




ARTICLE

# WHERE DID THE MONEY FROM THE EMANCIPATION FUND GO AFTER ABOLITION? PROJECTS, PROTESTS AND DISPUTES (1884-1890)<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article aims to contribute to the recent public debate about the participation of the Brazilian state and financial institutions in the enslavement of Africans and their descendants, by pointing out the destination of the money that constituted the national emancipation fund in the immediate post-abolition period. There were projects, protests and disputes over the money which, at first, was intended to help the enslaved conquer their freedom and which, after May 13, was contested. It shows the transformations that this fund has undergone since its creation in 1871, the implementation of a tax for its expansion, as well as following the money, identifying beneficiaries, the burdened and the ignored. The annals of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Empire, legislation, ministerial reports, periodicals, cartoons, speeches and period books were consulted.

## Keywords

emancipation fund – slavery – emancipation – immigration – post-abolition.

<sup>1</sup> Article not published on a preprint platform. All sources and bibliography used are referenced in the article. I would like to thank Ana Flávia Magalhães Pinto for the thought-provoking questions that led me to write this article and I would also like to thank Antonio Luigi Negro, known as Gino, to whom I owe the familiarity of the bibliographical repertoire used throughout this research. Thanks also to Wagner Magalhães for the translation.


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ARTIGO

## QUAL FOI O DESTINO DO DINHEIRO DO FUNDO DE EMANCIPAÇÃO NO PÓS- ABOLIÇÃO? PROJETOS, PROTESTOS E DISPUTAS (1884-1890)<sup>3</sup>

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### Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é contribuir para o debate público recente sobre a participação do Estado brasileiro e das instituições financeiras na escravidão de africanos e seus descendentes, apontando o destino das verbas que constituíram o fundo nacional de emancipação no imediato pós-abolição. Destacam-se projetos, protestos e disputas em relação ao dinheiro que, a princípio, tinha a finalidade de auxiliar os escravizados na conquista da sua liberdade e que, após o 13 de maio, colocou-se em contestação. Demonstram-se as transformações pelas quais esse fundo passou desde a sua criação, em 1871, a implementação de uma taxa para sua ampliação, além de seguir o dinheiro, identificando beneficiários, onerados e ignorados. Foram consultados os anais da Câmara dos Deputados e do Senado do Império, assim como legislações, relatórios ministeriais, periódicos, charges, discursos e livros de época.

### Palavras-chaves

fundo de emancipação – escravidão – emancipação – imigração – pós-abolição.

<sup>3</sup> Artigo não publicado em plataforma *preprint*. Todas as fontes e a bibliografia utilizadas são referenciadas. Agradeço aos questionamentos instigantes de Ana Flávia Magalhães Pinto, que me levaram a escrever este artigo. Agradeço igualmente a Antonio Luigi Negro, o Gino, a quem devo parte fundamental do domínio bibliográfico utilizado ao longo desta pesquisa e a Wagner Magalhães, pela tradução deste artigo para o inglês.

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Emancipation funds – national and local – have already been objects of analysis in several historiographical productions that investigated their several different aspects. Its functioning, implications for slavery, consequences for women, children, the elderly and families of enslaved people have been widely debated using different approaches.<sup>5</sup> However, little or almost nothing has been produced about these funds in the immediate post-abolition context, as well as the fate of these considerable amount of funds.

This article is part of the most recent public debate about the participation of the Brazilian State and financial institutions in the slavery of African people and their descendants, through money that was supposed to benefit thousands of enslaved and freed workers and which was reallocated to benefit slaveowners and former slave owners in their immigration policies.<sup>6</sup> This article specifically analyzes the national fund, to which the majority of donations, inheritances, fees and other sums contributed in favor of emancipation in Brazil.

The sources collected and consulted that support this text are of a public nature and were widely circulated at the time, which highlights the importance and scope of the issue involving the emancipation fund and its future. Through the *annals* of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Empire, in addition to legislation, ministerial reports, periodicals, cartoons, speeches and nineteenth-century books, it is possible to affirm that the money from this fund, the subject of disputes, continued to compensate former slaveowners – even after the legal extinction of slavery – it paid for the arrival of immigrants to Brazil and another part was dissolved in the Republic's reports and accounts without much explanation. These

<sup>5</sup> Some of these works are: MACHADO, BRITO, VIANA & GOMES, 2021; SANTANA NETO, 2018; COWLING, 2013; CASTILHO & COWLING, 2013; MENDONÇA, 2008; CHALHOUB, 2003; REIS, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> This debate was raised by Civil Inquiry n° 1.30.001.004372/2023-13, moved by the Federal Public Ministry (MPF) and endorsed by a group of 14 historians who seek to investigate the participation of Banco do Brasil in the trafficking of enslaved people and their slavery between 1808 and 1888. These historians are Álvaro Pereira do Nascimento – Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro (UFRRJ), Ana Flavia Magalhães – Universidade de Brasília (UNB), Beatriz Gallotti Mamigonian – Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), Clemente Penna – Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC Posdoc), Fernanda Thomaz – Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Hebe Mattos – Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) e Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora (UFJF), João José Reis – Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), Keila Grinberg – University of Pittsburgh, Mariana Muaze – Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO), Martha Abreu – Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) e Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ/FFP), Monica Lima – Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Sidney Chalhoub – Harvard University, Thiago Campos – Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF – Labhoi) e Ynaê Lopes dos Santos – Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). About the repercussion in national press see: MACHADO, 2023; BBC, 2023; G1, 2023; CAMPOS, 2023; AGÊNCIA BRASIL, 2023; UOL, 2023; LYRA, 2023; O GLOBO, 2023; CRUZ, 2023.

fates not only demonstrate the disregard for the freed black population – neglected in their needs throughout the entire emancipationist and post-abolitionist process – but also highlight the lack of transparency in the accounts of the new Regime of “public things”. This money would pay for the arrival of immigrants and the consequent increase in competition between workers in the country, favoring the owners in paying low wages for hired labor, making the work of immigrants and nationals precarious, preserving the position of command of the contractors (HALL, 1989, p. 3; NEGRO, 2018, p. 39).

In 1884, when writing his emancipation project, the president of the council of ministers, the liberal Manuel Pinto de Souza Dantas, provided in his fourth part, relating to the fund, that “all contributions, direct or indirect, that make up the income of the State”, an “additional tax of 6% would be added, calculated on the respective value and jointly collected with them”.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the proposal outlined by Dantas aimed to further increase the emancipation fund established by the Law of September 28, 1871, in order to be able to pay for more manumissions, thus accelerating the pace of liberations, which was already suffering scathing criticism from certain sectors of the abolitionist movement (CHALHOUB, 2003, p. 227; GEBARA, 1986, p. 72; COSTA, 1998, p. 456; 459-460; BRITO, 2003, p. 208; SANTANA NETO, 2018, p. 162). On July 15, 1884, parliamentarian Rodolpho Dantas, son of the council president, presented the project to the Chamber of Deputies, which went to the assembly after being approved by house committees with 29 signatures in favor and one against.<sup>8</sup> The only vote against was from Antonio Alves de Souza Carvalho, liberal deputy for Paraíba, who in his opinion, separately, listed his disagreements with the proposal, demonstrating displeasure with the 6% rate, considering that regarding “these innovations, reorganizations and additions of taxes, a matter of a very sensitive and risky nature, did not require regular, serious and detailed study”.

Carvalho attributed “an immoderate and inordinate abolitionist zeal” to the project, opposing it because he considered “any major increase in the emancipation fund to be inconvenient”, defining this part of the proposal as “completely unacceptable (...) a communist principle, unconstitutional and extremely loose (...)”

<sup>7</sup> Anais da Câmara dos Deputados (ACD), v. 3, 15 de julho de 1884, p. 162.

<sup>8</sup> The 29 signatures in favor of the bill were from: Rodolpho Dantas, Ruy Barbosa, Franklin Dória, Thomaz Pompeu de Souza Brazil, José Marianno, Antonio Antunes Ribas, Theophilo Fernandes dos Santos, Adriano Pimentel, Manoel Carlos, Cesar Zama, Almeida Oliveira, Salustiano Rego, Sinval, Vianna Vaz, Severino Ribeiro, José Pompeu, Leopoldo de Bulhões, Prisco Paraizo, Diana, Aristides Spínola, Dr. T. Bomfim Espindola, Silviano Brandão, Montandon, Castello Branco, Bezerra Cavalcanti, Generoso Marques, A. E. de Camargo, Francisco Ildefonso Ribeiro de Menezes e José Basson de Miranda Osório. ACD, 15 de julho de 1884, v. 4, p. 121.

to carry out the expropriation of slaves especially at the expense of their own owners”.<sup>9</sup> For Souza Carvalho, the creation of the tax, in addition to being undesirable, worked as a pretext to conceal his true interest – shared by many other parliamentarians, as demonstrated by Joseli Mendonça – which was to keep the emancipatory process gradual enough to control it and to protect yourself from any economic and social disturbances (MENDONÇA, 2008, p. 45).

