

# The political realm of Teodoro Sampaio and Rui Barbosa: strategies and alliances made by colored men in Brazil (1880-1919)

*Teodoro Sampaio e Rui Barbosa no tabuleiro da política: estratégias e alianças de homens de cor (1880-1919)*

Wlamyra Albuquerque\*

## RESUMO

O artigo busca analisar, com base em episódios protagonizados por Teodoro Sampaio e Rui Barbosa, condições e forma de atuação política de homens de cor, entre 1880 e 1919. A trajetória de Sampaio nos permite perceber como um homem de cor, constituído num dos mais tradicionais redutos escravistas nas Américas, interpretou as relações e a gramática política que o forjaram como sujeito no pós-abolição. Teodoro Sampaio atravessou a década de 1880 buscando arregimentar recursos financeiros e políticos que garantissem a compra da alforria dos seus três irmãos e a consolidação da sua carreira de engenheiro. Já Rui Barbosa, branco, jurista, jornalista e político liberal, viveu o mesmo período empenhado na campanha emancipacionista e na luta abolicionista. Em 1919, Sampaio, já renomado, apoiou a campanha presidencial de Rui Barbosa. Naquela ocasião, o passado escravista e a cidadania da população negra justificaram as

## ABSTRACT

The goal of this text is to analyze the political participation of colored men in Brazil between 1880 and 1919 by describing the experiences of Teodoro Sampaio and Rui Barbosa. Sampaio's trajectory shows us how a colored man raised in one of the most traditional strongholds of slavery in the Americas interpreted the relations and the political grammar that shaped his character in the post-abolition period. Teodoro Sampaio spent the 1880s trying to gather financial and political resources to purchase the manumission of his three brothers and consolidate his career as an engineer, while Rui Barbosa, a jurist, journalist, and liberal politician, was a fervent advocate of the abolition of slavery. In 1919, Sampaio, already a reputable engineer, supported Rui Barbosa's presidential campaign. The previous history of slavery and citizenship of the black population justified both of these men's political viewpoints. The refer-

\* Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA). Salvador, BA, Brasil. wlamyra@gmail.com

posições políticas de ambos. As fontes utilizadas são discursos, jornais, correspondência pessoal e inventários.

Palavras-chave: Teodoro Sampaio; Rui Barbosa; emancipacionismo; pós-abolição; cidadania.

ences used in this article include speeches, newspaper cuttings, personal correspondence and inventories.

Keywords: Teodoro Sampaio; Rui Barbosa; emancipation; post-abolition period; citizenship.

The letter written by the engineer Teodoro Sampaio (1855-1937) to Manoel Lopes da Costa Pinto, the Viscount of Aramaré, on 13th March 1882 was replete with appeals for generosity, charity and protection. First, as if to make sure that the language he was using was appropriate for such an appeal, the engineer penciled a draft, carefully choosing his words and refining the text. As was customary, he wished him good health and lasting prosperity and only then informed the Viscount of his desire to fulfil the promise made to his brother, Ezequiel:

The promise to free him must be fulfilled now, despite the difficulties I am facing, particularly as I find myself in the throes of organizing home and household. I ask Your Excellency to do this slave a great service, lowering the price of freedom with the generosity that Your Excellency has always shown, particularly towards us.<sup>1</sup>

With “organizing home and household,” Teodoro Sampaio was referring to his move to the city of Alagoinhas in Bahia, where he had been hired by the government as an engineer to oversee the extension of the Bahia/São Francisco railroad. By then, at the age of 27, he was already an experienced and reputable engineer, having completed a course in engineering at the Polytechnic School in 1876. Two years later he became part of the Hydraulic Commission, created by Counsellor Sinimbu to assess the country’s ports and potential for inland navigation. As we will see in the next few pages, it was as a candidate for this commission, made up of various technicians from the US, that Teodoro Sampaio was said to have suffered what he defined as prejudice; which, for him, was rare in Brazilian society at the time.

He was organizing home and household due to his marriage with Capitolina Moreira Maia, a colored woman, on 18th January 1882, some months before the move to Alagoinhas. Very little is known about her, apart from varying comments about her mental health problems, and even Teodoro Sampaio himself does not mention her in his autobiography.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1 – Teodoro Sampaio and Capitolina, n.d.

Source: Pereira, 2012, p.37.

