetic.<sup>481</sup> In an 1876 publication, Henrique Augusto Millet rejected this position, arguing that while the government spoke over reducing fraud and therefore benefitting all peoples, it was, in reality, a way for the government to raise revenue. He maintained that people were forced to purchase these scales without learning how to use them, and therefore fraud continued.<sup>482</sup> Thus, not only did they rise up and destroy the weights and scales in the markets, where the tax collectors were busy collecting their *imposto do chão*, but they also sought out all merchants and business establishments which used these new measurements. These businesses had, according to law, begun to employ the metric system in their establishments and pass on the costs to consumers. In the town of Pedra de Fogo, according to the district judge, the rioters forced their way into the taverns and destroyed the weights and scales.<sup>483</sup> Likewise, in Rio Grande do Norte, the rioters broke into the taverns and destroyed the weights and measurements there as well.<sup>484</sup>

Other businesses besides taverns were also targeted, such as butchershops. In the city of José de Mpubú, Rio Grande do Norte, after destroying the weights and measures at the market, and after a brief respite during which they gave “vivas to their patron saint” at the door of the church, then went on to destroy the weights and measures of the

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<sup>480</sup> Barman, “The Brazilian Peasantry Reexamined,” 418.

<sup>481</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 346, “Palacio da Presidencia de Pernambuco, 17 de Dezembro de 1874. Circular ás autoridades policies e judiciaries da provincial.”

<sup>482</sup> Millet, *Quebra-Quilos*, 55.

<sup>483</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 346, Silva Braga to Lucena, Nov 30, 1874.

<sup>484</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 297, Melo Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 4, 1874, Idem., Dec 19, 1874, and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Pessoa de Mello to Mello Filho, Dec 7, 1874.

butchershop. Many other butchershops were also targeted following the destruction at the markets, including those in Pernambuco.<sup>485</sup>

Besides taverns and butchershops, other merchant shops were targeted as well, forcing the storeowners and salespeople to hand over their weights and measurements.<sup>486</sup> Some merchants willingly handed them over and suffered very little damage as a result. In Itapissuma (Pernambuco), for example, *A Provincia* reported that the owners of the weights and measures simply handed them over to the populace to be destroyed and that as a result, “No violence was needed...all the people wanted to be rid of them.”<sup>487</sup> Others, however, were adamant in their refusals to hand them over.<sup>488</sup> As a result, merchants were hurt. In one instance, an Italian peddler was beaten for refusing to give up his measurements.<sup>489</sup> In another, the populace in Macahyba (Rio Grande do Norte), after destroying the weights and measures in a shop, took their wrath out on the Portuguese owner and his son, who was working in the store as a salesclerk. Both were severely beaten. So much so, in fact, that it was feared that the father would soon lose his life.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 346, Mello Filho to Lucena, Dec 9, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 7, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 346, “Palacio da Presidencia de Pernambuco, 17 de Dezembro de 1874. Circular ás autoridades policies e judiciaries da provincial” and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 346, Barão de Tracunhãem to Lucena, Dec 7, 1874.

<sup>486</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 346, “Palacio da Presidencia de Pernambuco, 17 de Dezembro de 1874. Circular ás autoridades policies e judiciaries da provincial” and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 33, 37, 38, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 19, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 297, Silva-Santos to Mello Barretto, Dec 9, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 297 de Mello to Mello Filho, Dec 7, 1874, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Feb 1, 1875.

<sup>487</sup> *A Provincia*, 6 Jan 1875.

<sup>488</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 297, Silva-Santos to Mello Barretto, Dec 9, 1874.

<sup>489</sup> *A Provincia*, Dec 1874

<sup>490</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 346, Mello Filho to Lucena, Dec 15, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup>, 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 15, 1874.

The examples of the Italian peddler and the Portuguese shopkeeper highlight that these new methods were seen as “foreign.” Frequently the terms “French metric system” or “French decimal system” were used to demonstrate the non-Brazilian nature of the new system. And the targeting of foreigners—and foreign merchants, at that—demonstrates further how the peasants saw this as a system being forced upon them by outsiders. Targetting foreign merchants was not new, as João José Reis has shown for Bahia in the 1830s and Jeffrey Mosher for Pernambuco from the 1820s to 1850s.<sup>491</sup>

In a number of other instances, the rioters themselves were wounded or killed as the merchants sought to protect their weights and measures. In one instance, *A Província* reported that Lieutenant Manoel Candido d’Albuquerque led a group to the business establishment of Captain Pedro de Rego Chavez “who, instead of handing over the weights and scales as the other merchants did, open-fired on the multitude.”<sup>492</sup> President Lucena later reported that as a result Lieutenant Candido was seriously wounded, one soldier (Manoel Francisco) was killed, along with five rioters and a number of wounded.<sup>493</sup> And when Captain Antonio José Henriques led a group to a business establishment, he saw that his way was being blocked by a number of guards. Barrelling in anyway, Captain Antonio lost his life in the confusion. *A Província* judged it to be “the result of his imprudence.”<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia*. Trans. Arthur Brakel. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 17 and 54 and Jeffrey C. Mosher, “Political Mobilization, Party Ideology, and Lusophobia in Nineteenth-Century Brazil: Pernambuco, 1822-1850” in *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80:4 (Nov, 2000): 881-912.

<sup>492</sup> *A Província*, Dec 22, 1874.

<sup>493</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, “Palacio da Presidencia de Pernambuco, 17 de Dezembro de 1874. Circular ás autoridades policies e judiciaries da provincial.”

<sup>494</sup> *A Província*, Jan 15, 1875.

Following these attacks, the merchants—both those whose shops had been attacked as well as those who had been spared—fled their towns.<sup>495</sup> The populace now demanded that all goods sold be done so with the old, traditional system. This occurred at the markets as well as the businesses.<sup>496</sup> In Fagundes, the participants in the destruction of the weights and measurements followed up their destruction by “forc[ing] everyone to buy and sell with the old weights and measures.”<sup>497</sup> If witnesses are to be believed, the rioters succeeded, at least for a time, in buying and selling goods using the traditional system.<sup>498</sup> Until the army arrived to squash the revolt, provincial presidents would be forced to report that “People are still refusing to pay taxes and use the weights and measures of the new system.”<sup>499</sup> But, whenever such reports were sent to Rio de Janeiro, they were routinely followed up by such statements as “However, I have faith that the forces I sent into the interior will soon remedy that.”<sup>500</sup> In Pernambuco, for example, Captain Capistrano, distributed new weights and scales at the market and then left some soldiers and the police commissioner to police the market. Those that resisted the new weights and measures were arrested and hauled off, some to be recruited into the military, others to be freed as they were deemed unfit for military service.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 15, 1874.

<sup>496</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, President of city council of São José de Mpubú, Captain Joaquim Ribeira Dantas to Mello Filho, Nov 30, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, “Palacio da Presidencia de Pernambuco, 17 de Dezembro de 1874. Circular ás autoridades policies e judicaries da provincial.” Also see AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Police commissioner Joaquim Appidio Rosa da Costa of the municipal district of Limoeiro to Provincial Police Chief Antonio Francisco de Correia de Araujo, Dec 19, 1874.

<sup>497</sup> “Paraíba Minister Dispatch”, May 21, 1875.

<sup>498</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, March 10, 1875, 71.

<sup>499</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 8, 1875.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>501</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Vasconcelos to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874.

## **Conclusion**

The Brazilian elites during the Second Empire sought modernization. Outward appearances became especially important, such as railroads, gas lamps in the cities, etc. Peasants, however, saw modernization and the introduction of the metric system as a means to increase taxes. While the government implemented a reforming measure designed to benefit commerce and ultimately peasant as well, many peasants saw their livelihoods deteriorate for a variety of reasons, such as the price of sugar on the global market or collapse of cotton economy. Others saw their livelihood threatened as railroads replaced muleteers. But they did not attack the railroads, or the cotton merchants per se, they attacked the metric system.

The metric system became the symbol of modernization. And modernization came to mean foreign, alien, and uncondusive to the Brazilian peasant. As a result, the Quebra-Quilos riots slowed down the modernization attempts in nineteenth-century Brazil. Cecília Loreto Mariz has noted on how poor Brazilians cope with poverty, arguing that some social scientists have an “erroneous opinion that individuals are the powerless victims of social structure.”<sup>502</sup> She argues in *Coping with Poverty* that many people cope by turning to religion. I argue here that while this may be true, peasants also attempt—and in this case temporarily successfully—to rid themselves of that which symbolizes the cause of their poverty. Again, the metric system was the symbol. Brazil’s goal of modernization was, they saw, hurting peasants. So they destroyed these symbols.

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<sup>502</sup> Mariz, *Coping with Poverty*, 5.

## CHAPTER 6

### REPRESSION

#### *Introduction*

The Quebra-Quilos revolt was by no means a peaceful uprising. While it is true, as many officials and subsequent historians have attested, that the rebels were extremely selective in the personal properties they destroyed and shed very little blood, repression of this uprising took on an especially bloody hue. Pernambuco, Alagoas, and Rio Grande do Norte all blamed the province of Paraíba where the uprising was said to have originated. It was there that the government in Rio de Janeiro would send an Expeditionary Force to crush the uprising.

Initially, all of the provinces believed that a single head could be found to have stirred up and then led the peasants. But Quebra-Quilos was not a Confederation of the Equator or a Praieira Revolt. Quebra-Quilos was a complex mixture of social banditry, resistance to modernization, and opposition to the breaking of moral contracts between peasants and the government—all mixed together. In this situation, general leadership would have been unnecessary. Thus as the months continued, no leader could be found. True, individual heads of bands were discovered, but to discover their identities and whereabouts took a great deal of coercion on the part of the military sent in to repress this uprising. Cries of abuse, violence, thievery, murder, and rape quickly erupted from the peasants. But still no leader could be found. In 1875, a popular folk tune, credited to Pedro Joaquim d'Alcantara César and reprinted by Armando Souto Maior in his study of

this uprising, sums up the sentiments of the peasants, particularly with regards to the government suppression:

“I am Quebra-Quilo, wrapped in leather...wife and children rudely violated...In vain, shoeless, my wife and children, under the shining sun, come mourning: they plead for help, charity...but their mournings reach no one!.... Tyrants see so much misery!.... With a bloody beaten face...the vile dishonor of dear family, take my life, so I can die.”<sup>503</sup>

Thus, as is evidenced by this folk song, the peasants, having participated in the Quebra-Quilos uprising, were to suffer the wrath of the government as they attempted, with varying degrees of success, to investigate and crush this uprising. This chapter outlines, through the use of official correspondence, newspapers, and reports of hear-say, the suppression of this uprising, beginning with the province of Paraíba.