On the other hand, a considerable number of abolitionists believed that something should be done to increase funds and speed up the fund's procedures. José do Patrocínio, a prominent abolitionist of color and owner of *Gazeta da Tarde*, dissatisfied with the slowness of the fund, judged it as “bleeding in a warm bath slowly and painlessly draining the life of the suicide”.<sup>10</sup> According to the 1885 report, prepared by Antônio Prado, then Minister of Agriculture, the emancipation fund had already freed 24,165 workers in almost 14 years, since the promulgation of the Law of September 28, 1871. The same report presented to the Assembly Geral by Prado stated that until June 30, 1884, there were still 1,133,228 enslaved people throughout the country.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Patrocínio's criticisms seemed to find consistency, in that those freed by the fund represented only around 2% of the total number of captives regularly enrolled in Brazil.

Dantas faced strong resistance from those who viewed the alleged acceleration of the emancipationist process with concern, which included both the conservative opposition and dissent from his own party. This conflict between the ministry and parliament prevented the Dantas project from being discussed among deputies, ending up being rejected. The cabinet, which on July 29, 1884 achieved the dissolution of the Chamber with the emperor's authorization, did not find a more favorable environment in the following legislature, being pressured by a motion of no confidence, resulting in another political crisis, which Pedro II attempted resolved by dissolving the ministry on May 5, 1885.<sup>12</sup> José Antonio Saraiva, who had the reputation of being a man necessary to imperial politics for having managed to carry out the electoral reform in 1881 after several imbroglios, was chosen by the monarch as Dantas' successor, his co-provincial and co-religionist (BARMAN, 2012, p. 417; SOUZA, 2020). More conservative than his predecessor, Saraiva sought to adapt the project to his personal taste and that of his allies, many of whom were staunch opponents of the previous cabinet. The new chief of staff sought to preserve the legal

<sup>9</sup> ACD, 15 de julho de 1884, v. 3, p. 131.

<sup>10</sup> *Gazeta da Tarde*, Rio de Janeiro, 28/3/1885, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> BRASIL, 1886, p. 31-33.

<sup>12</sup> *Gazeta da Tarde*, Rio de Janeiro, 5/5/1885, p. 1.

recognition of slavery, guarantee compensation to owners, in addition to ensuring gradualness and seigniorial control throughout the emancipatory process (MENDONÇA, 2008, p. 161-162).

When formulating his own project based on Dantas' proposal, Saraiva modified many articles, sections and paragraphs. As for the additional rate of 6% allocated to the emancipation fund, foreseen by his predecessor, Saraiva established in his measure, in article four, part two, that the rate would be reduced to "an additional 5% to all general taxes, except those of export", to be "charged from now on, free of collection costs".<sup>13</sup> In this way, – unlike Dantas –, the chief of staff exempted the powerful coffee growers from paying for the release of their own workers. To understand what was sought to be avoided when Saraiva exempted export products from taxation, here it is worth establishing a hypothetical reflection, if coffee were taxed. According to the report by the Minister of Agriculture, between 1884 and 1885 Brazil exported 374,347,081 kilos of coffee – more than 374 thousand tons of this grain – which was equivalent, according to the minister, to a turnover of 152,502:731\$000 (one hundred and fifty-two thousand, five hundred and two *contos*, seven hundred and thirty-one thousand *réis*).<sup>14</sup>

If the additional 5% provided for by the project were applied only to coffee, the first element of national export at the time, this would result in a balance of 7,625:136\$550 (seven thousand, six hundred and twenty-five *contos*, one hundred and thirty-six thousand and five hundred and fifty *réis*) for the emancipation fund. This amount, collected in one year, would correspond to 43.5% of all revenue collected by this same fund between the years 1871 and 1885, that is, 14 years, as reported by Saraiva, as Minister of Finance, in 1885.<sup>15</sup> This hypothetical amount resulting from these 5% would be even greater than the budget of the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, for the whole of 1885.<sup>16</sup> It is also necessary to point out that if this taxation were applied, the product of the 5% should continue at relatively high levels, since the quantity and value of coffee bags would remain at very high levels in the following years, which would also impact the values allocated to the emancipation fund (CARRARA, 2022, p. 224; BRASIL, s.d., p. 1374-1375, v. 5). Therefore, in addition to

<sup>13</sup> ACD, 12 de maio de 1885, v. 3, p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> See: BRASIL, 1886, p. 70.

<sup>15</sup> This report stated that the money collected by the emancipation fund "in the years 1871-1872 to 1884-1885" was 17,502:519\$153 (seventeen thousand, five hundred and two *contos*, five hundred and nineteen thousand, one hundred and fifty-three *réis*). BRASIL, 1885, p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> The proposed report for the year 1885 estimated that the Ministry of Justice would have 7,233:862\$658 in expenses and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would spend 950:006\$666 in the entire year of 1885. See: BRASIL, 1885, p. 9-10.

preventing farmers from being taxed on their significant sacks, Saraiva also sought to prevent many enslaved people from benefiting from this same taxation, valuing security – as his supporters argued – and slaveowners control in the emancipation process.

Furthermore, in the fifth article of the project, Saraiva divided the emancipation fund into three equal parts: the first would continue to be used in “accordance with the provisions of art. 27 of the regulation approved by Decree no. 5,135 of November 13, 1872”, that is, obeying the form and order shaped by the so-called Free Womb Law for the release of captives; the second part would be “applied to the liberation of older slaves and, among those of equal age, those of lesser value; as well as the payment of interest on securities issued pursuant to this law”; and, finally, the third part would be invested “in preference to the liberation of slaves employed in farming, whose slaveowners decided to replace, in their establishments, slave labor with free labor”. For the latter case, there were some provisions to be observed: the slaveowners had to commit to freeing “all slaves in said establishments and the obligation not to admit others”. It is observed that this provision was implicitly aimed at far from modest farmers, owners of “establishments”. It also promised that the State would compensate “half the value of the slaves thus freed, in bonds of 5%, preferred by the slaveowners who further reduce the compensation and manumit a greater number of slaves”. And, finally, it guaranteed that the farmers would have “the services of the freedmen for a period of five years”.

The week following the presentation of the Saraiva project in the Chamber, the *Jornal do Comercio* published an anonymous note, apparently written in collaboration, which would justify the “civilians” signature. The authors claimed that farmers should also “contribute financially to the solution of the complex problem”, that is, slavery, which is why they proposed “a tax of 5% on the value of slaves’ wages, which we moderately value at 10\$ per month or \$120 per year”. According to their calculations, “this tax on 1,000,000 slaves could reach \$6,000:000 in 1886” and should “be exclusively used to pay for immigrant tickets, under the conditions already indicated”.<sup>17</sup> In this sense, the captives would work to pay for part of the arrival of European immigrants, as their salaries would be taxed by the State.

In the session of July 15 of 1885, the conservative deputy from Rio de Janeiro Alberto Bezamat, challenged by the liberals Nabuco and Bezerra Cavalcante due to his support for the Saraiva project, stated that the proposal of this president of the council was based on “emancipation and reorganization of work”. He said he was

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<sup>17</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 19/5/1885, p. 2.

“embarrassed having to accept the 5% additional tax rate, given the financial difficulties the country finds itself in”, but considered that he should not “disturb the reform plan idealized” by Saraiva.<sup>18</sup> Among the conservatives, significantly committed to slave farming, there was no constraint in accepting the additional tax that would not burden, on the contrary, it would benefit the landlord class. On the other hand, the liberal dissent, fighters of the Saraiva project because they considered it conservative, felt uncomfortable voting against this measure that would result in manumissions, although in much smaller numbers than some would like.