Apart from his wife, he also enjoyed the company of his mother, the freedman Domingas da Paixão do Carmo, who he described as “a black woman of notable beauty in her race.”<sup>3</sup> She was given the task to deliver the letter to the Viscount of Aramaré: more than just a mere courier, freedman Domingas probably played an important role in negotiations.

As a rich historiography shows, in most cases, family members effected the purchase of manumission (Slenes, 2011; Reis, 1998). Thus, by negotiating Ezequiel’s manumission with her former owner, freedman Domingas was perhaps attempting to restore family ties that had been weakened by the logic of slavery adopted in the *engenho Canabrava* (Canabrava sugarcane Mill). Although there is no reliable information on the date and circumstances of Domingas’ manumission, it is quite possible that she was freed when Teodoro Sampaio was born in 1855. Although no manumission document for Sampaio was found, it is also possible that any birth in captivity may have been kept

quiet due to the social standing that he attained.<sup>4</sup> Her other children – Martinho, Ezequiel and Matias – all older than the engineer, remained captive until 1880. Teodoro mentions his father as being “white and a cultured man from a family of farmers” (Pierson, 1971, p.375).

In 1865, Teodoro Sampaio was taken from the *engenho Canabrava* to Rio de Janeiro by the priest Manoel Fernandes Lopes where he obtained his primary and secondary education at the *Colégio São Salvador*.<sup>5</sup> He only returned to Bahia, and consequently, to family life in 1878, 13 years after graduating in engineering from the Polytechnic School. It is interesting to note that, having escaped the interprovincial slave trade – the main threat to families of slaves in the Recôncavo Baiano at the time – one of Domingas’ children was sent away to study at the age of 10 while others were destined to work as slaves on the sugarcane plantations of the *engenho Canabrava* until the abolition of slavery. Between 1865, when Teodoro Sampaio left for Rio de Janeiro, and 1884, when Matias was manumitted, the Domingas family experienced quite different types of legal status and conditions of freedom than those typical to Brazilian slavery in the 1800s.

In the letter to the Viscount, the announcement that he was in the throes of organizing home and household was a prompt for Teodoro to ask him to “do this slave [Ezequiel] a great service, lowering the price of freedom with the generosity that Your Excellency has always shown, particularly towards us.” Placing himself at the mercy of the generosity of this slave owner, the reputable engineer endorsed the rules of deference and subservience which governed the business of manumission at the time. He was not only aware of the rules but legitimized them. In an undated manuscript “*Um engenho de cana-de-açúcar no Recôncavo*”, he paints the following picture of the lord of the Recôncavo Baiano engraved in his memory:

The lord of the sugar mill in those times did not consider himself highly thought of unless his slaves prided themselves on their master...

The old slaves who had provided good service deserved kind references so that the overseer did not mistreat them or fail to assign them their customary rations ... Humane, it is true, was the nature of the lord of the *engenho do Recôncavo de Santo Amaro*. Barbaric treatment and degrading punishments were not customary for the cultured people that the majority of the lords of the sugarcane mills of the Recôncavo were.<sup>6</sup>

But it was still necessary to negotiate manumission, even in this gentle and idyllic captivity, governed by “cultured people” who aroused the pride of subordination in their subordinates. As such, the negotiation involved not only the acknowledgement of the “incommensurable humanity” of the lords of the Recôncavo, but also financial resources. In the emotionally provoking letter to the Viscount, to ensure the funds for the purchase the engineer states that he will “resort to using for this purpose” some savings, however “this is not a burden, because it is an expense which I make from my heart and with the best will in the world, and I am certain that Divine Providence will not forsake us.” Furthermore, assuming that the deal has already been done, he promises to send two bonds, or cash, as soon as possible. At the end of the letter he makes further statements as to his confidence in the “goodness that has always characterized Your Excellency, your sincerity of heart, that is able to understand these difficulties” and therefore “will hear us and deign to reply to us.”<sup>7</sup>

It is tempting to think that Teodoro Sampaio, with his well-written letter on headed paper, was merely reproducing a mechanism which endorses subordination to gain something which was under the lord’s control, as was common with manumission in the 1880s. According to Ademir dos Santos, the engineer “temporizes, considering the two sides of this contradictory relationship” (Santos, 2011). In my view, rather than temporizing, he was using the ties he had established with the Viscount of Aramaré’s family, relying on the “protection,” “goodness” and “generosity” the slave owner had shown to him throughout his life, not only with respect to manumission, but also, and principally, in relation to the affirmation of his own freedom: ever since leaving the engenho Canabrava, Teodoro Sampaio had plunged himself into a relationship with the Costa Pinto family with the same tenacity with which he entered the navigable waters of the River São Francisco.