### **Paraíba**

Paraíba was the first to experience the Quebra-Quilos uprising and therefore was where the government's process of suppression began. When the revolts began and officials in the towns and cities saw themselves outnumbered, many began abandoning their posts, fleeing to the capitals. By December, “[m]any civil authorities from the interior of Paraíba [had] fled to the capital.”<sup>504</sup> In Ingá, for example, Police Commander Aranha relinquished his command and fled the city, accompanied by a sergeant and another soldier. In fact, the three reportedly travelled so quickly that, although they arrived in the capital on the same day, they supposedly had to change horses sixteen

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<sup>503</sup> As reprinted from 1875 edition in Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 34-35.

<sup>504</sup> *A Província*, 27 Nov. 1874; *A Província*, 2 Dec 1874.



times.<sup>505</sup> Colonel Fonseca, who arrived to repress this uprising, noted that those officials that did not flee to the capital fled into the forests. Many other inhabitants did the same.<sup>506</sup> Silvino Carneiro da Cunha, provincial president of Paraíba, immediately responded to these flights and uprisings by sending a number of messengers, including his secretary, overland and by sea to Recife, Pernambuco, to request help from President Lucena in the form of line troops and a war ship. He also requested President Lucena send a telegraph to Rio de Janeiro, informing them as to what was happening and requesting they send troops.<sup>507</sup>

Telegrams sent to Rio de Janeiro regarding the Paraíba attacks exaggerated the threat, but also quickly sought to quickly place blame for the uprising: “The motives claimed by the rioters, whose number was 1,000, is the Religious Question and the new weights and measures.”<sup>508</sup> Without immediate help it was feared that this revolt would spread to Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Norte. Thus time was of the essence, and the response was not slow in coming.<sup>509</sup> President Lucena, on November 25, reportedly sent an infantry force of soldiers of the line as well as a force from the imperial navy aboard a freight ship.<sup>510</sup> Even a corvette (*Paraense*) and the Eighteenth Infantry Battalion were preparing to go to the aid of Paraíba.<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>505</sup> *A Província*, 27 Nov 1874.

<sup>506</sup> “Quebra-Killos: Relatório do comandante,” 118.

<sup>507</sup> *A Província*, 27 Nov. 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Vaga Pessoa to Lucena, Nov 21, 1874.

<sup>508</sup> Telegrams of Nov 25, 1874 and Nov 26, 1874, as reprinted in *A Província*, 10 Dec 1874.

<sup>509</sup> Horácio de Almeida, “D. Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*. (Vol. 323—Abril-Junho—1979), 165. Both *Revista Ilustrada* and *Jornal do Comércio* also make specific reference to this Nov. 25 Telegram as well. *Revista Ilustrada*, 29 Nov 1874 and *Jornal do Comércio*, 29 Nov 1874.

<sup>510</sup> *A Província*, 10 Dec 1874.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*

J. M. Lopes da Costa, the minister of war, began receiving these telegrams on November 25. The following day, he ordered the steamship *Calderon* leave for Paraíba by way of Pernambuco, with an artillery and infantry contingent and supplies, including 200 muskets and 20,000 *cartuchos* (lead balls) that were to be handed out to the National Guard that would be called up.<sup>512</sup> He immediately informed Paraíba President Carneiro da Cunha that he planned to appoint Brigadeiro Herculano Sanches da Silva Pedra to “crush the movement” (suffocar a sedição incipiente).<sup>513</sup> They were to land in Pernambuco first to take on additional gunpowder and artillery shells for at least enough for 400 to 500 shots, along with horses and mules before it set off for Paraíba.<sup>514</sup> En route, however, since da Silva Pedra was currently stationed in Bahia, the *Calderon* would have to take yet another detour to pick him up en route. Along with this official, he was sending 400 soldiers of the line from the Fourteenth Infantry Battalion and a half battery of artillery, including three mountain cannons with twenty-two troops and two officials to service them.<sup>515</sup>

Nonetheless, it would not be da Silva Pedra, but Colonel Severiano Martins da Fonseca (brother of Deodoro Fonseca, the general who would proclaim Brazil a Republic in 1889) who would, on November 28, receive orders assigning him the task of

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<sup>512</sup> APEJE, Códice Minsiterio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 151, Minister of War J. M. Lopes da Costa, to Lucena, Nov 26, 1874 and APEJE, Códice Minsterio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 152-153, Lopes da Costa to Carneiro da Cunha, Nov 26, 1874.

<sup>513</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 29.

<sup>514</sup> APEJE, Códice Minsterio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 152-153, Lopes da Costa, to Carneiro da Cunha, Nov 26, 1874 and APEJE, Códice Minsiterio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 151, Lopes da Costa to Lucena, Nov 26, 1874; APEJE, Códice Minsiterio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 157, Lopes da Costa to Lucena, Nov 29, 1874 and APEJE, Códice Minsiterio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 169, Lopes da Costa to Lucena, Dec 10, 1874

<sup>515</sup> APEJE, Códice Minsterio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 152-153, Lopes da Costa to Carneiro da Cunha, Nov 26, 1874.

suppressing this revolt in the province of Paraíba.<sup>516</sup> Fonseca left Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro, the following day, November 29, with a portion of the Fourteenth Infantry Battalion, and headed for Paraíba. Traveling on the *Leopoldina* (rather than the *Calderon*, which also left from Rio de Janeiro), accompanying him was the captain of the First Infantry Battalion, Antonio Carlos da Silva Piragibe, who later became one of the most effective officers at crushing the uprising.<sup>517</sup> Thus the line force sent by the Imperial government on both ships, comprising the Fourteenth Infantry Battalion and the Seventeenth Wing, altogether formed a sizeable force—a total of 750 soldiers and forty-seven officers under the command of Colonel Severiano da Fonseca. Then, with the police forces already in Paraíba that would be added to the soldiers under his command, he had 1,023 troops to repress this revolt.<sup>518</sup>

Colonel Severiano arrived in Paraíba on December 7. President Carneiro da Cunha sent him orders on the tenth, ordering that he split his forces in two, taking the first, made up of the Eighteenth Battalion, and go by way of Alagoa-Grande, to Mamanguape. En route, all participants in the Quebra-Quilos revolt, especially the leaders, were to be arrested. Once done, the soldiers were to proceed to the city of Areia and do the same. The second group, made up of 1,509 men of the Fourteenth Battalion, should go to Campina Grande by way of Pilar and Ingá, with the same instructions to

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<sup>516</sup> “Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante,” 101.

<sup>517</sup> Also accompanying and also becoming especially important for the repression, were the Ensign of the Second Cavalry Artillery Regiment (Regimento de Artilharia a Cavallo) Esequiel José Gonçalves de Macedo, and the Ensign of the First Light Cavalry Regiment Raphael Nunes Pereira who would form a piquet of cavalry in Paraíba. See APEJE, *Código Minsiterio da Guerra*, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 157, Lopes da Costa to Lucena, Nov 29, 1874 and “Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante,” 101, *Revista Ilustrada*, Nov 29, 1874, *Jornal do Comércio*, Nov 29, 1874.

<sup>518</sup> De Almeida, “D. Vital e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil,” 165 and de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*. (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1958), 144; Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 148.

arrest all Quebra-Quilos participants. The increase in numbers of soldiers under Fonseca's command is difficult to satisfactorily explain. Perhaps the continual barracking of national guardsmen accounts for this, or perhaps the additional support came from nearby provinces. Or perhaps he exaggerated his numbers. This second group was also given the added chore of attacking the settlements of Quemados, followed by Serra dos Pontes and Serra Redonda.<sup>519</sup>

Thus Colonel Fonseca's forces took two principle routes, a northern one and a more central one. Just the arrival of these troops to Paraíba allowed President Carneiro da Cunha a reprieve: "Here," he bragged to President Lucena on the thirteenth, "the sedicious movements have now completely ceased," although he was sure to note that a number of towns such as Independencia and Bananeiras were still completely without any troops and eagerly awaiting the Expeditionary Force.<sup>520</sup> President Carneiro da Cunha also was sure to mention that Fathers Ibiapina and Calixto da Nóbrega were the principle authors of this agitation. Although there is little evidence to collaborate this allegation, *A Provincia* reported that Colonel Fonseca arrested Father Ibiapina, the septagenarian from Ceará during his march.<sup>521</sup>

Arriving at Ingá on the nineteenth, Colonel Fonseca found the town quiet and everything in peace. While there, however, he received word that Serra Redonda and Serra do Pontes, nearby, were both infested with armed rioters. Fonseca immediately sent soldiers from Rio de Janeiro, led by Captain Piragibe, to confirm the report with

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<sup>519</sup> "Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante," 101, 131.

<sup>520</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 346, Carneiro da Cunha to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874.

<sup>521</sup> *A Provincia*, Dec 8, 1874.

orders to arrest all that were implicated in the agitation in Ingá. These soldiers made up a light cavalry and infantry force that set off at midnight.<sup>522</sup>

The troops set off towards Serra do Pontes. After marching for two hours, they began arresting everyone within four leagues of the road, all reportedly implicated in the attacks in Ingá. Once making the arrests in Serra do Pontes, and not wanting to be slowed down with all those arrested, Piragibe left them behind under the guard of sixteen infantry troops. Captain Piragibe led the rest of the soldiers as well as a cavalry piquet directly to Serra Redonda. They arrived at 4:30 am and encircled the town. The townspeople of Serra Redonda resisted, but Captain Piragibe was nonetheless able to make numerous arrests.<sup>523</sup>

Following these arrests, Captain Piragibe decided to head to Cafula and Riachão. Arriving at Cafula at 8:00 am, Piragiba's forces discovered the rioters hiding in a ravine and in the woods. Resisting arrests, shots were fired, but no blood was spilt. Following Cafula, Piragibe and Esequiel headed towards Riachão. Arrests were made en route to Riachão, and the soldiers encountered very little resistance. By the time they entered Riachão at 1:00 pm, they had fifty-six prisoners in tow, nearly all credited with being key participants ("motores") of the Quebra-Quilos uprising. These fifty-six prisoners were soon sent to the capital for President da Cunha to decide their fates. The soldiers, after a short rest, proceeded to "pacify" the remainder of the population.<sup>524</sup>

The Expeditionary Force then made its way to Campina Grande, making as many arrests as they could along the way. When Fonseca entered Campina Grande on the

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<sup>522</sup> See "Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante," 103.