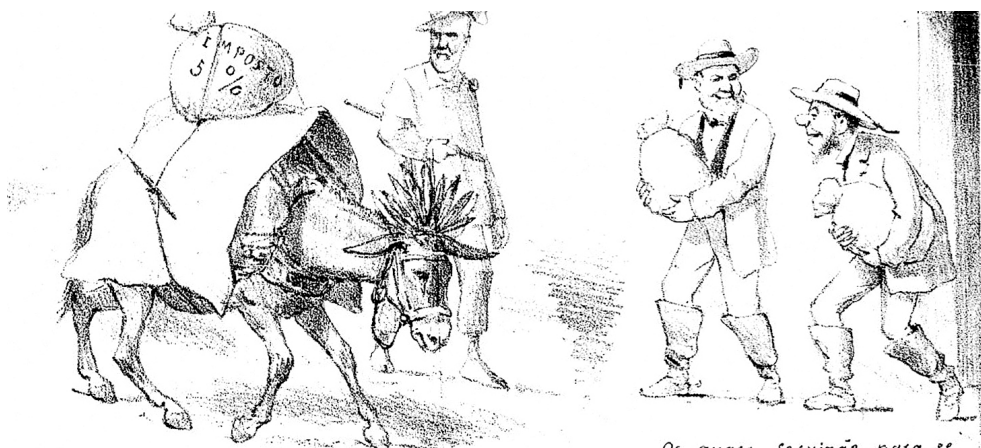
In mid-July of that year, 1885, attentive to the government’s political developments, Angelo Agostini criticized the tax proposal through his caricatures. In the first of them (Figure 1) it is possible to observe a donkey in the foreground, a pack animal, wearing an indigenous headdress, an allegory with which Agostini used to represent Brazil (BALABAN, 2009, p. 287). On its overloaded back, the donkey bears, exhausted, the weight of the 5% tax, being watched attentively by Saraiva, with his share in his hand. Alongside this representation, the illustrator drew two happy farmers, with bags of money in their arms, the product of the tax that fell on the country’s back and with which the manumissions of its slaves would be paid off. In this way, Agostini criticized the creation of the tax that would not fall on exports such as coffee, but that would benefit coffee growers, showy slaveowners of captives from the Empire. The tax would result in a type of social transfer of income to the richest through the State, taxing Brazilians unequally and favoring the expansion of social inequalities through this fiscal policy with a view to privileging the most powerful. The following month, in August, Agostini again criticized the proposal, representing Saraiva assailing the country with the aforementioned tax, like a criminal (Figure 2).

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<sup>18</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 16/7/1885, p. 1. It is worth noting that volume II of the Chamber of Deputies’ annals for the year 1885 includes the sessions that took place between April 6 and 30, while volume III begins with the session on July 20 and extends to August 19. Therefore, the discussions that took place between May and July 19 that are reproduced here will have as their source the *Jornal do Commercio*, from the Court, which published the speeches of the parliamentarians on a daily basis.



Figure 1



*Tambem declara que o Paiz deve ser considerado politicamente um burro de carga e sobrecarregado com mais 5 % de impostos*

*Os quats, servirão para se pagar a lavonra, o direito desi manter a escravidão no paiz, o mais tempo que ella puder .*

Revista Illustrada, Rio de Janeiro, 15/7/1885, p. 4

Figure 2



*Hoje, todos concordam que, como financeiro, o Sr Saraiva não passa de um saltador da Nação.*

Revista Illustrada, Rio de Janeiro, 20/8/1885, p. 4

On July 22, liberal Franklin Dória, president of the Chamber, voted on the 5% rate, which was approved by a significant majority: 70 votes in favor and 28 against.<sup>19</sup> Two days after the vote, Joaquim Nabuco, who voted against the tax, criticized its approval, attributing the government's victory to the exemption of export products, "because these are paid for by the slave-owning class". Nabuco suggested, on the other hand, that "the provinces of Ceará, Amazonas and all others that on their own emancipated themselves from slavery" should be excluded from the contribution.<sup>20</sup> It was no secret to anyone the Pernambuco deputy's determined and fierce opposition to the Saraiva project, which the following year would see the president of the council as part of the political transition to the slave-owning conservatism of Cotegeipe, his successor. (NABUCO, 1886a, p. 39-40).<sup>21</sup>

The issue highlighted fragmentations, nuances and divergences in projects among parliamentarians. Given the disagreements between the general representatives of each province, it made sense for Nabuco to restrict the collection of the tax between the parts of the Empire that still preserved slavery, seeking to isolate the slaveholding provinces and, in this way, make the maintenance of slavery as a national project unfeasible. The proposal went against the interests of slave owners in the Center-South, where there was the greatest concentration of these workers, since treating aspects related to slavery in a regional way could lead to a deep political crisis, as those parliamentarians who cited the experience recapitulated of the American Civil War (1861-1865) (STEIN, 1957; GOYENA SOARES, 2020, p. 12).

Lacerda Werneck, conservative deputy from Rio de Janeiro, who voted in favor of the creation of the tax, stated that the aforementioned tax would be "a bad gift and that sexagenarians would gladly" do without it. The deputy considered it "much better to apply this amount to the education of the naive, distributing it across the various provinces". The second part of the amount to be collected by the tax, which would have as its objective the emancipation of slaves from farming and immigration, according to the parliamentarian, should be divided "as is done for the emancipation fund as it would benefit from a much larger number".<sup>22</sup>

Werneck's proposal intended to control the number of freed people, as it removed sexagenarians as beneficiaries of the first part of the additional fee. Fur-

<sup>19</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 23/7/1885, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 25/7/1885, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Nabuco had already recorded this resurgence of the policy undertaken by Saraiva in another of his work, entitled *O erro do Imperador*, in which he blamed Pedro II for not having supported the Dantas cabinet (NABUCO, 1886b, p. 7-8).

<sup>22</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 11/8/1885, p. 2.

thermore, everyone knew that “the number of free children of enslaved women handed over to the State” was “very small”, as stated later by the then Minister of Agriculture, Antônio Prado, for that year, 1885.<sup>23</sup> Prado recorded two deliveries of *ingênuos* (free children of slave women) to the State that year which, if added to the 118 deliveries up until then, highlighted in the previous year’s ministerial report, it would have totaled 120 children, to whom Werneck would have liked to direct the first part of the fee amount.<sup>24</sup> Even though the Fluminense deputy’s proposal encompassed the 439,831 naive children who remained under the lordly tutelage, it was also public knowledge that these children were subjected to the hardships of captivity as if they were enslaved. (NABUCO, 1949 [1884], p. 72).<sup>25</sup>

### The tax and the distribution of the fund

On August 13, the tax returned to the Chamber’s agenda. A commission proposed modifications to the project, including the tax to be charged.<sup>26</sup> The amendments presented and approved maintained the division of the emancipation fund into three equal parts, however, it excluded the payment of manumissions that took into account the classification established by the fund, as determined by Decree no. 5.135 of November 13, 1872.<sup>27</sup> In its place, it established that the first part would be

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<sup>23</sup> BRASIL, 1886, p. 36.

<sup>24</sup> BRASIL, 1885, p. 375.

<sup>25</sup> BRASIL, 1886, p. 36. *A Gazeta da Tarde*, da Corte, published on the anniversary of the so-called Free Womb Law, in that year 1885, that “the *ingênuos* were re-enslaved out of humanitarian sentiment, of those who did not hand them over to the State in exchange for bonds” – *Gazeta da Tarde*, Rio de Janeiro, 28/9/1885, p. 1. Regarding the precariousness of the *ingênuos* experience of freedom, see: CASTILHO & COWLING, 2013, p. 161-162.

<sup>26</sup> The commission was composed of the liberals André Pádua Fleury, Franklin Dória, Ulysses Vianna, Felício dos Santos, Francisco Maciel, Prisco Paraíso and Lourenço de Albuquerque. ACD, 1885, v. 3, p. 247.

<sup>27</sup> Article 27 of the aforementioned decree that regulated the so-called Free Womb Law determined a classification order for manumissions by the emancipation fund. The following should be prioritized: I. Families; II. Individuals. In the case of the liberation of families, the priorities should be respectively: I. Spouses who were enslaved by different masters; II. Spouses, who had children born free under the law and under eight years of age; III. Spouses, who had free children under 21 years of age; IV. Spouses with minor slave children; V. Mothers with minor slave children; VI. Spouses without minor children. In the case of the release of individuals, the following would be preferred: I. The mother or father with free children; II. Individuals from 12 to 50 years of age, starting with the youngest females and the oldest males. Both in the emancipation of families and individuals, the regulations determined that they would be preferred: firstly, those who, by themselves or through others, contributed a certain amount for their liberation and, secondly, those who suffered the most suffering at the judgment of their masters. And it concluded: “under equal conditions, luck will decide”. See: BRASIL. *Decreto n° 5.135, de 13 de novembro de 1872*.

“applied to the emancipation of older slaves, in accordance with what is established in government regulations”. In the original proposal, the second part of the fund should be “applied to the liberation of older slaves and, among those of equal age, those of lesser value”, in addition to paying off “the interest on bonds issued” by law. The commission thought it would be appropriate to allocate the second part of the fund “to the liberation, for half or less than half of its value, of farming and mining slaves whose masters wanted to convert establishments maintained by slaves into free ones”. The third part, in principle, was reserved preferentially for the “liberation of slaves employed in farming, whose masters decided to replace, in their establishments, slave labor with free labor”, observing some provisions.<sup>28</sup> The committee then suggested a modification. The third part would be “intended to subsidize colonization, with a view to settlers who are effectively placed in agricultural establishments of any nature”.<sup>29</sup> It was the first time that an explicit and specific clause was dedicated in favor of immigration in an emancipationist law.