According to Eul-Soo Pang, who carried out an important study about the sugar industry which analyzed the Costa Pinto family’s political links and investments, the family was one of the most powerful and enterprising members of the aristocracy in Bahia and founded the first mechanized sugar mill in the State of Bahia in 1880 in the parish of Bom Jardim (Pang, 1979, p.24). According to Pang, Francisco Antonio de Costa Pinto, the Count of Sergimirim, Antonio da Costa Pinto Junior, and Manuel Lopes da Costa Pinto, the Viscount of Aramaré, comprised the “patriarchy of the modernization of agriculture in the nineteenth century.”<sup>8</sup> They also founded the *Imperial Instituto Baiano de Agricultura* in 1859, when, during the visit of Pedro II to

the Northern Provinces, the Santo Amaro Railroad Company was idealized (Pang, 1979, p.35-36).

Thus, Following Eul-Soo Pang's argument, the Costa Pinto family were the vanguard of modernization among the rich aristocrats of Bahia, since they realized that the organization of owners and structuring a system to transport production were fundamental steps to increase their fortunes and political prestige. For Robério Souza, the improvement of the transport system also reaffirmed the agricultural elite's dreams of making Salvador the main economic center of the Northeast. The Costa Pinto family therefore represented an audacious plan to increase financial prosperity and political power (Souza, 2011, p.9). In fact, the fortune and prestige afforded to the Viscount of Aramaré between the 1860s and 1880s, were far from inconsiderable. In May of 1859, he registered the lands of two sugar mills (Aurora and Canabrava), one in the parish of Bom Jardim, and the other in Santo Amaro. The latter, where Teodoro Sampaio was born, had an area of over 1,100 *tarefas* of land with *massapé* soils.

He had happy memories of his childhood in Canabrava and remembered the signs of wealth of the Costa Pinto family with blatant nostalgia in a very particular piece about the political culture that characterized the lord's family, the captives and their family members. Although, unfortunately, this text was not dated, its nostalgic tone suggests that it was written after the end of slavery. Recalling his time in captivity, Teodoro Sampaio shows us how a "colored man," in one of the most traditional strongholds of slavery in the Americas, interpreted the relations and the political grammar that forged him as a subject in the post-abolition period. His memories are enmeshed by the routine of the lord of the sugar mill, as the following extract shows:

I was born under the sacred roof of the chapel of the Canabrava sugar mill which at the time was the property of the prominent farmer and head of the important Costa Pinto family from the Recôncavo de Santo Amaro. In those times, the wealthy lords of the sugar mills were accompanied by a small entourage. Apart from the commemorative days when the people from the neighborhood flocked in numbers to participate in the merriments and dinners ...the families flaunted their luxurious silverware, and expensive linens with fine embroidery ... Days in which the Lords' taste, wealth, and urbanity showed their worth, the peculiar aspects of family life, characteristic of the merciless and invincible monotony of existence in the country.<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting to note that the entrepreneurship of this “modernizing patriarchy,” made up of refined and “cultured people” who, according to Teodoro Sampaio, were humane and benevolent in their treatment of slaves, coincided with his career aspirations. In 1872, when the Count of Sergimirim presided over the *Imperial Instituto Baiano de Agricultura*, the construction plans of the railroad which would connect Bom Jardim to Santo Amaro were forwarded to the provincial government. One of the main enthusiasts of this project, and ally of the Costa Pinto family, was the minister Cansanção de Sinimbu, who appointed Teodoro Sampaio to the Hydraulic Commission in 1878.<sup>10</sup>

In the autobiography, commissioned by Donald Pierson, Sampaio mentioned that his career started when he became a member of this commission, and that on that occasion he experienced an “incident” which helped him to “explain a case of prejudice which is rare today in this country.” After being recommended for the post, he was excluded from the official appointment published by the government because he was “the only colored man in the brilliant commission, and this fact appeared shocking to the spirit of the official of the minister’s [Sinimbu] Office, all the more so because the commission was made up of technicians from the US, who did not appreciate the company of colored men. I was therefore eliminated and experienced the first thorn of prejudice among us.”<sup>11</sup>