<sup>523</sup> "Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante," 103-4.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid., 104-5

morning of the twenty-fifth, he did so “with a large number of men imprisoned from the places we passed.”<sup>525</sup> Captain Piragibe and his troops met up with him there, as did Miguel Guedes do Nascimento, an inhabitant of Ingá who offered his services and those of sixty men.<sup>526</sup>

Two days later, Fonseca sent out Captain Piragibe to the smaller outlying town with instructions to arrest all accused within a three league radius, “and at the same time proceed with vigorous recruitment.”<sup>527</sup> But, when the soldiers arrived at Pocinhos they were confronted with armed rioters hidden in the hills. When the rioters fired on them they were unable to return fire as those shooting were hidden from view. The following day, Piragibe was able to convince some local citizens to help, and, with that help, was able to pursue and apprehend a number of the rebels.<sup>528</sup>

Amidst the hustle and bustle of repression, perhaps as early as December 5, Fonseca had placed Captain José Longuinho da Costa Leite in charge of rooting out the rebels from the city of Areia, while leaving Captain Piragibe in charge in Campina Grande.<sup>529</sup> Captain Longuinho, in particular, was noted for his cruelty. Horácio de Almeida noted that by the time Longuinho had arrived, order had been practically reestablished. But, ordered to arrest the guilty, Longuinho made mass arrests, in blind and inhuman persecution, as de Almeida describes, arresting many who had nothing to do with the uprising. When Longuinho could not find any guilty people, he ordered that his soldiers arrest the fathers and sons, torturing them in order to find the location of the

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<sup>525</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>527</sup> The towns were Pedro de Godo, Lagôa do Catolé, and Pocinhos. “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do comandante,” 107.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid., 107-8.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid., 108; Horácio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*, 144.

fugitives.<sup>530</sup> Upon making arrests, according to eyewitness Almino Álvares Afonso, Longuinho then invented the “colete de couro” in which a wide strip of leather was wetted after which it was “wrapped around the unhappy victim from the neck to the waist.”<sup>531</sup> The prisoners were then sent to the capital and en route the leather would begin to dry, shrinking as it did so. As it shrunk, the victim’s internal organs would begin to crush, he would begin to asphyxiate, and they would begin to bleed from their mouths.<sup>532</sup>

Hundreds of people of all ages were imprisoned, subjected to the *colete de couro* and sent, eventually, to Rio de Janeiro.<sup>533</sup> One, Antonio Candeia Cuimarães, who had been a leader of a group of Quebra-Quilos, went crazy en route as a result of the beatings the troops gave him.<sup>534</sup> Once they arrived in the capital, they were brought before President Carneiro da Cunha where, “whether young boys or old men, guilty or innocent,” they would be recruited into the military.<sup>535</sup> In the midst of this, it was not Longuinho, but the provincial police chief that was responsible for passing judgement and processing.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> Horácio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*, 144, Horácio de Almeida, “D. Vital,” 166.

<sup>531</sup> Almino Álvares Afonso, *Uma nota Sobre o Quebra-Quilos da Paraíba do Norte*. (Mossoró, RN, Brasil: Fundação Vingt-un Rosado—Coleção Mossoroense, 2002), 36, note c.

<sup>532</sup> Horácio de Almeida, *Brejo de Areia*, 144.

<sup>533</sup> Joffily, *Notas Sobre a Parahyba*, 187.

<sup>534</sup> *A Província*, Dec 29, 1874.

<sup>535</sup> Afonso, *Uma nota Sobre o Quebra-Quilos*, 21.

<sup>536</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 34 and Geraldo Irineo Joffily, “O Quebra-Quilo. A Revolt dos matutos contra os doutores (1874),” 126-7. Chief of Police Manoel Caldas Barreto would therefore take credit for the arrest of Father Calixto da Nóbrega. See Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 39, *Resposta do District judge da County de Campina Grande Bacharel Antonio da Trindade A. M. Henrique Ao Relatorio do Dr. Chefe de Policia Manoel Caldas Barreto sobre os movimentos rioters havidos n’esta Província, Apresentado ao Exm. Sr. President da mesma Dr. Silvino Elvidio C. da Cunha. Em 23 de Fevereiro de 1875*. (Parahyba: Typ. Conservadora, 1875), Document 4, and AN, Fundo IJ1 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 25, 1875.

Innumerable cries of abuse erupted from the populace, against the soldiers of both Longuinho and Piragibe, although Longuinho's name was shouted with much more frequency than that of Piragibe. Manoel Alexandre de Viveiros, who was hiding in the *engenho* (sugar estate) Mineiro, was imprisoned and flogged to such an extent that his screams were carried afar. Viveiros had been accused of leading the uprising in Alagoa Novo of November 21, 1874; many other were similarly flogged, reported de Almeida, even many who had not even participated in the uprising.<sup>537</sup>

Women and children were also reportedly abused by the soldiers. Afonso witnessed the death of "a child of four months that was brutally cut up...and abandoned in the forest, for the ravens and the dogs to eat."<sup>538</sup> But more than child abuse, rape was often claimed as well. Soldiers would, argued Afonso, hold the fathers at knife point while raping their daughters. Afterwards, the fathers and brothers would be arrested and sent to the capital.<sup>539</sup> The newspaper, *O Despertador*, a liberal publication, also accused the soldiers of attacking the peaceful inhabitants of the settlements in the middle of the night, arresting and beating them, sacking the houses, raping the daughters, and violating the wives. In one instance, these inhabitants were then bound with cords and brought to a central place, though what for can only be surmised.<sup>540</sup> Irineo Joffily, writing in 1892, argued that in Pocinho, Captain Piragibe and his piquet of cavalry invaded the town while all of the inhabitants were attending mass. Adjacent to the church was a large circle in a

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<sup>537</sup> Horácio de Almeida, *Breja de Areia*, 144. The others were Mathias de Hollanda Chacom, Ignacio de Manoel Joaquim, Manoel de Mendonça, Patricio Gomes Everino, Cabo Brito, Porfirio de tal. See AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, From the Chief of Police (of Paraíba) Manoel Caldas Barreto to da Cuna (Pres. Paraíba), 3 Feb 1875.

<sup>538</sup> Afonso, *Uma nota sobre o Quebra-Quilos*, 16.

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>540</sup> "Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante," 127.



square into which he ordered all of the town's inhabitants to enter. He then allowed the old and infirm to leave, and chose forty men that appeared to be "robust," tied them in cords, and then sent them to Campina Grande where they were thrown in prison.<sup>541</sup>

Word of such atrocities soon reached Colonel Fonseca. He admitted that there were indeed a few soldiers that "forgot the honor owed to the uniform" and who were guilty of robbery, but that they had been punished severely. Captain Longuinho, in particular, had been pointed out to Fonseca as being "excessive" with the prisoners. But, Fonseca claimed, Longuinho stopped entirely when he was talked to, by way of a circular sent by Fonseca on January 13 to Captain Longuinho, who was still in the city of Areia.<sup>542</sup> Longuinho denied having sent children or the innocent to the capital, but only those who had been implicated in the sedition or those who were recognized thieves and assassins. These prisoners were guilty and therefore "should not be given any consideration."<sup>543</sup> He denied the shedding of blood of the prisoners, or other accusations of abuse, these he denied, although he admitted, as had Fonseca, that some soldiers did indeed commit acts of violence and robbery, but paid dearly for it.<sup>544</sup>

It was not merely the regular soldiers that were accused of abuse, but police forces and the National Guard as well.<sup>545</sup> But then again, the line between police and soldier quickly blurred. To reestablish order and facilitate the arrests, Captain Longuinho was appointed police commissioner of Areia, Captain Virginio José Espinola was appointed police commissioner of Lagôa Nova, and Captain Francisco Joaquim Pereira

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<sup>541</sup> Irineu Joffily, *Notas sobre a Parahyba*, 89-90.

<sup>542</sup> "Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante," 126.

<sup>543</sup> Reprint of letter from Longuinho to Fonseca, Jan 17, 1875, in "Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante," 136.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-7..

<sup>545</sup> "A Circular From Fonseca," 13 Jan 1875, reprinted in "Quebra-Kilos: Relatorio do commandante," 133.

Caldes was appointed police commissioner of Lagôa Grande. This way, argued Fonseca, since they were not from those regions they could in an unbiased manner carry out the “march of justice.”<sup>546</sup> By the third week in January, the police chief had finished all of the processing of the accused in Ingá and moved on to Campina Grande, then proceeded to Alagoa Nova, Alagoa Grande, Independência, and finished processing all of the guilty there by the end of February.<sup>547</sup> The key regions which, by mid-February, were occupied and therefore pacified by the military were the following:<sup>548</sup>

Campina Grande	50
Areia	28
Ingá	23
S. João	22
Cabaceira	22
Alagoa do Monteiro	16
Alagoa Grande	16
Alagoa Nova	16
Total Troops	193

Paraíba’s suppression proves to be among the bloodiest of all of the provinces. This I attribute to claims by the provincial governments—Paraíba included—and the central government in Rio de Janeiro that since it was here that the uprising originated it should therefore be here that it should be first and foremost suppressed. When the Expeditionary Forces arrived to investigate and discover the leaders, however, they found that not only was there no overall leader, but the minor participants-as-leaders, such as João Carga d’Água, were difficult to find and the movement itself, as a result of this lack of leadership, could not quickly nor quietly be suppressed. Thus the relatively non-

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<sup>546</sup> “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do comandante,” 108.

<sup>547</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Francisco de Correia to Carneiro da Cunha, Feb 13, 1875; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 318, Carneiro da Cunha to Visconde do Rio Branco, Feb 20, 1875.

<sup>548</sup> “Quebra-Kilos: Relatório do comandante,” 122. Note that this is just the Fourteenth Battalion.

violent nature of the revolt was met with violent repression by the government, until finally, towards February, the uprisings began to die out. The leaders were all imprisoned and processed, and participants that were not considered leaders were recruited into the military.