That same day, August 13, there was the final vote on the project, being approved by 73 votes in favor and 17 votes against.<sup>30</sup> Then, the proposal went to the Senate, where it would not undergo changes, due to a pact signed between Saraiva, who resigned three days later, and the baron of Cotegipe, former president of the Senate and who would form a new government (CRUZ, 2022, p. 147). Cotegipe protected the project from opposition attacks as much as he could and managed to have it sanctioned on September 28, 1885, in deference to the so-called Lei do Ventre Livre, of September 28, 1871. For his effort in keeping the Saraiva project intact, As approved by the Chamber, the 1885 legislation also became known as the “Saraiva-Cotegipe Law”.<sup>31</sup> Subsequently, under the baron’s blessing, Francisco Belizário Soares de Souza, Minister of Finance, listed a long list of services, commercial transactions and

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<sup>28</sup> “I. Liberation of all slaves in said establishments and obligation not to admit others; II. Compensation by the State of half the value of the slaves thus freed, in bonds of 5%, preferred by the masters who further reduce the compensation and manumit a greater number of slaves; III. They will benefit from the services of the freedmen for a period of five years, subject to the provisions of art. 2nd, § 1st of this law. § 4 The provision of services by freedmen, as referred to in the previous paragraph, and in other provisions of this law, will be remunerated with food, clothing, treatment for illnesses and a monetary bonus per day of service that must be determined in government regulations”.

<sup>29</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 14/8/1885, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 14/8/1885, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Gazeta de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 29/9/1885, p. 2; *Revista Ilustrada*, Rio de Janeiro, 31/12/1885, p. 3; *Gazeta da Tarde*, Rio de Janeiro, 21/1/1886, p. 1.

products that would be taxed by Decree n° 9.593, of May 7, 1886.<sup>32</sup> According to the same decree, the 5% would be charged from the first of July of that year, 1886.

The product of the 5% additional fee did not take long to demonstrate its dimension. In the Treasury report, referring to the year 1885, Belisário de Souza stated that the amount reached 4,662:050\$000 (four thousand, six hundred and sixty-two *contos* and fifty thousand *réis*) more than four times the result of the rents already traditionally established by the Law of September 28, 1871, which totaled 1,000:000\$000 (one thousand *contos de réis*).<sup>33</sup> According to the Saraiva-Cotegipe Law, of this amount gathered by the 5%, 3,108:033\$333 were destined for the emancipation of older slaves and for the liberation of half or less than half the price of those enslaved in farming and mining and the third part, meaning that 1,554:016\$662, was allocated to the colonization subsidy through the costs of transporting settlers. It is interesting to note that in table 1 while the income traditionally sent to the emancipation fund suffered a sharp drop in 1888, due to abolition, the product of the 5% rate showed an increase of 18.7% in relation to the previous year, demonstrating not only an increase in its amount, but the persistence of its collection beyond May 13th.

Table 1

Years	1885	1886	1887	1888
Emancipation funds	1.000:000\$000	1.000.000\$000	1.000:000\$000	462.911\$133
Results of the 5% tax	4.662.050\$000	5.086.999\$998	5.210.400\$000	6.406.385\$883

Sources: *Relatórios do ministério da Fazenda*, 1885, p. 19; 1886, p. 19; 1887, p. 19; explanation of Table no. 3 for the financial year 1888, p. 87.

<sup>32</sup> These taxes were “import duties for consumption; file of genres free from consumption rights; tax of foremen; storage; headlight tax; tax from the dock; paper stamp; property transfer tax; tax about industries and professions”. Also added to this was the “saying about allowances and salaries; tax property; tax of transport; tax of cattle; public deposit premiums; and the tax on patents and privileges”. This also included “income with special application, namely: slave tax including additional; transfer of ownership of slaves; fines; tax on slave consignees; said about lotteries; and stamp of lottery tickets”. BRASIL. *Decreto n° 9.593, de 7 de maio de 1886*.

<sup>33</sup> The income traditionally established by the Law of September 28, 1871, refers to the fee and taxes on the transfer of property of enslaved people, fines, donations, benefits from tax-free lotteries, the tenth part of the net benefit from lotteries granted after the law, active debt, taxes on consignees of slaves, 15% taxes on lotteries, ticket stamps and remainders of lottery prizes. All these items raised, according to the Ministry of Finance report, one thousand *contos de réis*. BRASIL, 1886, p. 19.

Following a measure taken in 1888, after abolition, the Ministry of Finance began to exclude the item “emancipation fund” from its tables, which would be replaced by the term “income with special application”. The justification fell on the budget law for the year 1888, which would have established the item “to subsidize colonization”, which would be covered by this income.<sup>34</sup> In this way, the fund, a legal instrument of emancipation, would be gradually removed from the Empire’s political and accounting repertoire, blurring the transparency of public income, to the extent that it would make it impossible to identify the amounts originally intended for the manumission of enslaved people. In its place, immigration subsidies, Brazil’s official state policy at the time, gained prominence.

### Costing for the arrival of immigrants

Two years after the Law of September 28, 1885, payments from the tax began to appear in the country’s press. On September 22, 1887, the *Jornal do Commercio*, from the Court, published that “the payment of 3,692\$570 (three *contos*, six hundred and ninety-two thousand and five hundred and seventy *réis*) was authorized to the baron of Santa Maria Madalena”, José Joaquim da Silva Freire, “as compensation for the passage of 84 immigrants, arrived from Europe on the steamer Lavarello, and introduced to the farm called Boa Vista, which he owned”. The note also stated that this transportation expense to the village of Santa Maria Madalena, in the interior of Rio de Janeiro, was subsidized “by a third of the proceeds of the 5% additional fee”.<sup>35</sup>

The baron, a coffee grower, had been bringing immigrants to his properties since at least February of that same year, 1887, when the municipal council of Santa Maria Madalena was notified that this gentleman “was authorized to introduce ten families of Italian farmers to his farm Boa Vista”.<sup>36</sup> A few days later, the Ministry of Agriculture issued an order warning the baron that “full payment for the passage of these immigrants” would only be made by the imperial government “after they have been definitively placed as workers, with or without a service rental contract on the aforementioned farm”.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the government was concerned about the effectiveness of the work of immigrants brought in through its funding, even if they worked without a contract, which made Europeans more vulnerable to the impositions of bosses, although it could also mean greater autonomy for these workers.

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<sup>34</sup> BRASIL, 1891, Table no. 1, n.p.

<sup>35</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 22/9/1887, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 18/2/1887, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Revista de Engenharia*, Rio de Janeiro, 28/2/1887, p. 4.

Two months after informing the council of his village and the ministry's warning about the payment of the immigrants' tickets and already feeling the change of winds against slavery, the baron decided to free "unconditionally, 96 slaves, the only ones he owned, asking them to assist in the future harvest" after which they would be "considered as colonists".<sup>38</sup> Manumissions on the eve of abolition were a strategy widely used by the lords in an attempt to ensure the submission of the freed people through gratitude or dependence, in an attempt to make their paternalistic policies untouchable (CHALHOUB, 1990, p. 144; ALBUQUERQUE, 2009, p. 83; CUNHA, 2012, p. 87-88; MATTOS, 2013, p. 235; NEGRO, 2018, p. 19). When analyzing the migratory movements in Rio de Janeiro, in the post-abolition period, Carlos Eduardo Coutinho da Costa highlighted that the decision to abandon the farms was part of a conscious choice by many freedmen based on the autonomy of being able to come and go, contrary to the will of the lords in the continuity of asymmetrical and violent labor relations (COSTA, 2020, p. 150-151).

Two months after abolition, on July 9, 1888, together with other farmers in the region, this same baron signed the minutes of installation of the Madalenesse Immigration Society, whose main objective was "to establish a flow of European immigrants to this municipality using benefit from the favors of the State or the province in order to eliminate the shortage of hands that puts farming in a precarious condition, greatly aggravated by the effects of the May 13th law".<sup>39</sup> The argument for emancipation as a cause of crises and lack of labor in the fields dated back to at least the end of the 1860s and was widely disseminated throughout the parliamentary discussions that spanned the entire 1880s (CUNHA, 2000, p. 25; CHALHOUB, 2003, p. 144; MENDONÇA, 2008, p. 45; ALONSO, 2015; NEGRO, 2018, p. 28). This discursive resource served the slave owners in that they could pressure the State to maintain slavery and, when they gradually began to see abolition on the horizon, it was useful in demanding immigration, financing and compensation from the Crown.