Teodoro makes it clear that the case was quickly resolved, thanks to a senator who informed the minister of the incident in time to remedy it. Thus, the political alliances that met the interests of the Costa Pinto family included not only intervening in the Sampaio’s career, but also reversing the consequences of the “prejudice” of which he was victim in a decisive moment of his career. In turn, apart from loyally committing himself to the political and economic plans of his protectors, he resorted to another distinctive strategy: exalting his professional competence, thus affirming his status as a free and honorable man. For him, as soon as he joined the team of US technicians, the “cloud of prejudice” quickly dissipated thanks to the acknowledgement of his work, and he had “the honor to win the healthy esteem and friendship of those who served the profession over the years...”<sup>12</sup> Thus, his attributes as an engineer outweighed the “quality” of being a colored man. Teodoro Sampaio did not miss an opportunity to endorse this argument. Mentioning the occasion when he had to present sketches, plans and calculations regarding the navigability of the River Parapanema to Emperor Pedro II, he highlights that, even though he was still dressed for fieldwork, the monarch made him sit down to his right and showed great interest, not only in the information provided by the engineer about his explorative studies, but also about Indian customs and

languages. Such interest led Teodoro Sampaio to conclude that Pedro II was “the most unprejudiced Brazilian of his time” (Pierson, 1971, p.379).

In 1883, a year after the transaction that resulted in Ezequiel’s manumission, and a year before the manumission of Matias – the last of Sampaio’s brothers to be freed – he invited the Viscount of Aramaré’s nephew, João Ferreira de Moura, to be the godfather of his first son, Fructuoso Sampaio. Justifying the invite, Sampaio said that he wished “His Excellency to be his protector, as Your Excellency was for me” (Santos, 2011, p.2). João Ferreira was one of the heads of the Liberal Party in Santo Amaro, vice president of the Province of Bahia in 1867, and member of the Council of Ministers. He was well aware that by making João Ferreira de Moura his son’s godfather he would ensure his son the material, social and symbolic benefits that the proximity to this powerful family afforded. By inviting João Ferreira to hold his first-born son at the baptismal font, he sought to affirm and strengthen the bonds established with the family.

Sampaio’s own professional success and prestige also seemed to have had an influence on this relationship as the register of Matias’s manumission, written by the hand of the Viscount of Aramaré in 1884, suggests:

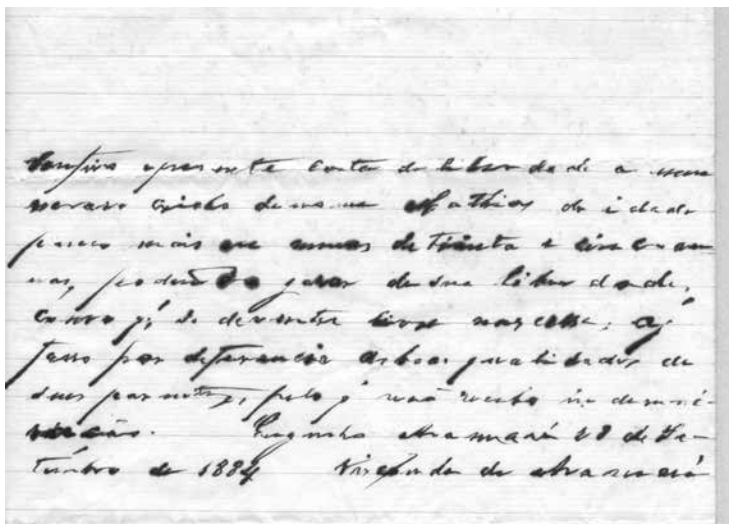


Figure 2 – I present this letter of freedom to my Creole slave named Matias, more or less 35 years of age, who is able to enjoy his freedom as if he had been born of a free womb, which I grant in deference to the good qualities of his relatives, for which I receive no indemnification. Engenho Aramaré, 28th September 1884.

Source: IGHBa, Acervo Teodoro Sampaio, caixa 5, documento 8.



Let us look at the details of this case of freedom.