### ***Pernambuco***

In Pernambuco, the repression of the uprisings was quite different than that of Paraíba, principally due to the lack of an expeditionary force, such as the one led by Colonel Fonseca. President Lucena of Pernambuco did request help from Rio de Janeiro, which arrived in the form of soldiers of the line, but no expeditionary force. Instead, these soldiers, combined with the calling up of the National Guard and extensive use of police forces, sought to repress this uprising quite sporadically. Thus, in short, no concerted, organized suppression of the revolt occurred. Pernambuco reacted to each uprising separately, attempting to squash them individually. Blaming Paraíba, they claimed many of the rioters came from that province, destroyed weights and scales, returned to Paraíba. It was difficult to find them and Lucena instead sought to send all available personnel to assist in suppressing the revolt at what was seen as its source: Paraíba.

Following the revolts in Paraíba, then, Pernambuco experienced many similar uprisings. Sending a telegram to Rio de Janeiro, President Lucena stated on November 25, "The same disorders" occurred in the town of Bom Jardim in the county of Limoeiro, which is adjacent to two of the counties of Paraíba. Thus he sent to Paraíba that very day, according to this telegram, a line infantry force, and a force of the imperial navy. He was

also preparing to send the *Recife*, a steamship of war and, on the twenty-sixth, he planned to send the corvette *Paraense* and part of the Eighteenth Infantry Battalion.<sup>549</sup>

News poured into Recife of President Carneiro da Cunha's attempts to crush the uprising, followed by numerous requests for support. So Lucena sent an additional forty-five troops to assist him.<sup>550</sup> But by this time, the uprising had spread to the province of Pernambuco. Just as in Paraíba, officials found themselves overwhelmed by rioters and without sufficient forces to put them down. A telegram sent to Rio de Janeiro summed it up thus: "In the interior, there are no forces to stop them."<sup>551</sup> Officials now began to flee, leading President Lucena to order that all civil authorities remain in their official residences and to mobilize the National Guard.<sup>552</sup>

In Itambé, across the provincial boundary from Pilar in Paraíba, which had just been assaulted by approximately 500 people around 8 pm, the "peaceful" inhabitants requested help from the authorities lest they be attacked next, arguing that "If a respectable force does not come here immediately terrible things will happen." And even though Lucena immediately sent troops to support the town, it proved insufficient, and many inhabitants had begun abandoning their houses and fleeing the vicinity.<sup>553</sup> On November 30, this town was attacked "by a large group while this force was in the town."

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<sup>549</sup> Telegram of Nov 25, 1874, as printed in *A Provincia*, Dec 10, 1874.

<sup>550</sup> Telegram of Nov 27, 1874, reprinted in *A Provincia*, Dec 10, 1874. Also noted in *Jornal do Comércio*, Dec 6, 1874 and Dec 12, 1874 and *Revista Ilustrada*, Dec 6, 1874 and Dec 12, 1874.

<sup>551</sup> Telegram of Nov 26, 1874, reprinted in *A Provincia*, Dec 10, 1874.

<sup>552</sup> *A Provincia*, Dec 2, 1874.

<sup>553</sup> APEJE, Códice "Offícios Diversos," 1874-79, MS24, Juiz Municipal dos Orphaos to Lucena, 26 Nov 1874; APEJE, Códice "Offícios Diversos," 1874-79, MS29, from promotor público of the County of Itambé, Vasconcellos, to Lucena, Nov 30, 1874; Telegram of 27 Nov 1874, reprinted in *A Provincia*, 10 Dec 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874; APEJE, Códice "Offícios Diversos," 1874-79, MS24, Juiz Municipal dos Orfãos to Lucena, Nov 26, 1874.

Lucena sent troops both marching as well as via steamship, ordering all guilty of leading a revolt be arrested.<sup>554</sup>

Following the arrival of the troops, the commander of the public force, Captain Capistrano, began to redistribute the weights and measures of the metric system at the market on December 7, in which about 600 people attended. The police commissioner then stayed behind with a number of troops to assure compliance and to arrest many who were suspected as having led the uprising, arresting two in particular as having been the leaders. Of those arrested, a number were freed because they had clearly not participated and because, perhaps more importantly, they were seen as unfit to send to the capital for recruitment.<sup>555</sup>

Bom Jardim had also been attacked around December 2. By now, Itambé as well, the uprisings were expected and the town records hidden. Like many other officials, the district judge had already fled, and the county judge was in charge. Later accounts claimed that he acted in such a manner that his “loyalty and behavior are suspect” and his conduct investigated.<sup>556</sup> Perhaps this was one reason many officials fled; those that remained were in part blamed for not successfully repressing the riots. Such absences had consequences, of course. The commander of the National Guard, for example, was away from his troops statikoned in the town on the night of the attack. Without clear authority to act, they apparently did not. The rioters destroyed the

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<sup>554</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874 and Dec 5, 1874

<sup>555</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Mecina de Vasconcelos to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Captain Pedro de Alcantara Tiberio Capistrano to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874.

<sup>556</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874.

weights and measures of the town and left. Pernambucan officials claimed they came from Paraíba and had returned there following the destruction.<sup>557</sup>

The minister of war ordered on December 16 that all of the heads of the sedition be arrested. Those that were not actual heads should be recruited ("if they do not have exemptions") and be sent to Rio de Janeiro "at the first opportunity."<sup>558</sup> President Lucena and Carneiro da Cunha were

already doing this, but they now stepped it up a notch. In Itambé, the police commissioner, João Pires Ferreira, reported arresting on December 7-8 twenty inhabitants that had participated in the November 30 uprising, though he

Locality	Regular troops	National Guard
Iguarassú	20	
São Bento	16	
Guaranhuns	25	
Panellas	55	
Palmares	20	20
Gravatá	15	
Brejo		40
Caruarú	40	
Goianna	50	
Bonito		30-40
Source: <sup>1</sup>		

ended up freeing eleven of them, ostensibly for being neither heads nor eligible for recruitment.<sup>559</sup> Provincial Police Chief Antonio Francisco Correia de Araújo sent literally dozens of lists of prisoners being sent to the capital who were not legally exempted from recruitment.<sup>560</sup>

<sup>557</sup> Ibid; AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874 and Dec 5, 1874. The 16th Battalion of the national Guard would remain stationed in the city to ensure peace. See APEJE, Códice Ministério da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 185, Lopes da Costa to Lucena, Dec 24, 1874.

<sup>558</sup> APEJE, Códice Minsiterio da Guerra, MG11, 1874-1875, MS 172, Lopes da Costa to Lucena, Dec 16, 1874. Also see APEJE, Códice "Officios Diversos," 1874-79, MS49, Vasconcellos to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874.

<sup>559</sup> Of those that he did not free, he was careful to note that all but one was unmarried and the one that was was separated from his wife. The other two were not mere participants, but alleged heads of the movement. APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil 140, Outubro-December 1874, MS349-351, Police commissioner of Itambé, João Pires Ferreira to Correia de Araujo, Dec 8, 1874 and APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil 140, Outubro-December 1874, MS352, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 12, 1874.

<sup>560</sup> APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil 140, Outubro-December 1874, MS352, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 12, 1874, MS 358, Idem, Dec 15, 1874, MS363, Idem., Dec 16, 1874, MS371, Idem., Dec 18, 1874, MS372,

Nearly every major town, particularly those closest to Paraíba, now received combined National Guard and regular troop forces, as can the selection demonstrates in the attached table. At times, those being called up in the National Guard were more sympathetic to the rioters than the government. One particular example stands out. President Lucena ordered the commander of the National Guard, João Vieira de Mello e Silva to call into active service the national guardsmen from Caruarú and Panellas. Among those Mello e Silva activated was a Manoel Francisco da Costa. Da Costa, however, refused to follow orders and declared that not only would he *not* take up arms to defend the government, but declared his would take up arms *against* it. As a result, Mello e Silva ordered a patrol of the National Guard to arrest him. When the guardsmen arrived at his house, they were confronted by the Manoel da Costa's father, João Francisco da Costa, who refused to allow his son to be arrested. Threatening to shoot the national guardsmen if they proceeded further in arresting his son, he was evidently ignored, after which two of the guards were seriously wounded. The troops return-fired against João da Costa, killing him.<sup>561</sup>

When possible, loyal citizens were recruited to help put down the riots. In Nazareth, the Baron of Tracunhãem approached Lucena, offering his services to put down these agitations. As police commissioner in Nazareth, it was natural that he would

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Idem., Dec 18, 1874, MS376, Idem., Dec 18, 1874, MS379, Idem., Dec 19, 1874, MS414, Idem., Dec 21, 1874, MS424, Idem., Dec 24, 1874, MS426, Idem., Dec 26, 1874, MS429, Idem., Dec 26, 1874, MS431, Idem Dec 26, 1874, MS452, Idem., Dec 30, 1874, MS456, Idem., Dec 30, 1874, MS468, Idem., Dec 30, 1874.

<sup>561</sup> APEJE, Códice "Offícios Diversos," 1874-79, MS222, Supreme Commander of the National Guard of the counties of Caruarú and Panellas, João Vieira de Mello e Silva to Lucena, Dec 27, 1874, APEJE, Códice "Offícios Diversos," 1874-79, MS224, County Judge from the municipal district of Caruarú, Antonio Paulino Cavalcante d'Albuquerque to Lucena, Dec 27, 1874, and APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil 140, Outubro-December 1874, MS468, Correia de Araujo to Lucena, Dec 30, 1874.

work to put down this uprising, leading groups of volunteer citizens against the agitators. For this purpose, Lucena sent him arms and ammunition, and accepted his support in leading his followers to nearby towns and settlements to suppress the uprising.<sup>562</sup> Thus on Sunday, December 6, he and his forces assisted at the market of Angelica, though arriving too late, the weights and measures having been already broken. But he did manage to arrest and imprison eleven rioters.<sup>563</sup> Arms and ammunition were handed out to citizens willing to help the authorities.<sup>564</sup> Still, the uprisings kept occurring. Luis de Albuquerque Maranhão, the commander of the flying detachment in Bom Jardim, found a good number of landowners willing to volunteer the service of their *agregados/moradores* to repress this uprising. Lieutenant Colonel Gonçalves Guerra (a *senhor de engenho*), put 300 men at his disposition, the Lieutenant Colonel José Cabrar de Oliveira Mello (also a *senhor de engenho*) offered more men from his two *engenhos*, and Luis Francisco Goiao, the *senhor de engenho* (named *Aurora*), placed all of his inhabitants as well as those inhabitants of his relatives which lived nearby at the disposition of Maranhão.<sup>565</sup>

In Pernambuco, then, President Lucena sent out as many troops as he felt he could afford (he would always keep about 400 to protect the capital of Recife) as he believed the Quebra-Quilos to be a Paraíban problem with Paraíbans invading Pernambuco. He

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<sup>562</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>563</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, J. Mircano to Lucena, Dec 9, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena, "Para o Povo da County q1ue altere a Ordem Publica," 9 Dec 1874. Also see AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Luiz d'Albuquerque Maranhão to Lucena, Dec 8, 1874 and *Relatorio Apresentado á Assembléa Geral Legislativa na Quarta Sessão da Decima Quinta Legislatura pelo Ministro e Secretario de Estado dos Negocios da Justiça Dr. Manoel Antonio Duarte de Azevedo*. (Rio de Janeiro: Typographica Americana, 1875), 6-7.