The strategy of the gentlemen of Santa Madalena of coming together through the Madalenesse Immigration Society to compete with greater strength in receiving amounts from the General or Provincial Government, found support in the experience of the gentlemen from São Paulo. In December 1887, *A Imigração*, a newsletter prepared and printed by the Sociedade Central de Imigração, an association dedicated to the systematization of the immigration flow from Europe to Brazil, informed some beneficiaries of the third part of the additional tax of 5% directed

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<sup>38</sup> *Gazeta de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 9/4/1888, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 10/7/1888, p. 2.

to subsidize transport of immigrants.<sup>40</sup> According to the publication “the treasury of Fazenda de S. Paulo was authorized to pay the Immigration Promoting Society the amount of 156:862\$500” (one hundred and fifty-six *contos*, eight hundred and sixty-two thousand and five hundred *réis*). This amount was related to “the passage of immigrants from Europe, due to that association”. This Society, which operated especially between the ports of Genoa, in Italy, and Santos, on the coast of São Paulo, brought together powerful São Paulo farmers, such as Martinho Prado Junior, who was its director, president and who later had conflicts with settlers for seeing in foreigners “mere instruments of work”, as highlighted by Michael Hall (HALL, 1989, p. 6). Joaquim Egydio de Souza Aranha, baron of Três Rios, wealthy landowner from the Campinas region, was also part of this Society, as was Antonio Carlos de Arruda Botelho, viscount of Pinhal, farmer from the Piracicaba region, businessman and founder of Banco de São Paulo (VASCONCELLOS, 1918, p. 355-356; 514).<sup>41</sup>

The same news that highlighted the payment of the Sociedade Promotora de Imigração by the province of São Paulo, also highlighted another payment, this time to Francisco Antonio Queiroz Telles, count of Parnaíba, owner of the São Francisco colony, which brought together Germans and Swiss in the region of Jundiá and received the amount of 5:687\$300 (five *contos*, six hundred and eighty-seven thousand and three hundred *réis*), “for the passage of immigrants he located on his farm” (VASCONCELLOS, 1918, p. 339-340)<sup>42</sup>. At that time, the Count of Parnaíba still had enslaved workers, as *Correio Paulistano* highlighted when reporting that this farmer gathered his captives on August 21, 1887, “40 in number, and declared to them that they would be free, three on the 31st of December 1889, for having rendered him more important services, and the others on December 31, 1890, if they continue to have good behavior”.<sup>43</sup>

The attachment of some of these São Paulo masters to slavery is sensitive, as well as their attempts to control the enslaved despite the mass escapes in that province, the advance of the abolitionist campaign and the arrival of European workers. Like other provinces of the Empire, São Paulo persisted with slavery until the end, as evidenced by the powerful Count of Parnaíba. The payment to these gentlemen can also be understood as an attempt by the Crown to bring them to itself, since a significant part of São Paulo’s economic elite began to flirt with republican and

<sup>40</sup> About the Sociedade Central de Imigração see: HALL, 1976, p. 147-171; VASSILIEFF, 1987.

<sup>41</sup> *Correio Paulistano*, São Paulo, 4/7/1886, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> *Correio Paulistano*, São Paulo, 26/11/1887, p.2.

<sup>43</sup> *Correio Paulistano*, Rio de Janeiro, 23/8/1887, p. 3.



federative ideas, exerting political pressure on the Monarchy (LEMOS, 2009, p. 415; GOYENA SOARES, 2020).

Still in 1888, *The Immigration* celebrated the arrival of 109,530 immigrants to Brazil, around double from the previous year, which registered 55,986 European workers arriving on the other side of the Atlantic. Folha attributed these numbers to the Law of September 28, 1885, legislation that was, in its view, “unfairly judged” and which had “a very positive and direct influence on the great solution of May 13”. This statement found space in Michael Hall’s reflections on abolition, for whom mass immigration would have contributed to the feasibility of abolition, especially in the province of São Paulo, and not the other way around (HALL, 1989, p. 3). The publication considered that “we certainly did not reach and could not maintain the current level without the extraordinary favor of the Law of September 28, 1885, now expanded by that of November 24”.<sup>44</sup> This last law determined in the third part of the second article, “to use in the service of immigration and national colonization from now on the part of the income product with special application from the year 1888”.<sup>45</sup> The emancipation fund, therefore, became the financier for the arrival of immigrants.

### Post-may 13 disputes

On May 13, on the day of the abolition of slavery, *Jornal do Commercio* circulated a text signed by a “Paulista”, which stated that the government, due to the end of captivity and to avoid “calamities greater than any disturbances”, should adopt some measures. The author listed that it was necessary to pass a law that would extend “the fatal deadlines for mortgage debts, in order to give farmers greater respite”, another law “authorizing the founding of a bank, with favors and sufficient capital to make loans to large-scale farming terms, annual fees, and low interest rates”. It would also be necessary, according to the article, a law directing “funds to assist large-scale immigration, immediately applying the current emancipation fund to this” and “finally [a] law that obliges everyone to work without infringing on individual freedom”.<sup>46</sup> These concerns were a foreshadowing of the discussions that would deepen following the end of slavery and that would not leave out the direction of the emancipation fund, which in 1887 brought together the amount of 4,473:600\$000 (four thousand, four hundred and seventy-three *contos* and six hundred thousand *réis*), around half of the entire budget for the prominent ministry of

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<sup>44</sup> *A Imigração*, Rio de Janeiro, dezembro de 1888, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> BRASIL. *Lei n° 3,396, de 24 de novembro de 1888*.

<sup>46</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 13/5/1888, p. 3.

the Empire for that year, which was 8,928,675\$497 (eight thousand, nine hundred and twenty-eight *contos*, six hundred and seventy-five thousand, four hundred and ninety-seven *réis*) (BRASIL, 1888, p. 7, 19).<sup>47</sup>

A few days after abolition, on May 25 of 1888, *Jornal do Commercio* published an article entitled “the additional tax and its destiny”, in which the anonymous author defended the continuity of the tax collection, however, with modifications. The writer brought to the discussion a fragment of the Law of September 28, 1885, which stated that the aforementioned tax would be “collected even after the liberation of all slaves and until the debt arising from the issuance of the titles authorized by this law is extinguished”. The argument brought was that if there was no abolition through the issuance of titles, the tax would be easily revoked – even some complaints that were published in the press against the continued collection were based on this same justification.<sup>48</sup> However, he considered that the 5% also included the immigration subsidy, considered a “need (...) now greater”. That was why he suggested changing the tax from 5% to 2%, since slavery had already been extinguished, meaning it was only important to continue paying for the arrival of immigrants to Brazil.<sup>49</sup>

Five days later, in the session on May 30, conservative Pernambuco deputy Pedro da Cunha Beltrão took the issue of the tax to the Chamber. He claimed that it seemed to him “beyond doubt that, after the law of May 13, the Public Treasury can no longer continue to charge the additional 5% created by the Law of September 28, 1885”. Even with slavery abolished, he considered, “the 5% continues to be charged, and the government has not provided anything in this regard”. He said that “either the law of May 13th revoked” the formation of the emancipation fund “in the part relating to the institution of this additional tax or not”. For him, Beltrão, revoked it and there was no doubt about that. He stated that the letter of the Law of September 28, 1885 defined that the rate would be suspended as long as there was “extinction of the securities issued authorized by the same law, and because such securities were never issued, and consequently there is nothing to redeem, it must charge be suspended”. Therefore, he sent an indication to the Chamber’s budget committee in which he requested the end of the additional fee and the refund “to taxpayers of amounts unduly paid and illegally collected since the date of the same law” of May 13th.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> BRASIL, 1888, p. 7; 19.

<sup>48</sup> Some articles against charging the fee were published after abolition. See: *Jornal do Recife*, Recife, 18/5/1888, p. 1; *O Paiz*, Rio de Janeiro, 26/5/1888, p. 3; *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 2/7/1888, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 25/5/1888, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> ACD, 30 de maio de 1888, v. 1, p. 206.