The manumission of the Creole Matias without any charge was justified in deference to the good qualities of his relatives, of whom Teodoro Sampaio was obviously the most illustrious. Perhaps in those times (1884), the fact that Teodoro Sampaio's brother was a slave could have caused embarrassment, not only to Teodoro, but also to his allies: "the landed elite and the business classes." Furthermore, we should not forget that Domingas, who was a "high quality" slave, may have been involved in this negotiation; after all, Matias' manumission was the last needed to reunite her family outside of the fences of the engenho Canabrava. Matias lived with Teodoro Sampaio in his home in the *Rua da Misericórdia* (Mercy Street) in Salvador up to his death on 11th September 1911.<sup>13</sup>

However, under such circumstances, not even the supposed kindness of the lords, Teodoro's professional competence, or the maternal perseverance of Domingas was not enough to guide the designs of the Costa Pinto family. Matias' manumission was registered in a quite peculiar context, on 28th September 1884, the anniversary of Law of Free Birth enacted in 1871. In June 1884, Manoel Pinto de Souza Dantas, leader of the Liberal Party in Bahia took command of the Council of Ministers in the Court; and then, on 15th July, Rodolfo Dantas, his son, introduced a bill written by Rui Barbosa into the Chamber of Deputies which called for the emancipation of slaves, creating a major controversy related to the "*questão servil*" (servile problem). The main point of disagreement was the article that provided for uncompensated emancipation of all slaves over the age of sixty.

According to Joseli Mendonça (1999, p.30), "the servile problem had not provoked such heated emotions in the Brazilian Parliament perhaps since 1871." The discussion of the bill in the Chamber of Deputies sparked a heated political debate across the country, robbing the slave owners of their dreams and encouraging abolitionists and slaves. José do Patrocínio wrote in the *Gazeta da Tarde* that, although it was early to say whether the bill was actually good, "it was a pleasure to observe the hate of the agricultural oligarchy towards it."<sup>14</sup> Although he insinuated that he had no knowledge of the Bill written by Rui Barbosa, José do Patrocínio judged that the bill would bring benefits to the abolition movement. He himself contributed to drafting the bill.

In a letter to Rodolfo Dantas, Patrocínio recommends that certain issues should not be left out of the bill, such as the "recognition of the Law of 1871," and commits himself to sending books and speeches with highlighted excerpts: "it would be a great pleasure to send you everything I have relating to this

subject.” Patrocínio judges that the “enormous talent” of Rodolfo Dantas, together with that of Counsellor Rui “could give an exact idea of how much shame and how much humiliation this morally degrading and economically impoverishing institution has cost us.”<sup>15</sup>

That year, given the heat of parliamentary debate, the abolition movement gained momentum across the country, leading the sugar aristocracy to position themselves in face of the startling loss of legitimacy of slavery (Chalhoub, 2003). It is well known that Dantas did not survive the political crisis, and in 1885 the Emperor dismantled his ministry and invited the senator José Saraiva to form and head a new ministry. In Bahia, the failure of Dantas’ endeavor had harsh consequences for the liberal ranks, one of which was Rui Barbosa’s defeat in the election for Deputy General by the conservative candidate Inocêncio Marques de Araújo Góis Júnior, who was strongly supported by the *Liga da Lavoura e Comércio de Santo Amaro* (The League of Farming and Commerce of Santo Amaro) created in 1884 by the Costa Pinto family.

A survey of the abolition societies in Bahia undertaken by Jailton Brito shows that the slave owners’ protests against Dantas’ bill were more decisive in Santo Amaro, in the Recôncavo (Brito, 1997). For Walter Fraga, in 1884, the main reaction of the sugar aristocracy to the visible shock to the slavery institution was to declare themselves emancipationists but against “revolutionary agitation” and, principally, against the disrespect of property rights, which Dantas’ bill represented. The promotion and publicizing of manumissions without charge, group manumissions, and manumissions of slaves who had explicitly demonstrated obedience and gratitude were part of the strategy to control the emancipation process (Fraga, 2006, p.108-109).