<sup>564</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Mello Filho to Lucena, Dec 18, 1874.

<sup>565</sup> APEJE, Códice Guarda Nacional (GN), 82, 1874, MS585, Luiz de Albuquerque Maranhão to Lucena, Dec 11, 1874.



was in part correct, as many invasions did indeed occur, and thanks to his timely sending of soldiers, many were also repelled. But Lucena was in reality missing the larger picture. If he knew what was causing this uprising in Paraíba, he should have known it would also occur in Pernambuco by Pernambucans themselves. Thus nearly all of the towns, via police commissioners, deputy commissioners, etc., would thank Lucena for sending troops and then clamor for more. Soon there were at least 1,000 National Guardsmen to support the five hundred or so police spread throughout the province.<sup>566</sup> Armando Souto Maior noted the following troop dispersal throughout the province, although this does not differentiate between National Guard and regular line troops, nor police troops, nor does this take into account the *forças volantes* moving throughout:

County	Number of Troops
Recife	474
Garanhuns/Bom Conselho	40
Buique	30
Barreiros/Agua Preta	20
Brejo/Cimbres	40
Flores/Ingazeira	40
Nazaré	40
Caruarú	40
Boa Vista/Ouricuri	40
Cabrobó	40
Exu/Tacaratu	40
Floresta/Bonito	60
Total	944

Source: Souto Maior, 100.

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<sup>566</sup> Also see Monteiro, *Crise Agrária*, 148.

The district judge of Caruarú, for example, gratefully acknowledged the fifty troops Lucena had sent him on December 10. But, he argued, the public was still in a state of agitation and there were rioters that were threatening to invade his city. He therefore asked for many more troops.<sup>567</sup> In another city, the district judge took another approach: “I am sure you will send troops to this town,” he wrote to Lucena, as there are only 12 police here, but twenty-two prisoners.<sup>568</sup> The district attorney wrote on December 16 that his county was in complete “anarchy” and without protection; there were only six soldiers and if attacked they would be unable to put up any resistance.<sup>569</sup> Bom Conselho, as well, requested more troops.<sup>570</sup> With all of these requests, Lucena turned to the closest province which did not appear to be encountering Quebra-Quilos rioters: Bahia. Bahia, in response, sent a half battalion to his support.<sup>571</sup>

In Bonito on the nineteenth, the rioters “were attacking from doors and windows” to get to the archives. Lucena had already sent a number of troops to the city, and they managed to push back the rioters, though not before serious violence had erupted, one soldier being seriously wounded by a projectile to his head.<sup>572</sup> More troops were quickly sent for. The added soldiers, the police commissioner, and district attorney, sought to restore order and arrest the guilty through midnight arrests, causing additional resistance.<sup>573</sup> The district attorney then sought to bring all guilty in nearby areas to

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<sup>567</sup> AN IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Duarte de Azevedo to Lucena, Dec 13, 1874.

<sup>568</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correa da Silva to Lucena, Dec 14, 1874.

<sup>569</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Lucena to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 5, 1874.

<sup>570</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Ceciliano dos Santos Barros to Lucena, Dec 20, 1874.

<sup>571</sup> *A Provincia*, Dec 10, 1874.

<sup>572</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Pessoa de Cunha to Lucena, Dec 20, 1874.

<sup>573</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Correia de Silva to Lucena, Dec 22, 1874.

Bonito: “It would be good if all the denounced or processed,” he argued, “were sent to this prison to serve as a solemn example.”<sup>574</sup>

Officials, faced with riots they had failed to prevent, now utilized their newly-arrived soldiers to convince the peasants to resume paying taxes. In the market of Capoeiras, for example, twenty soldiers sought to convince, through threat of force, the participants to resume the payment of their taxes.<sup>575</sup> By December 19, the district attorney of Nazareth reported that all arrests had been completed and that they were now ready to begin the judicial proceedings.<sup>576</sup> The following week (December 24), that town contained two prisons full, all ready to be recruited into the armed forces.<sup>577</sup> The following day one of the last uprisings occurred. While a large group—4,000 according to the detachment commander—was waiting to celebrate mass, a group of 400-500 went and attacked the district judge. This officer had only four soldiers with him that day, and was forced to back down without a fight.<sup>578</sup>

Once the riots ended, the quest to find the leaders increased. Nearly all arrests seem to have taken place in the middle of the night. On January 2, 3, 4, and 5, the captain of the flying detachment, Antônio Raimundo Lins Caldas, raided houses, searching for all those accused of having participated, sending a list of fifteen he had captured during those four nights to President Lucena.<sup>579</sup> The peasants now resisted. On

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<sup>574</sup> APEJE, Códice promotor público, PJ9, 1874-1875, MS321, Barros Francos to Lucena, Jan 9, 1875.

<sup>575</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Police commander of Capoeiras, Francisco Carneiro Machado Rios to Lucena, Dec 19, 1874.

<sup>576</sup> APEJE, Códice District attorney PJ9, 1874-1875, MS260, District attorney of the county of Nazareth, José Cavalcante d’Albuquerque Uchôa to Lucena, Dec 19, 1874.

<sup>577</sup> *A Província*, Dec 24, 1874.

<sup>578</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 346, Commander of detachment of Triunpho José Benedicto Bages Ramos to Lucena, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>579</sup> Souto Maior, *Quebra-Quilos*, 141.

January 5, Antonio José de Andrade, police commissioner of the municipal district of Floresta, received word that many of the inhabitants in his municipal district had been counseling each other to get ahold of guns, gunpowder, and lead like the rioters had done in order to protect themselves from the troops. The government, they claimed, was attempting to get rid of religion, capture the people, free the rest of the slaves, and take all of their cattle.<sup>580</sup>

Settlements, such as that of Itapissuma were occupied by the troops: “Today, for merely breaking some measures in this single act of violence, the government has employed violent methods to exterminate the population,” complained *A Provincia*, also lamenting on the ninth that the troops were imprisoning everyone in Victoria, even seven year-old children, although these were soon released.<sup>581</sup> And in Caruarú, an inhabitant of the town sent a letter to be reprinted in the newspaper, complaining that the true culprits of the sedition were not being punished, but those that had nothing to do with it.<sup>582</sup> The following day, January 16, in Caruarú, the superior commander of the national guard began to beat one of the nine sons of an old man, who quickly came to his son’s rescue. The commander then turned on the old man, shooting him twice, stabbing him nine times, and cutting him up quite badly, killing him. “This is the type of thing the agents of the government are doing,” argued *A Provincia*, which is “1,000 times worse than the Quebra-Quilos, who respected the property and lives of citizens being content with

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<sup>580</sup> APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS8, Police commissioner of municipal district of Floresta, Antonio José de Andrade, to Cavalcante de Albuquerque, Jan 5, 1875.

<sup>581</sup> *A Provincia*, Jan 6, 1875; *A Provincia*, Jan 9, 1875.

<sup>582</sup> *A Provincia*, Jan 15, 1875.

breaking the weights and measures.”<sup>583</sup> In Bom Jardim, one person reported, “every day here in Bom Jardim more and more prisoners are filling the jail”—thirty-five in a single room, the room acting as a make-shift prison.<sup>584</sup> With reports of soldiers raping the daughters of the inhabitants of Caruarú, it’s no wonder the town quickly became deserted. When one of the town’s inhabitants died, nobody was brave enough to bring the body to the church for a funeral and he was therefore buried in the woods.<sup>585</sup>

By mid-January 1875, more and more reports began to be sent by governmental officials of their successful suppression, enforced collection of taxes, and reimplementation of the metric system. Predencio Pessoa do Diego, police commissioner from the municipal district of São Bento, for example, reported that “In this municipal district, the authorities have collected the municipal and provincial taxes...I have done the best I could to re-implement the metric system.”<sup>586</sup> Throughout January and February arrests continued, the jails filled, and the accused were either processed or sent for recruitment to the capital. Dr. Sebastião do Rego Barros arrived at Bonito from Recife on January 17 and immediately set to work processing those that had been arrested for taking part in the December 19 uprising, meaning those deemed to have been leaders or, as the police commissioner stated, “individuals that distinguished themselves in the December 19 sedicious movement.”<sup>587</sup> Prisoners kept pouring into the cities from the outlying settlements. On February 6, the Ensign Augusto da Silva Rocha arrived in

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<sup>583</sup> *A Província*, Jan 16, 1875. *A Província* on Dec 29, 1874 also reported a citizen which had been cut up by a sword after coming to the place where his brother had been assassinated.

<sup>584</sup> *A Província*, Jan 22, 1875.

<sup>585</sup> *A Província*, Jan 23, 1875 and *Ibid.*, Jan 26, 1875

<sup>586</sup> APEJE, *Código Polícia Civil*, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS12, Police commissioner of municipal district of São Bento, Predencio Pessoa do Diego to Lucena, Jan 16, 1875.

<sup>587</sup> APEJE, *Código Polícia Civil*, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS38, Police commissioner of municipal district of Bonito, Odilon Austriniliano Brayner to Lucena, Jan 28, 1875.