In the session of June 20, the conservative deputy from Rio Grande do Sul Antonio Ferreira Vianna, Minister of Justice, the same one who had helped draft the Law of May 13th, presented to the Chamber a project to repress idleness (n° 33 A – 1888), which would use the proceeds of the additional 5% tax for the construction, organization and funding of “establishments intended for the correction of violators of the term of good living” that could be built on islands or in border regions of the empire. The locations were intentionally chosen to purge those indicted from social life in large urban centers, as was previously done with the recruitment policy that directly affected the poor and black population of the country (KRAAY, 1999). Furthermore, “disciplinary establishments for minors under the age of 17 convicted of violating the terms of good living” and “nursing homes for the old and disabled who have an absolute lack of means of subsistence” would be created in the Court and provinces of the empire.<sup>51</sup>

Most of the money that was previously intended for the liberation of black people would be used for their mass incarceration. The project aimed to reach the so-called “dangerous classes”, made up of people of color, to whom the State demonstrated, even post-abolition, little or no interest in providing dignified conditions for survival and social ascension (CHALHOUB, 1990). On November 20, 1888, when closing the work of the General Assembly, the emperor stated that he hoped that in the following session, in March 1889, when the Chambers were reopened, the projects would be resumed, including that of the “repression of idleness”.<sup>52</sup>

In the June 26th session, in the Chamber, João Alfredo, head of the government, presented a project in favor of the real and agricultural credit banks. The proposal provided for the direction of “fees and income destined for the emancipation fund” and “the importance of the quota of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the additional rate of 5%” to “a fund destined to help with the payment of interest and amortization of mortgage bills, for whose emissions the State assumed responsibility”.<sup>53</sup> In this way, the money that would be destined to free slaves over 55 years of age, and to pay half or less than half the value of “farming and mining slaves”, whose slave owners wanted to “convert establishments maintained by slaves into free ones”, would be used by the State in case it assumes interest and mortgages involving real and agricultural credit banks. Therefore, the State assumed the role of guarantor for the farmers, the main customers of these banks, with the money that until then was directed to the

<sup>51</sup> ACD, 20 de junho de 1888, v. 2, p. 18-19; 310-311.

<sup>52</sup> BRASIL, 1889, p. 866-867.

<sup>53</sup> The project excluded taxes “relating to servile property” and “general taxes on the transfer of slave property”. See: ACD, 8 de junho de 1888, v. 2, p. 398-399.

emancipation fund for the liberation of enslaved people. The dispute over the fund and the additional fee was so great that on June 28, the conservative deputy from Rio de Janeiro, João Evangelista Sayão Bulhões de Carvalho, asked the government to respond immediately about the purpose it intended to give to the said amount. “If the guarantee of interest and mortgage notes issued by regional banks, according to Mr. president of the council”, asked Bulhões de Carvalho, or “if to asylums and correctional establishments for the repression of idleness, protection of invalids from slavery, according to the project of the Minister of Justice”.<sup>54</sup>

This proposal by João Alfredo was a response to the Baron of Cotegipe who had presented a compensation project to the former slave owners days before, on June 19th. Cotegipe emerged as one of the main agitators in defense of compensation for former slave owners and, to this end, included in his calculations the two thirds of the emancipation fund aimed at the enslaved population.<sup>55</sup> Unlike the baron, who intended to directly compensate the former owners through the values of the former slaves freed on May 13, João Alfredo proposed compensation – without calling it that name – through government support for the banks that subsidized farming..

On July 3, 1888, two weeks after Ferreira Vianna presented his project, *Jornal do Commercio* reproduced a text originally published in *Jornal do Recife* about the 5% rate. Under the title “the additional five percent”, the note stated that the Law of May 13th stated “in its polished conciseness that slavery was abolished in Brazil, all provisions to the contrary revoked”. The text continued by stating that “among the provisions to the contrary (...) that were revoked is the Law of September 28, 1885” which, in turn, “formed the emancipation fund” and “established the additional 5% to all general taxes, except export taxes” [emphasis in the original]. Despite the publication showing that the creators of the 1885 law had instituted the additional tax “even after the liberation of all slaves until the debt arising from the issuance of titles authorized by the same law was extinguished”, there was no such debt. Therefore, he argued that he could not “without serious offense to the Constitution and the laws, continue to charge a tax that has been revoked”, but João Alfredo, who in addition to being head of cabinet was also Minister of Finance, still would not have telegraphed “to the collection offices, which are subordinate to it, so that they no longer collect the additional 5% taxes”. The note ended by stating that the continued collection of this tax would be an “illegality” since the extinction of slavery and “the amounts individually paid and unconstitutionally collected” should be returned to commerce.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Anais do Senado do Império do Brasil (ASIB), 28 de junho de 1888, v. 2, p. 431.

<sup>55</sup> ASIB, 19 de junho de 1888, v. 2, p. 109-111.

<sup>56</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 3/6/1888, p. 2.

At the Chamber session, on that same day, July 3, 1888, Joaquim Nabuco read and delivered to the board of directors a representation he received from the Associação Comercial Beneficente de Pernambuco, in which he requested the deputies “to eliminate the additional fee of 5% to all general taxes (except those on exports), created by the Law of September 28, 1885”. As justification, the association claimed that the “legislative act of May 13th took away the reason of the aforementioned tax, which in the majority of its revenue, should be applied to the manumission of slaves without prejudice to the respective masters”. The representation admitted “that a portion of the proceeds from this additional tax was intended to subsidize colonization, to pay for transportation of settlers, who were actually placed in agricultural establishments of any nature”. However, he considered that the association’s decision was already known, which was in favor of “taking advantage of all national workers”. It also stated that as the Law of May 13th had not revoked the existence of the 5% tax for the emancipation fund, “it would be expected that this August Assembly would vote on the requested elimination, as the permanence of a tax created in view of circumstances that totally disappeared with the unconditional abolition of slavery in Brazil”.<sup>57</sup>

In that same session on July 3rd, in disagreement with the proposals of Ferreira Vianna, Cotegipe and João Alfredo, when referring to the financial problems of his native province, the conservative deputy from Piauí Coelho Rezende suggested that the sum of the “emancipation fund and the product of the additional 5%, currently unapplied, which amounts to more than 14 thousand *contos*, according to notes taken from the report (...) of the Minister of Finance” was “applied to improvements in the provinces, provided that, with the extinction of the element slave, it must have another destiny”.<sup>58</sup> It is not known for sure how Coelho Rezende arrived at the amount of 14 thousand *contos de réis*, since as previously demonstrated, João Alfredo’s report showed the value of 4,473:600\$000 (four thousand, four hundred and seventy-three *contos*, six hundred thousand *réis*), well below what the deputy claimed existed, but still a great fortune. Despite the mismatch of information, what is important is understanding the plan drawn up by the parliamentarian for the amount collected by the emancipation fund. Unlike the Pernambuco Commercial Beneficent Association, which believed it was more appropriate to invest in “the use of all national workers”, Coelho Rezende defended that the amount be reverted to the treasury of all provinces in the country, under the general and vague argument of promoting improvements.

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<sup>57</sup> ACD, 3 de julho de 1888, v. 2, p. 471.

<sup>58</sup> ACD, 3 de julho de 1888, v. 2, p. 484.

On July 10, the Chamber's budget committee gave a favorable opinion to Ferreira Vianna's project. However, encountering difficulties or resistance in directing all proceeds from the additional fee to the project against idleness, Vianna, Minister of Justice, proposed that the commission place a limit of 500:000\$ [five hundred *contos de réis*] for the execution of the project, deducted "from the proceeds of said additional 5% fee".<sup>59</sup>

Days later, on July 20th 1888, João Alfredo's project would be criticized in the Chamber by the conservative deputy from Rio de Janeiro Alberto Bezamat. Bezamat, a member of the conservative dissent, therefore opposition to the government, took into his hands the records of the session of September 17, 1887, in which João Alfredo demonstrated a certain proximity of ideas with the former president of the council, baron of Cotegipe, and began to read it. Bezamat's objective was to demonstrate that the people of Pernambuco had changed their minds about the application of the emancipation fund. That is why he highlighted a speech by João Alfredo in which he stated that the emancipation fund could "be applied much more effectively to the transformation of work, which we cannot delay; part of that money", that is, from the fund, "has already been allocated to immigration: we should allocate it all to the same service".<sup>60</sup> This speech, highlighted by Bezamat and printed in *Jornal do Commercio* the previous year, sought to arouse the protests of those who had trusted João Alfredo so that he would further intensify the flow of European immigration to Brazil, using all the funds from the emancipation fund to this end.<sup>61</sup>

On July 26, 1888, ignoring the criticisms made by Alberto Bezamat, João Alfredo went to the Chamber in order to try to calm the emotions of the deputies complaining about abolition and intensify the defense of his proposal to bail out the banks with part of the money from the fund of emancipation. He stated that regarding the situation of the crops he had tried to "inform himself of everything, and to obtain exact clarifications" he carried out "a thorough investigation" in every way he could, including calling "a hearing of competent people". Without mentioning the names of the people he consulted, the chief of staff said that the information they presented to him seemed to him "that the state of the crops is not what has been said. The crop debt was calculated, by one of the most knowledgeable men in this place, at half the value of a single harvest". In this way, according to João Alfredo, the farmers dissatisfied with the extinction of captivity, were exaggerating

<sup>59</sup> ACD, 10 de julho de 1888, v. 3, p. 74.