Thus, by manumitting Teodoro’s brother without charge on 28th September 1884, the Viscount generated a great deal of positive publicity for the “praiseworthy actions” of the slave owners, and reaffirmed the importance of the Law of 1871. Registering Matias’ letter of freedom exposed the slave owners’ trick of giving merit and acknowledging the good qualities that entitled the slaves to freedom. It was evident that manumission was understood as something that was granted by the slave master to a slave that, in his judgement, deserved it – to whom he could attribute and or recognize qualities that entitled the slave to freedom. Teodoro Sampaio and Domingas probably witnessed the handing of the manumission letter, written by the Viscount of Aramaré, to Matias. An occasion of pomp and circumstance when “the lord of the sugar mill [being] highly thought of, [expected] that his slave did not

pride himself on his master.” The Viscount of Aramaré, like many others in Brazil as the 1880s progressed, had to live with the risks this situation posed to his political and economic pretensions to control the manumission mechanisms. He died following a stroke a few days after the Proclamation of the Republic, leaving his family in financial trouble.<sup>16</sup>

The newspaper *Diário da Bahia*, which also supported the abolitionist movement when it was run by Rui Barbosa, lamented the death of the Viscount of Aramaré, extolling the virtues of his farming background and ties with the family of Counsellor Dantas, since his daughter had married the counsellor’s nephew João dos Reis de Sousa Dantas Filho.<sup>17</sup> After the first months of the Republic, the heirs of the Viscount of Aramaré concerned themselves with reorganizing his businesses and the workers of the engenho Canabrava. In August 1890, the Decree N° 623 was published at the palace of the provisional government of the republic, headed by Manoel Deodoro da Fonseca which granted “João dos Reis de Souza Dantas Filho and José Pacheco Pereira and to coronel Aristides Novais an interest guarantee of 6% per year to establish a central sugar mill in the State of Bahia.”<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, Teodoro Sampaio was reorganizing his life in São Paulo where, between 1892 and 1903, he occupied the important post of director and chief engineer of sanitation of the State of São Paulo. His return to Bahia had to wait until 1904, when he oversaw the construction of the city’s sanitation system. In an unfinished text written in 1906, Teodoro Sampaio evaluated the effects of the abolition of slavery on Bahia’s society. In his own words:

Today Bahia is a decaying society; it is a society in transition, with the unhealthy look of a degenerate people. The times when Bahia was cultured are long gone.

...

It must be said that the abolition of slavery squandered the fortunes of the old people, killing off sociability and the refinement that came with urbanity.

The decay of society in Bahia dates from the abolition of slavery.

The period that follows is one of remodeling, of reforming customs, reforming labor, of new life demands for the lords and for the ex-slaves; the inaptitude of those ...accustomed as they were with living off the work of others; and the latter, unprepared for a regime of freedom, who with their ignorance and the very nature of the race lead to a regime of idleness and inactivity..<sup>19</sup>

## 1919: THE “SIDE OF THE NEGRO” AND THE “STIGMA OF SLAVERY”

As can be seen, Teodoro Sampaio saw the post-abolition period as a time of remodeling and change, even for the nature of the “race” that had just gained its freedom. For him, the economic and political changes caused by the abolition of slavery and the creation of the Republic decimated sociability and the refinement of old. However, the engineer also observes that all parties were implicated in the process which he interpreted as decay: the lords of the sugar mills, accustomed to living off others; and the freed slaves, unprepared and ignorant, idle and inactive. Thus, the responsibility of the supposed unwillingness to work, ignorance and lack of refinement was allotted to the main characters of the drama of slavery. Willing to help overcome this “lamentable” state of affairs, Teodoro Sampaio, as co-founder and speaker of the *Instituto Geográfico e Histórico da Bahia* (IGHBa), judged that one of our weaknesses was degeneration of race, since “although we have the ability to evolve, history is yet to show, in ages past, a great people that strived for human progress of mixed-blood from the races that comprise our ethnic makeup.”<sup>20</sup> Without doubt, neither Teodoro Sampaio, nor the IGHBa were alone in their digressions regarding the relation between the legacy of slavery, abolition and race in Brazilian society (Schwarcz, 1993).