Panellas from Garanhuns with his twelve regular soldiers carrying seven prisoners in tow, adding them to the “many prisoners in the jail of this town.”<sup>588</sup> Two weeks later, in Itambé, a new police commissioner arrived to assume his post and was handed a list of eighty-seven criminals that had participated in the uprising that he should arrest.<sup>589</sup>

Although by the end of February the prisons were still reportedly full and soldiers were continually taking recruits to the capital, on March 3 it appeared as if the emergency had finally abated, as the National Guard detachments began to be dissolved. By April 10, the remainder had been dismissed, with one of the last groups of prisoners awaiting transport to the capital.<sup>590</sup>

Whether the brutality really reached the level that *A Provincia* complained about is less important than the fact that by January, the government was finally able to call up enough guardsmen, requisition enough soldiers, and arm enough citizens to crush this uprising. The government did not impose centrally-controlled efforts in Pernambuco as it had in Paraíba, but it was just as successful at quelling these agitations.

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<sup>588</sup> APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS45, Police commissioner of municipal district of Panelas, Gondim to Lucena, 6 Feb 1875.

<sup>589</sup> APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS52, Police commissioner of Itambé João Francisco da Silva Braga to Lucena, Feb 18, 1875.

<sup>590</sup> APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS57-58, Police commissioner of municipal district of Bom Conselho Manoel Corte de M[illegible] to Lucena, Feb 27, 1875, APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS59, Ibid, APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS60, Sartyro Ferreira Leite to Lucena, March 4, 1875, APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS63, Ibid., March 21, 1875, APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS64-65, Pereira do Largo to Lucena, April 4, 1875. APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS68, Police commissioner of Granito, Simão Geraldo de C[illegible] to Lucena, April 21, 1875; APEJE, Códice Polícia Civil, 141, Jan 1875 to Dec 1878, MS64-65, Pereira do Largo to Lucena, April 4, 1875.

## **Alagoas**

In Alagoas, just south of Pernambuco, a number of characteristics of the Quebra-Quilos rebellion cannot be overly emphasized: First, these uprisings began later in Alagoas than in Pernambuco, which in turn had begun later than in Paraíba. President João Vieira de Araujo, the provincial president of Alagoas, would later blame Paraíba and Pernambuco as well as Rio Grande do Norte as having provoked the movements in his province.<sup>591</sup> Secondly, the intensity of the uprising in Alagoas was not as focused nor as strong as that of either Paraíba or Pernambuco; Alagoas' may better be considered an "agitation" rather than a revolt or uprising. Thirdly, since the Quebra-Quilos agitations were therefore less intense, the suppression was much less severe and intense than in any of the other provinces in which it occurred.

Rumblings of uprisings and agitations began to be felt in Alagoas by the third week in December, leading the provincial president, João Vieira de Araujo, to begin sending troop reinforcements into the interior to quell any projected riots. The National Guard created a flying detachment like had been formed in Pernambuco in order to crush small agitations.<sup>592</sup> The first major riot occurred as a group of 200 descended on the settlement of Mundahú-meirim the following day, in part under the leadership of cotton merchant Antonio Thomaz de Aquino.<sup>593</sup> Then the manifestations spread throughout the province, and President Araujo sent all of the troops he had available in the capital to nip

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<sup>591</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Correia de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, March 4, 1875.

<sup>592</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Ferreira Passos to Vieira de Araujo, Dec 25, 1874.

<sup>593</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Interrogation of scribe of justice of peace and deputy commissioner of district of Mundahú-meirim, Belmiro de Torres Frazão, by Candido Soares Marques, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Martins de Mirand to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 7, 1875, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Rebello de Torres Maio to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 17, 1875, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 25, 1875, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Interrogation of Felix, slave of Antonio Teixeira de Aquino, by Police commissioner Arthur Henrique de Figueiredo Mello, Dec 31, 1874

it in the bud.<sup>594</sup> Of course, this left the capital of Maceio vulnerable, leading to cries of uprisings on January 1.<sup>595</sup> President Araujo sent requests to President Lucena for support, who in turn reportedly sent a number of ships to help protect the capital.<sup>596</sup>

As the rioting slowly spread in Alagoas, President Araujo began sending out troops to suppress the agitation. Soon, a total of 221 National Guardsmen had been called into service, including 163 that was stationed in the capital, forty in Imperatriz and eighteen in Assembleia. Of course, those stationed in the capital were frequently sent out into the interior, such as the detaching of thirty to send to Porto Calvo.<sup>597</sup>

By January 8, arrests had been made. Perhaps it is due to the lesser severity of the uprisings here that relatively few allegations of abuse or cruelty were raised, nor is there any evidence that the infamous *colete de couro* was used here. Commanding Captain Floriano Vieira de Mello reported on January 8 to have arrested many of the key individuals in the few uprisings that occurred. They were all arrested at this time and immediately sent to the capital. Due to the few numbers of rebels in Alagoas, perhaps this was the reason they were not kept for a time in prisons before being transported to Maceio as was more common in Pernambuco and Paraíba.<sup>598</sup>

The troops then remained in the major towns, arresting all inhabitants that had participated in the uprisings that had slipped through the net of initial arrests, and

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<sup>594</sup> *A Provincia*, Jan 5, 1875.

<sup>595</sup> AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Vieira de Araujo to Antonio Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 15, 1875, AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Correia Gondim to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 1, 1875, and AN, Fundo IJ<sup>1</sup> 370, Police commissioner Arthur Henrique de Figueiredo to Correia Gondim, Jan 1, 1875.

<sup>596</sup> *A Provincia*, Jan 5, 1875.

<sup>597</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Martins de Miranda to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 7, 1875 and AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, March 27, 1875. Note that as of Sept 4, 1874 there were only 50 National Guardsmen called up, and on Dec 18 this was increased to 150. AN, Fundo IJ1 297, Untitled Document, undated.

<sup>598</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Vieira de Mello to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 8, 1875.



ensuring that order would be retained. Some were “arrested in the act.”<sup>599</sup> Others, such as the inhabitants of the settlement of Leopoldina were quickly arrested and sent to Maceio when they began to demonstrate against the deputy commissioner.<sup>600</sup>

By mid-January it appeared that the agitations, small that they were, had been suppressed. Eustagio Rebello Brasil, the commanding lieutenant of Imperatriz, reported that after having been stationed in that town for the duration of fifteen days in order to assist in the capture of rioters in the region, he had as yet to see any agitations.<sup>601</sup> By the end of January, although President Araújo made sure and left the troops in the interior of the province to ensure public tranquility, it appeared that the uprisings were over. The corvette *Magé* stayed at the port of Maceio to protect the capital, but further south, in Sergipe, the provincial president removed the troops from along the São Francisco River, no longer fearing the uprising would spread into his province.<sup>602</sup> All that appeared to remain was the final arrests and processing of those heads of the seditions.<sup>603</sup>

By February 3, President Araujo reported that both the capital and “the interior is now completely pacified.”<sup>604</sup> Throughout the remainder of the month, arrests were made and judicial proceedings carried out. President Araujo sought to target for arrest and imprisonment the key leaders, arguing that proof that leaders guided this uprising lay in

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<sup>599</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 15, 1875.

<sup>600</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Fito Passos, to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 11, 1875.

<sup>601</sup> Although, he notes, Captain Floriano had managed to capture the leader Antonio Thomas. AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Lieutenant commander of Imperatriz Eustagio Rebello Brasil to Vieira de Araujo, Jan 18, 1875.

<sup>602</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Vieira de Araujo to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 25, 1875.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid., Jan 27, 1875.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid., Feb 3, 1875.

the fact that no property, with the exception of the weights and measurements, had been destroyed.<sup>605</sup>

Although by the end of March the regular troops were still in the interior, all national guardsmen were dismissed except for those in the capital.<sup>606</sup> In July, an uprising once again burst into flames, though it would be quickly doused. When it occurred—though details are vague on the actual uprising—President Araújo wrote to President Lucena requesting that he urgently send at least fifty regular troops to his assistance; he sent twenty-five. It seems to have been enough, and five were imprisoned for this uprising.<sup>607</sup>

### ***Rio Grande do Norte***

By early December, Rio Grande do Norte also began to experience the Quebra-Quilos uprisings. And, although the province is adjacent to Paraíba, the events resembled Alagoas much more closely than that of Pernambuco. Thus the violence committed by the military was among the lowest of any of the provinces that participated. Ironically, however, whereas the other three provinces (Paraíba, Pernambuco, and Alagoas) suppressed their uprisings by February or March, Rio Grande do Norte would continue to experience uprisings against the Law of Recruitment, which I have argued is an extension of this Quebra-Quilos uprising. Thus suppression would be longer in coming, although one could argue that since the Law of Recruitment was never fully enforced, suppression

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<sup>605</sup> Ibid., March 4, 1875.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid., March 1875.

<sup>607</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 370, Correia Gondom to Vieira de Araujo, July 29, 1875.

would be far less rigorous. Nonetheless, by the end of 1875, the majority of uprisings against this new law had ceased.

Beginning on December 4 and 5, the towns closest to Paraíba began to rise up in rebellion. The three initial cities and towns was the city of São José de Mpubú and towns of Conguaratama and Goaninha. All were next to Paraíba and therefore that province once again was blamed for having caused this uprising and exporting it across the border.<sup>608</sup> Following the investigation of Police Chief Luiz Ignacio de Mello Barretto, who visited the region along with thirty national guardsmen, President João Capistrano Bandeira de Melo Filho sent all available soldiers to those cities and towns, both as a result of the uprising but also to prevent any further spread from Paraíba.<sup>609</sup> He next increased the number of National Guard in the capital to sixty troops and requested ten soldiers of the line be sent from Ceará by way of the steamship *Ceará*. His plans were to distribute these ten soldiers throughout the province in the various settlements, as he stated that “I believe [the rioters] may not attack if they know there are troops here.”<sup>610</sup> When the steamship arrived, Mello Filho gratefully received not ten, but thirty-two soldiers as well as two ensigns from the provincial president of Ceará.<sup>611</sup>

But by this time, December 14, it was too late, as dozens of cities, towns, and settlements had experienced Quebra-Quilos uprisings. President Mello Filho focused his forces on restoring order and arresting the leaders of these uprisings. And, as was the case in the other provinces, the midnight hours became the preferred time for arrests. For example, the police chief arrived at Poço-Limpo and Macahyba in the middle of the night

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<sup>608</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 297, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 4, 1874.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid., Dec 15, 1874 and Dec 18, 1874.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid., Dec 15, 1874.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid., Dec 20, 1874.

on the sixteenth, with thirty National Guard, began making many arrests and recruited all those that could not immediately prove legal exemption.<sup>612</sup> Nonetheless, they reported that some of the rioters had escaped, fleeing to neighboring Ceará-mirim. President Mello Filho sent an additional twenty-two troops as well as the police chief to that city.