<sup>60</sup> ACD, 20 de julho de 1888, v. 7 – apêndice, p. 90.

<sup>61</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 18/9/1887, p. 1.

about the true condition of the plantations, that is, the farming would not be in trouble due to the abolition.

However, he considered that he would not deny the fact that they needed to “extend credit to farmers, give it more elasticity” and with this objective declared that he had already taken “how many steps depended” on him to “soften the situation” that these owners were going through. He further stated that he was “willing to use part of the available revenue, coming from the emancipation fund, to help any of the banks in this place” that offered a guarantee and began to “make a fair distribution among the farmers”. He said that he had asked “one of the bank directors [of Banco do Brasil], who lend most on mortgages and agricultural pledges, what amount they would need to respond to current emergencies”, to which the director replied that they needed “3,500 :000\$000” (three thousand and fifth *contos de réis*). Robert Slenes highlighted the important role of several banks, especially Banco do Brasil, in financing Rio de Janeiro’s large crops between the 1870s and 1880s, offering long-term, low-interest mortgage loans. These facilities were only suspended by Banco do Brasil in 1884, when this institution expressed “concern about the future of large-scale farming” and not coincidentally in the same year that Dantas took over as head of the Executive branch and tried to implement his emancipationist project without compensation in Parliament, as seen previously (SLENES, 1986, p. 131-134).<sup>62</sup>

“Well”, concluded João Alfredo, “we can already see that the crisis is not as terrible as people say”.<sup>63</sup>The value indicated by one of the directors of Banco do Brasil was lower than the more than 4 thousand *contos de réis* collected by the emancipation fund. Certainly, the president of the council sought both to appease the heated spirits of the farmers, eager for compensation, and to restrict expenditure on public coffers, already in an alarming situation. It appears that all proposals involving the use of the fund and the product of the additional 5% tax – which continued to be charged – were postponed or paralyzed with the change in political situation that occurred on June 7, 1889. The fall of João Alfredo, weakened by clashes within his own party, the rise of the liberals, led by the Viscount of Ouro Preto and the agitation of demonstrations against the Monarchy seem to have imprinted a new dynamic in this regard in Parliament.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> In more recent research, Rodrigo Goyena Soares has robustly highlighted the efforts of the cabinets led by João Alfredo (1888-1889) and Ouro Preto (1889) to compensate the large slave masters in the post-13 May period, by injecting large sums of money into the *Banco do Brasil*, which would serve as credit for the Empire’s large landowners. See more on: SOARES, 2023.

<sup>63</sup> ACD, 26 de julho de 1888, v. 2, p. 402.

<sup>64</sup> BRASIL, 1889, p. 243.

In January 1889, *A Imigração* published that in the previous year, that is, in 1888, the ports of Rio de Janeiro and Santos, the main points of entry for foreigners into Brazil, registered 130,056 landings of European workers. This total corresponded to “almost five times the annual average of the immediate previous decade”, which was 27,320 immigrants per year. “This result (it is fair to recognize)”, stated the publication, “we must attribute it, at the same time as administrative solicitude, to the prediction of that Law of September 28, 1885 which”, in the opinion of the periodical, led to the end of slavery and “prepared the advent of the definitive organization of free labor, authorizing the government to compensate the passage of immigrants destined for farming”.<sup>65</sup>

### The republic and the destination of the money from the fund

Still in January 1889, the court’s *Gazeta de Notícias* published a criticism of the continuity of the additional fee and its referral to the emancipation fund, which no longer freed any person due to the legal extinction of slavery on May 13th of the previous year. Under the title “dialogue between two traders”, it could be read: “Manuel, I’m going to ask João Alfredo if the new tax will still be for the emancipation fund. José, don’t be surprised because we still have lotteries for that, what a despotism, come the great Republic, it’s long overdue”.<sup>66</sup> In addition to expressing taxpayers’ protests against the tax that persisted even after abolition, the anecdote revealed the uneasiness between the characters and the monarchical regime, in the hope that the Republic would live up to their expectations of fair governments, including with regard to tax collection, eliminating the additional fee once and for all. This complaint was not an isolated case. In April 1890, the minutes of the meeting of farmers from the term of São José de Além Paraíba, in Minas Gerais, the same term that two years earlier had represented in the Senate in favor of compensation to former masters, stated that “the tax for the slave emancipation fund is still standing, when it should have fallen with the law of May 13th”.<sup>67</sup>

A few weeks after the establishment of the Republic, on the last day of 1889, some of the newspapers in Rio de Janeiro widely publicized the report made by Ruy Barbosa, Minister of Finance of the Provisional Government, in which he de-

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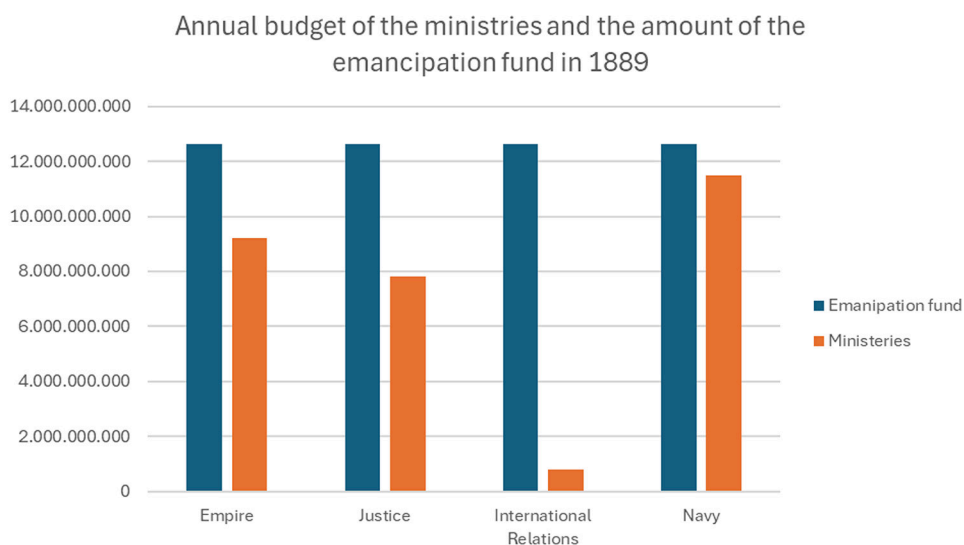
<sup>65</sup> *A Imigração*, Rio de Janeiro, 31/1/1889, p. 5.

<sup>66</sup> *Gazeta de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 17/1/1889, p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 6/4/1890, p. 3. This note was also published on *Gazeta de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 29/5/1890, p. 2; *O País*, Rio de Janeiro, 8/4/1890, p. 2.



scribed the “financial situation bequeathed to the Republic by the monarchy”.<sup>68</sup> The document presented to Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca on the day of the republican coup, on November 15, accused the Crown of “accumulating elements of ruin”. Therefore, the new Minister of Finance intended to demonstrate to the country that “the Republic encountered nothing but difficulties, commitments, and imperative emergencies”. Among the figures listed was the large “emancipation fund balance”, which at that time corresponded to 12,622:308\$776 (twelve thousand, six hundred and twenty-two *contos*, three hundred and eight thousand, seven hundred and seventy-six *réis*). This value was greater than the budget for the ministries of the Empire (9,226:528\$097), Justice (7,816:574\$808), Foreigners (805,706\$666) and the Navy (11,495:004\$305) for the entire year 1889, as can be seen better in Graphic 1 (BRASIL,



1889, p. 7, 9-10).<sup>69</sup> The Provisional Government would have to deal with increasingly constant complaints against the collection of the additional fee.

### Graphic 1

<sup>68</sup> As contas foram publicadas em vários veículos da imprensa influentes no Rio de Janeiro, capital do país: *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 31/12/1889, p. 1; *Gazeta da Tarde*, Rio de Janeiro, 31/12/1889, p. 2; *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 31/12/1889, p. 1; *Gazeta de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 31/12/1889, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> BRASIL, 1889, p. 7, 9-10.