Sometime after, in 1919, this same issue would be exposed in a different form during the presidential election campaign disputed by Epitácio Pessoa and Rui Barbosa who, at the age of 70, finished a tumultuous campaign amid workers’ protests and even an attack on his party members in Salvador during a campaign rally in the center of the city. The newspaper *A Tarde*, that supported Counsellor Rui’s campaign, denounced that on the afternoon of 25th March 1919, *secretas*, dockers and boaters were “sent” to the rally by senator J. J. Seabra and the governor Antônio Muniz to support Rui Barbosa. According to the newspaper this was orchestrated by an undercover policeman known as Carestia de Vida, who commanded around 300 “Sicarii”. Describing the confrontation as a barbaric attack, the writer states: “after this Africa of jobs ... the gentlemen Lauro Lopes, Carlos Seabra and another two or three Sicarii went by automobile to the palácio da Aclamação to receive applause from the governor and toast with champagne.”<sup>21</sup>

The arrival of Rui Barbosa was scheduled a few days after this incident. In order complete his campaign tour he needed to strengthen his delicate, though important, alliances with political leaders from Bahia. The trip was risky, given the attack; however, he faced the challenge as an act of bravery. He clarified his

plans in a letter to the deputy Pedro Lago: “the trip to Bahia was already in doubt due to steam difficulties and conferences in (the States of) Minas (Gerais), São Paulo and Rio (de Janeiro). Now, however, I shall go by any means, God willing, if necessary cancelling the conference in Rio” (Barbosa, [1946], p.66).

As soon as Rui Barbosa’s trip was confirmed, his allies in Bahia began preparations. As a member of the *Instituto Geográfico e Histórico da Bahia*, Teodoro Sampaio was given the task of making the reception speech and was careful not to leave out one of the mottos of the campaign: taking the lead in the abolition of slavery:

Dear Counsellor,

The redemption of slaves struggling for the freedom of those yet to be born against the piracy around the crib... Throughout the memorable abolitionist movement which ended in abolition, the right and respect for property never subdued your enthusiasm for freedom, because in your enlightened and capable mind the right to human dignity cried out louder. You wiped the stigma of man’s centuries old crime from the negro’s face and removed the burden of over three centuries of oppression from the slaves’ hunched shoulders...<sup>22</sup>

Teodoro Sampaio’s speech raises some interesting issues. One is the endorsement, in 1919, of the Law of 1871. Another is the mention of the stigma of slavery: removed from the tense context of 1888, the engineer seems to revise his opinions about the consequences of the abolition of slavery. Leaving aside the lord’s kindness, Sampaio adhered to the discourse that credited major social change at the end of the nineteenth century to the visionary nature of the abolition movement embodied by Rui Barbosa. This was not a trivial exercise given the circumstances, in which his presidential candidate was the target of “Sicarii”, “wrongdoers” and “an Africa of yobs.” In his own way, Teodoro Sampaio was helping to intertwine the heroic memory of the abolition movement with a political plan which sought, at least, to subdue the actions of the “Sicarii”, and “coloured men” who weaved, differently to him and with other powerful and prestigious lords, their own ties and political agreements.

The test of fire of the tense presidential campaign was the reception in the port. Teodoro Sampaio was only one the members of the IGHBa. When Rui Barbosa disembarked in Bahia, he saw a “truly frenzied” crowd awaiting him; some saw “hysterical ladies squashed by the masses of people” touching Rui Barbosa’s hands (Gonçalves, 2000, p.157; Viana Filho, 1987, p.441). To protect

him, a group of men from the local commerce organized a *Guarda Branca* (white guard) who used straw hats and white suits with a badge on the lapel with an image of Rui Barbosa. They had the task of policing the “the masses of people” that jostled in the port as can be seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3 – Rui Barbosa giving a speech in the port in Salvador.

Source: Machado, 1999, p.82.

According to Rui Barbosa, the *Guarda Branca* “accompanied him after he disembarked, playing, at the same time, an important role in keeping public order among the masses that had gathered, always encouraged by the exemplary feelings of civic enthusiasm and affection for popular rights.”<sup>23</sup> Some days after, in a banquet for 250 people, the engineer Teodoro Sampaio listened to the most important speech which Rui Barbosa made during the 1919 election campaign. The following are some of its most famous lines:

I had the honor of being the author of the Dantas bill, of writing, in its support, the opinion of the commissions, of being, in the House of Deputies, its body and flag, of being defeated in the subsequent elections due to the love I held for it, of fighting the Saraiva Law, of appealing to the conscience of the Brazilian nation with the merits of the act of redemption, of incurring the threats of the infamous *guarda negra* (black guard), of never being absent in the moments of most risk, with a devotion that never waned, and which never desired or received other

interests or gains in return, other than danger, hate and revenge. (Barbosa, 1919, p.368)