If Colonel Fonseca was the principle official charged with the task of putting down the rebellion in Paraíba, for Rio Grande do Norte it was Police Chief Luis Ignacio de Mello Barretto. He travelled the province, surrounded by national guardsmen, making arrests and attempting to suppress the rebellions. In every town he went, he would meet with the “better citizens” and try to convince them to aid the authorities.<sup>613</sup> For example, in São José de Mpubú he appealed to the senhor de Engenho, Colonel Miguel Ribeiro Dantas and in Jardim the “principle residents” of the city agreed to help the authorities.<sup>614</sup> Though with varying degrees of success, he began to make arrests, sending all “those I felt worthy of being recruited” into the military.<sup>615</sup>

While Mello Barretto traveled throughout the countryside “under cover of darkness...to arrest the guilty,” President Mello Filho sought to send out all available troops: “My hope,” he stated, “is that the agitators (*disordeiros*) will disperse with knowledge of the arrival of the public force.”<sup>616</sup> Thus he sent sixty troops to Sant’Anna “to secure individuals and property”, and sixty to Jardim. Since by now all his resources were stretched thin, particularly as he decided he needed to increase the National Guard

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<sup>612</sup> Ibid., Dec 18, 1874

<sup>613</sup> Ibid., Dec 19, 1874 and AN, Fundo IJ1 297, From Mello Baretto to Mello Filho, Dec 24, 1874.

<sup>614</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 19, 1874.

<sup>615</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Mello Baretto to Mello Filho, Dec 24, 1874.

<sup>616</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Dec 28, 1874

in the capital by another forty troops, he began creating flying detachments to travel throughout the countryside.<sup>617</sup>

With regards to the National Guard, there were approximately sixty troops and one officer, a Lieutenant, on active duty as of December 15. Thus as part of this increase which would then occur, he sent out orders between December 20-31 and rose the total number of National Guard troops to 100, which included the forty called up to protect the capital, with three officials (one lieutenant and two captains).<sup>618</sup> The increase in troops and flying detachments sent traveling around the countryside succeeded in eliminating, at least temporarily, the disturbances in the countryside. But, complained President Mello Filho, many are still refusing to pay their taxes or use the new metric system.<sup>619</sup> By 8 January he began referring to these *forças volantes* as “expeditionary forces.”<sup>620</sup> Although he never states how many regular troops he had to support his 100 National Guardsmen, he created two main expeditionary forces, each one made up of forty-five soldiers and one officer. Their instructions were to search out armed bands that were reported to be roving the countryside, arrest them, and hand them over to the police authorities for interrogation. Once all had been interrogated, the heads should be processed by the judicial authorities while all others should be recruited into the military unless they had legal exemption.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> Ibid., Dec 8, 1874, Dec 29, 1874, Dec 31, 1874.

<sup>618</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Untitled Document, Undated, AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Dispatch of Mello Filho to National Guard, Jan 18, 1875.

<sup>619</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 3, 1875.

<sup>620</sup> However, the commanders themselves referred to their official positions as “commandante da força volante” or “commandante do destacamento volante” rather than “commandante da força expedicionário.” See AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Captain of flying detachment, Antonio Pinto de Moraes Castro of City of Jardim to Mello Filho, Feb 1, 1875 and AN, Fundo IJ1 297, Commander of flying detachment of Pão dos Ferros, Captain Antonio Benavides leabra de Mello to Mello Filho, Feb 4, 1875.

<sup>621</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 8, 1875.

Thus when armed groups arrived at the settlements of Luiz Gomes and Vitória in the middle of January and began destroying the weights and measures of the metric system found in the business establishments, President Mello Filho quickly ordered Captain Antonio Benevides Leabra e Mello, commander of one of the expeditionary forces, to the region, augmenting his force by sixteen to ensure success. In this particular instance, sixteen troops from the expeditionary force were left to increase the number of National Guard troops already there in order to keep the peace once the expeditionary force moved on.<sup>622</sup> When Captain Leabra de Mello and his expeditionary force had ensured that peace had been restored, they continued to move about, visiting the towns of Sant'Anna do Mattos, Triumpho, and diverse settlements, finding them to be in peace, although this did not stop him from making arrests<sup>623</sup>

The National Guard was to be called up in times of emergency and dismissed once the emergency was over. Thus on January 30, President Mello Filho evidently believed the revolt had been largely suppressed as he gave orders to cut the National Guard in half, reducing the number to fifty, including the two captains of the expeditionary forces and two ensign.<sup>624</sup> This was, however, not to take place until they returned to the capital; they were not dismissed to return to their homes until March 1, 1875, although Captain Antonio Benavides Leabra de Mello and his troops returned to the capital on April 11 after ensuring that peace continued to exist in five of the principle counties.<sup>625</sup>

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<sup>622</sup> Ibid., Jan 20, 1875.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid., Feb 15, 1875; AN, Fundo IJ1 297, Leabra de Mello to Mello Filho, Feb 4, 1875.

<sup>624</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 297, Untitled Document, Undated, AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Jan 40, 1875, Feb 15, 1875.

<sup>625</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 97, Mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, March 1, 1875, April 24, 1875.

In Rio Grande do Norte, the main aspect of Quebra-Quilos revolt—the refusal to pay taxes, breaking of the metric system, etc—was suppressed relatively easily.

However, riots over the Law of Recruitment continued far into the year. On August 1, 1875, 200 men and women, armed with guns, clubs, and knives, tore down the lists of citizens destined for recruitment in the town of Goaninha, destroyed lists of voters affixed to the walls of the church, and sought to, in short, impede the recruitment process. And they succeeded, at least on this day, as the government had thought peace established and had reduced its forces once again. Thus the seven troops in that town simply were not used as they were so vastly outnumbered.<sup>626</sup> This uprising occurred a number of other times in August as well. Thus when it occurred on August 31, (Goaninha again), the interim police chief (who was, at the time, in Conguaretama) was sent there to reestablish order, carry out an investigation of the incident and arrest all those guilty, such as Justino Felix de Lima, whom he interrogated on September 4, as he lay in the hospital.<sup>627</sup>

The new provincial president Dr. José Bernardo Galvão Alcoforado Junior (as of April 1875) sent twenty-three additional soldiers to support the seven already in Goaninha, twenty to Papary, and nine to Aviz to support the nine already there.<sup>628</sup> In Conguaretama the troops were already there when a group of 300 approached the town. The captain, Varinguez, divided his troops between himself and Ensign Moreira (and eight soldiers). When the group arrived, Ensign Moreira open-fired on them. In the

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<sup>626</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 297, District judge of Goaninha, Antonio Jose de Amorim to Mello Filho, Aug 6, 1875.

<sup>627</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 297, mello Filho to Duarte de Azevedo, Sept 1, 1875 and AN, Fundo IJ1 297, Interrogation of Justino Felix de Lima, Sept 4, 1875.

<sup>628</sup> AN, Fundo IJ1 297, Despatch of Mello Filho entitled “*Oposição Cumprimento da Lei de 26 Setembro de 1874*,” no date.

process, two men and three women were killed, although only three of the troops were “lightly” wounded and none killed.<sup>629</sup>

By September the uprisings against the Law of Recruitment appear to have finally ceased. Since these uprisings were an extension of the Quebra-Quilos revolt, then this province can claim to have had the longest revolt of all the provinces. These uprisings against this law demonstrate the frustrations felt by the many peasants who saw their traditional ways of life altered. First the economic downturn, then the religious issue, then the metric system, and now recruitment. All of these combined demonstrate the importance of this complex uprising to understanding the intricate history of this province during the period of the late Empire.

### ***Conclusion***

This chapter outlines in narrative form the suppression of the Quebra-Quilos movement. Since it started in Paraíba, and all of the surrounding provinces blamed the riots on Paraíba, it would be there that the government in Rio de Janeiro would send the initial Expeditionary Force. But the Force was given an extremely difficult if not impossible task: root out all of the leaders and bring them to the capital. Who were the leaders? A few names come out of the trial and investigative records, but no overall leadership. Thus we see what happens in such a case: the military rounded up men, women, and children, forced confessions out of them, and then the leaders were imprisoned and the rest, if possible, sent to the provincial capital for recruitment into the military. Unfortunately, the records are then silent as to what happened to the leaders

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<sup>629</sup> Ibid.



after their imprisonment. Following the suppression in Paraíba, Pernambuco, Alagoa and Rio Grande do Norte all sought to crush the uprising in their provinces as well. They succeeded. By February of 1875, only pockets of resistance occurred, and by March, 1875, the National Guard units began to be disbanded.

In addition to the importance of this chapter for the actual Quebra-Quilos uprising, it serves another purpose: a description of how the imperial government was set up to deal with such a case. The block inspectors reported to the deputy commissioners who reported to the police commissioners, who then reported to both the provincial police chief and the provincial president. Likewise the district judges, district attorneys, and justices of the peace would forward the information on the provincial presidents. The provincial presidents then reported to the minister of justice who, along with the minister of war, sent reinforcements and instructions on how to proceed with the suppression. Then, in opposite fashion, the provincial presidents reported this information back through the chain of command to, eventually, the block inspectors. In this uprising, many of the officials in the middle of this chain fled to the capitals. When this happened, the broken link was bypassed—thus justices of the peace, for example, would send, though infrequently, letters on to the provincial presidents. But as soon as possible, the provincial presidents would replace that broken links with new ones at all costs. Many of the military officials also became district judges, justices of the peace, etc. Thus peace was reestablished throughout the empire and this uprising, which very well could have spread throughout the entire country, was suppressed within a matter of four months.