The black population was not oblivious to the emancipation fund or the disputes that involved it. Still under the Monarchy, on April 26, 1889, shortly before the Law of May 13th completed its first year, the court's *Gazeta de Notícias* published a letter prepared by a group of freedmen who represented the freedmen of the region of Vassouras, province from Rio de Janeiro. "Commissioned by our companions, freed from several farms near the Paty station, municipality of Vassouras, to obtain education and instruction for our children from the imperial government", said the letter, they were addressed to Ruy Barbosa. The signatories stated that "the Law of September 28, 1871 was circumvented and never put into effect regarding the part that dealt with the education of the naive", therefore, they considered that "our children lie immersed in deep darkness". They believed, therefore, that it was "necessary to enlighten them and guide them through instruction". Regarding the Crown, they stated that "slavery has always been the support of the throne in this vast and beloved country", however, "now that the law of May 13, 1888 has abolished it, the queen's ministers want to make the freed people our unconscious companions, the basis for laying the foundations of the third reign" [emphasis in the original]. Dissatisfied, they stated that "the freedmen of Paty do Alferes, represented by us, protest against the indecent means that the government wants to use and declare, taking advantage of this opportunity, that they do not join in similar collusion" and, furthermore, "until now they have been sucked in by the government of the empire, they want the education and instruction that the Law of September 28, 1871 granted them".

The freedmen considered that the imperial government continued "to charge an additional 5% tax, it is fair that this tax, decreed for the slaves' emancipation fund, goes towards the education of the freedmen's children". To this end, they asked for "the assistance of the inspired pen of Your Excellency [Ruy Barbosa] who had so much influence on our emancipation". However, they understood "perfectly that liberation came from the people, who forced the crown and parliament to decree it (...), and for this reason we will not raise our weapons against our brothers", despite having been "advised by the aulics of the palace, once our greatest executioners". They wrote the letter "to escape the great danger we are in due to lack of education, we came to ask for it for our children and so that they do not raise a murderous hand to slaughter those who want the republic, which is freedom, equality and fraternity".<sup>70</sup> An evocation that recalled not only the French Revolution of 1789, but also the Haitian Revolution itself, of 1791, through which enslaved people sought to implement the motto of revolutionary France and freed the Island of São Domingos from

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<sup>70</sup> *Gazeta de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 26/4/1889, p. 2.

French rule (TOCQUEVILLE, 1866; JAMES, 2010). The letter was concluded with the seven signatures of the members of the commission of freedmen and dated April 19, 1889. The document demonstrates the political and social awareness of the freed population of Vassouras – an important stronghold of the coffee economy in the province of Rio de Janeiro – in the recognition of education as an important element of a life in freedom, a conception shared by many other freedmen of the time (FONSECA, 2002, p. 118; & SCHUELER, RIZZINI & MARQUES, 2015; GRADEN, 2006, p. 323).

For the signatories of the letter and those they represent, abolition was made by the people and should not be the final measure adopted in favor of the black population. It was necessary to guarantee decent conditions for instruction so that they could exercise their freedom with greater completeness and autonomy. Wlamyra Albuquerque, who analyzed this same letter, drew attention to the fact that the commission addressed the letter to Ruy Barbosa, a prominent politician in discussions about public education in the country (ALBUQUERQUE, 2009, p. 185-186).<sup>71</sup> Demonstrating knowledge about national politics, the existence of funds from the emancipation fund and the validity of the 5% tax, the freedmen in question were convinced that the fairest thing would be to revert all funds from the fund and tax to the education of the *ingênuos*, since this measure was circumvented in compliance with the Law of September 28, 1871. That is, it systematically ignored the provisions of its second article, second part and third paragraph, which established the provision of education to the naive by private people, “associations or establishments created for this purpose”.<sup>72</sup>

The freedmen’s demand was ignored by Ruy. It was no surprise that this same letter was republished at the end of July 1890, in the middle of the Republic and in one of the newspapers with the largest circulation in the federal capital, *Jornal do Commercio*. The new reprint responded to the request of “a freedman”, as the author of the note signed. A paragraph published above the letter to the Bahian said that “now that it is a matter of obtaining favors from the government for this parish [of Paty do Alferes] and that the petitioners promise to open schools for the children of freedmen and for adults, we transcribe the request addressed to the, then journalist, Dr. Ruy Barbosa”.<sup>73</sup> The republication was, therefore, a demand on the then Minister of Finance, since these were times that were intended to be new republican

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<sup>71</sup> This same letter was also analyzed by other historians. See: FONSECA, 2014, p. 45-46; VIANA; RIBEIRO NETO & GOMES, 2019, p. 166-167.

<sup>72</sup> BRASIL, 2022.

<sup>73</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 27/7/1890, p. 2.

times, which should be, in the view of those freedmen, of “freedom, equality and fraternity”. Therefore, a suitable opportunity to “obtain favors from the government”.

It seems that the freedmen would not obtain the favors of the one they believed to be the “true defender of the people”, at least they would not achieve what they demanded from the emancipation fund, which persisted in the report of the Ministry of Finance, prepared by Ruy Barbosa himself, for that year of 1890. The ministerial document showed a balance of 6,815:864\$745 (six thousand, eight hundred and fifteen *contos*, eight hundred and sixty-four thousand, seven hundred and forty-five *réis*), almost half the amount it contained in the previous year (BRASIL, 1891, p. 369).<sup>74</sup> This means not only the continuity of financing the arrival of immigrants, but also the payment of manumissions that apparently was still being carried out, as requested by the Baron of Cantagalo, at the end of November 1889, for the enslaved people he freed through the fund.<sup>75</sup> The same report stated that the third part of the additional 5% fee directed to colonization services was worth 6,730:697\$292 (six thousand, seven hundred and thirty *contos*, six hundred and ninety-seven thousand, two hundred and ninety-two *réis*), and is also subject to discounts on expenses incurred in 1889.<sup>76</sup>

In the following year, in 1891, the same ministry’s report indicated a much lower value for this purpose, 77:796\$855 (seventy-seven *contos*, seven hundred and ninety-six thousand, eight hundred and fifty-five *réis*), which was the value replicated by subsequent reports in attached tables.<sup>77</sup> This sharp drop in values demonstrates how the subsidy for immigrant travel to Brazil continued at full steam, directly benefiting former owners of slaves employed in agricultural production.

On October 6, 1890, *Jornal do Commercio* published Decree no. 804, signed by Deodoro da Fonseca and Ruy Barbosa two days earlier, extinguishing “the additional fee of 5% for the emancipation fund”.<sup>78</sup> Given the sources consulted, *i.e.*, various periodicals and ministerial reports from Finance and Agriculture, in addition to decrees, it is not possible to know exactly where the almost 78 *contos de réis* from the emancipation fund were directed. However, it is likely that this amount was completely used to facilitate the arrival of immigrants, as João Alfredo had initially suggested in 1887.

## Final considerations

<sup>74</sup> BRASIL, 1891, p. 369.

<sup>75</sup> *Jornal do Comercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 29/11/1889, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> BRASIL, 1891, p. 369.

<sup>77</sup> BRASIL, 1892, p. 148. The value and table were reproduced until, at least, the 1898 Ministry of Finance report.

<sup>78</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, 6/10/1890, p. 1. See: BRASIL. Decreto n° 804, de 4 de outubro de 1890.

As seen previously, this research seeks to contribute to recent debates involving not only the participation of the Brazilian State and financial institutions in slavery, but also to discuss the destination of the money that constituted an important instrument for purchasing manumissions for enslaved people in the country: the national fund of emancipation. To this end, it was demonstrated herein the transformations that the fund underwent in 1885, since its creation, with the Law of September 28, 1871. It was also demonstrated how the so-called “Saraiva-Cotegipe Law” included, for the first time, explicitly, the subsidy for European immigration, based on the sharing of the fund. Strategy used by the Brazilian State both to whiten its population and to inflate the national labor market, seeking to reduce the wages of national and foreign workers through high competition.

This research highlighted speculation about the value of the fee that increased the income of the emancipation fund, in addition to the disputes surrounding its collection. The existence of a fiscal policy actively operated by a political and economic elite through the State, based on inequality, exempting and privileging their fellow men, the powerful, was highlighted. Throughout the pages, the path of part of this money was traced, sent to pay for immigration and which directly or indirectly benefited countless slave owners and former slave owners. Furthermore, the disputes over this amount from the emancipation fund after May 13th and the various plans for it were demonstrated, such as the financing of punitive policies for the black population, balancing provincial accounts and building schools for freed people and their descendants.

The significant amount raised by the emancipation fund ended up being dissolved in the Republic’s non-transparent expenses. Most likely, their money was entirely channeled to finance the arrival of European immigrants, as some of the farmers claimed and as a third of the fund already pointed out. There is still a lot to be discussed based on what has been outlined here. Most notably, the construction of policies to compensate the black population for the burdens systematically supported by the State and financial institutions in favor of maintaining and reaffirming privileges for small political and economic groups. There is a lot of money to track down and discover.

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