Counsellor Rui Barbosa managed to bring together in a single paragraph the most crucial episodes of the emancipation process in Brazil and offer himself to the nation for a new cause; the Presidency of the Republic. In doing so, he thanked and complemented the great engineer Teodoro Sampaio, now an important ally who experienced the dismantling of slavery and the creation of the Republic attempting to extricate his family from slavery while confirming his ties with the large slave owners and his contact with the highest authorities of the court, including the emperor. These figures were treated at the time as two of Bahia's most illustrious men. However, the political and historic tapestry involving Rui Barbosa and Teodoro Sampaio in the post-abolition period was woven from the complex socioracial relationships and political strategies that formed the subjects in the dismantling of the main strongholds of slavery in the Americas: Bahia.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Instituto Geográfico e Histórica da Bahia (IGHBa), Teodoro Sampaio Archive, box 9, document 75, Letter from Teodoro Sampaio to the Viscount of Aramaré on 13th March 1882.

<sup>2</sup> According to Arnaldo Pimenta da Cunha, she lived with dementia for over 15 years in one of the rooms of Teodoro's family home in Misericórdia Street in the centre of Salvador. Arnaldo Pimenta da Cunha, *Revista IGHBa*, n.69, p.132.

<sup>3</sup> IGHBa, Teodoro Sampaio Archive, box 6, document 52.

<sup>4</sup> The biographies of Teodoro Sampaio diverge on this point. Humberto de Campos in *Sombras que sofrem* states that he “drank slave milk from the slavery of his mother's breast,” while Arnaldo Pimenta da Cunha points out that sufficient evidence does not exist to confirm whether he was manumitted, *Revista IGHBa*, n.79, p.103.

<sup>5</sup> For Wanderley Pinho it was the intelligence of the young Teodoro that convinced the chaplain to invest in his education: “such manifestation of a lively intelligence must have captivated the priest who took it on himself to educate him. The chaplain soon saw that that child was destined to do great things.” Speech given by Jayme da Gama e Abreu, 17th December 1940, *Revista IGHBa*, n.67, 1941, p.170.

<sup>6</sup> IGHBa, “Um engenho de cana de açúcar no Recôncavo de Santo Amaro”, manuscript, box 1, document 15.

<sup>7</sup> IGHBa, Teodoro Sampaio Archive, 7-1-1942, box 9, letter from Teodoro Sampaio to the Viscount of Aramaré, 13th March 1882.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, p.57.

<sup>9</sup> IGHBa, Teodoro Sampaio Archive, box 9, document 58.

<sup>10</sup> IGHBa. Teodoro Sampaio, letter to Donald Pierson, Teodoro Sampaio Archive, box 6, doc 52, Notes autobiography, 12th October 1936.



<sup>11</sup> Idem.

<sup>12</sup> Idem.

<sup>13</sup> IGHBa, Arnaldo Pimenta da Cunha, “Teodoro íntimo”, *Revista IGHBa*, n.69, p.122.

<sup>14</sup> *Gazeta da Tarde*, Salvador, 19th July 1884.

<sup>15</sup> Fundação Casa Rui Barbosa, Letter from José do Patrocínio to Rodolfo Dantas, CR 1120/1 (3).

<sup>16</sup> APEB, Colonial section, Inventory 08/3401/11, 1889.

<sup>17</sup> *Diário da Bahia*, Salvador, 23th November 1889.

<sup>18</sup> Internet site of the Brazilian Senate, available at: <http://legis.senado.gov.br/legislacao/ListaTextoIntegral>; Accessed on 15th January 2015.

<sup>19</sup> IGHBa, Box 5, document 13, speech “O aspecto da sociedade baiana em 1906”, 5th April 1906.

<sup>20</sup> IGHBa, speech by Teodoro Sampaio, *Revista IGHBa*, n.39, 1913, p.124.

<sup>21</sup> *A Tarde*, Salvador, 26th March 1919, emphasis added.

<sup>22</sup> IGHBa, Teodoro Sampaio Archive, box 3, document 37, Reception speech for Rui Barbosa, 11th April 1919.

<sup>23</sup> Rui Barbosa, *Correspondence*, 21th April 1919. Afonso Rui explains that the main task of the *Guarda Branca* was to avoid accidents and distance disturbances from the Senator.