## CONCLUSION

The Quebra-Quilos revolt is the most important revolt of northeastern Brazil during the Second Empire. It demonstrated limits to which peasants would allow themselves to be exploited, for once the moral economy is breached, very little apart from brute force can placate the disgruntled rural lower classes (and it could be argued that this force would serve more as salt rather than a soothing balm on an open wound). This revolt also demonstrates an historical truth: nothing emerges from a vacuum and no historical act fails to influence future events. Perhaps this revolt demonstrates this truth better than most.

As with writings on any historical event, one must question whether the retelling of the story should be thematic or narrative. Both have their uses and therefore I have sought to utilize both in describing these events and their significance. Chapter One, in particular, remains narrative in structure. The uprising began at the market of Fagundes, in the interior of Paraíba. It then spread to Campina Grande, and then to nearly all of the neighboring settlements, towns, and cities, before crossing the provincial border into Pernambuco. It then spread in a southerly direction until crossing into Alagoas, where it slowly began to peter out. Simultaneous to its entrance into Alagoas, the revolt sprang up in Rio Grande do Norte with similar results. Though narrative, this demonstrates a degree of homogeneity among the participating peasants throughout the northeast. No charismatic, military, or religious leader was ever discovered to have led these uprisings; they occurred by and for the peasants, in direct reaction to contemporary affairs.

Of all of the contemporary affairs discussed in this work, Chapter Two outlines one of the most difficult: the economic decline in the northeast during the 1870s. While it is true that interior peasants of the northeast (*sertanejos*) experienced frequent droughts resulting in economic downturns, the events of the 1870s were much worse than they had ever previously experienced. Sugar production had declined by this time, leading to a depression in related industries (such as cattle-raising), and many of the slaves were in fact transferred to the Paraíba Valley in the center-south of Brazil to work on the coffee plantations. Another economic crop, cotton, also became important to the interior peasants, as it could be grown on a relatively small scale. Market fluctuations were extreme here as well, as whenever the United States reduced their exports—such as during the American Revolution, War of 1812, and American Civil War—the Brazilian northeast would see a resurgence of their cotton exports. Although the end of the American Civil War in 1865 saw a return to cotton for the American South, in Brazil the reduction of cotton production was delayed until the 1870s as Brazil increased its demand for cotton and textile products as a result of the Paraguayan War.

With governments in the provinces dependent on exports for their revenues, particularly sugar and cotton, the dual decline would signify a crisis at the municipal and provincial level as well. To make up for declining revenues, governments increased taxes. As I have shown in Chapter Two, in Pernambuco alone twenty-nine existing taxes were increased and thirty-two new ones created. Of these, the most egregious to the peasants were the *imposto do chão*, or tax on foodstuffs and goods brought to the weekly markets. Already suffering economically, these additional taxes were simply too much for the peasants to bear.

Dom Pedro II, however, saw himself as a liberal leader of a country sorely in need of modernization. Thus through his insistence and that of like-minded politicians, he installed the Conservative cabinet of Rio Branco and, through this cabinet, implemented a good number of reforms in Brazil. Of these, two stand out: reform of the Church, as discussed in Chapter Three, and that of the military, as discussed in Chapter Four, not dissimilar to the Juarez and Iglesias Laws in Mexico at roughly the same time. Though not as extreme as those laws, Rio Branco and the Imperial Government sought to bring the Church more tightly under its control. The Church, in contrast, was turning anti-modern and ultramontane, arguing that they were in fact part of a universal rather than national church and thus must give more loyalty to the papacy than the Emperor. When the Vatican issued such decrees as the *Syllabus of Errors*, decrying modernization and, in particular, Masonry, many of the clerics showed their support by expelling Masons from the church. The result was a power-clash between regalists and ultramontanes which, though not of the magnitude of the Mexican War of Reform, was serious enough that the offending clerics found themselves either expelled from the country or confined to prisons. With this, the peasants—traditionally proclerical—had their ideological justification for revolt, revolted in the name of the Church and in opposition to Masonry. Attempts were thus made—though ineffectively and erroneously as it turned out—to blame the Church for this uprising.

The Reforming government of Rio Branco also sought to reform the military, the subject of Chapter Four. Traditionally, rank-and-file soldiers were recruited by rounding up those considered vagabonds, unemployed, or more importantly, those without powerful patrons to protect them. In short, a patronage system had developed in Brazil in

which those who demonstrated loyalty to their patrons (who in turn demonstrated loyalty to the government through ability to bring their clients to the polls on election days) could be assured they would not have to suffer rank-and-file military duty. They might have to serve in the National Guard, but they would be exempt from regular military service. But the Paraguayan War (1865-1870) demonstrated a tremendous need to reform the system of military recruitment, and the reforming cabinet pushed a new law to democratize military recruitment: every eligible adult male would have to register for the military draft, and the government would choose from those eligible regardless of patron-affiliation. This may have appeared to have solved the military recruitment problem, but it undermined the entire social structure in Northeastern Brazil based on patron-client relationships. If a patron could not protect a client from military recruitment (which he could not with this new system), what good was this system? Even some patrons at this point sided with the uprising peasants.

Thus the economic downturn and resulting taxes gave economic cause for the Quebra-Quilos Revolt. The Religious Question then gave ideological justification for grievances already spreading throughout the region, morally justifying revolt in the eyes of the peasants. And then the social system as well, through the military recruitment reform, began to undermine the third important aspect of peasant lives: the patronage system. The situation was ripe for disaster. But it was none of these that gave the uprising its name. One grievance linked the economic disasters to the hatred of the modernization campaigns then proceeding throughout the Empire: the reform of the system of weights and measures.

Though passed in 1862 and decreed to be fully implemented in 1872, the laws enforcing the use of the metric system were not enforced until 1874. To utilize this system, weights and measures had to either be bought or rented, taxes had to be paid to officials to conform the units to uniform standards, and old, tried-and-true methods abandoned. Coming on the heels of economic collapse and disgruntlement about government interference in individuals' lives (in the name of modernization), and utilizing religious justification, this would be the last straw. The weights and measures were, on average, 10% smaller than they were used to, but (to make up for the taxes), prices remained the same, effectively raising prices across the board by 10% at a time when the average income was greatly reduced. Upon rising up in rebellion, then, the peasants would first and foremost take out their frustrations on the weights and measures of this new system, thereby taking the name Quebra-Quilos. This was the immediate cause for rebellion, but events had long been in the making.

The case of Quebra-Quilos is a classic example of the moral economy as espoused by E.P. Thompson. Rioters, he argued would legitimize their uprising, "informed by the belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs; and, in general, that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community."<sup>630</sup> In eighteenth-century England, food riots were "triggered off by soaring prices, by malpractices among dealers, or by hunger. But these grievances operated within a popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices in marketing, milling, baking, etc."<sup>631</sup> In short, the "traditional view of social norms and

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<sup>630</sup> E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the Eighteenth-Century Crowd," in *Past & Present* 51 (May 1971), 78.

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

obligations, or the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor,” had broken down.<sup>632</sup> That is exactly what happened here in Brazil by 1874. Income declined and taxes increased in the northeast, the government implemented a new measuring system which resulted in even more taxes, clerics were imprisoned, and the crucial networks of patronage was undermined. Thus this revolt.

Quebra-Quilos is also an example of social banditry. Eric Hobsbawm has argued that “the history of banditry is largely the history of its occasional mass explosions,” one of “independent action by groups of men of violence and arms,” consisting “largely of peasants and landless labourers ruled, oppressed and exploited by someone else.”<sup>633</sup> Rather than simple Robin Hood-type figures, then, social banditry can manifest itself in armed uprisings, particularly independent ones such as Quebra-Quilos without a specific leader. Hobsbawm pinpointed the period just following Quebra-Quilos—the Great Drought of 1877-1878—as the one in which widespread banditry emerged in the northeast, but I would argue that this example given here demonstrates an earlier one, if by a mere three years.<sup>634</sup>

As stated above, no historical act fails to influence future events. This is a good example. Traditionally, there have been three causes for the collapse of the Empire in 1889: the planters, the military, and the Church.<sup>635</sup> The planters were disgruntled following abolition of slavery in 1888 (without compensation for freed slaves) and thus

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<sup>632</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>633</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Banditry*, rev. ed., (New York: New York Press, 2000), 11; 16; 22-23.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>635</sup> Emilia Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories*, 202. See pages 202-233 for a good historiographical and analytical overview.

turned their back on the monarch and adopted Republicanism. However, in the northeast, much of the slave issue had been resolved by selling the slaves to the center-south, so this seems less likely to have been the cause for this particular region. But the second two: the military's disgruntlement over the government's handling of the Paraguayan War and botched attempts and subsequent reform as well as the Religious Question, were both played out in the case of this revolt. The Quebra-Quilos revolt assisted in preventing the success of military reforms thus aiding in the military's loss of faith and subsequent rejection of the monarchy. The revolt was not a primary cause, but a contributory one.

Finally, the Religious Question has frequently been credited for causing the collapse of the monarchy. While da Costa is correct that it was not the primary cause,<sup>636</sup> we see here the use of the Religious Question as justification for an economic uprising. Thus the Religious Question and subsequent weakening of support for the monarchy as a result of its handling of this issue can be seen as witnessed and experienced by the peasants of the northeast, rather than in the courtrooms and cabinet-meetings of Rio de Janeiro. In other words, it would not be the Religious Question that caused the collapse of the Monarchy, but lack of faith in the monarchical institution, one aspect of which was played out here as a result of the Religious Question which *justified* the other issues (take, for example, the slashing of the portrait of Emperor D. Pedro II after his arrests of the priests).

The final chapter here turns back from analytical to a narrative summation of events in which the government sought to send in the troops and crush the uprising. Historians have long questioned whether by the time the troops arrived the uprising had

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<sup>636</sup> Ibid., 212.



by itself calmed down, or whether the troops succeeded in crushing them. I have argued here that once the troops arrived, the rioters returned to their houses, and thus I give more credit to government troops for suppressing—rather than crushing—this revolt. Methods used in suppression ranged from minor (serving as a “show of force”) to quite violent, such as using the *colete de couro* (leather corset) to punish the suspects and force confessions and information. All of the participants seen as “heads” were to be imprisoned and the rest, regardless of the new Law of Recruitment, were to be recruited into the military and sent to the capital. This concluding paragraph demonstrates the ways in which the government suppressed popular uprisings, practices which would combine in their importance, particularly after the creation of the Republic.

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