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War and revolution in the origins of the Oriental State of Uruguay, 1810-1830

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Keywords: Río de la Plata Revolution, José Artigas, Oriental Province, Oriental State of Uruguay, Patriot army, Socio-ethnic conflicts; Afro descendants; Independence, Sovereignty.

This article broadly presents the revolution of independence in a border territory between Spain and Portugal: the oriental band of the Uruguay River. It focuses on the ideas of José Artigas, radical expression of the revolution in the Río de la Plata for his early proposals for independence from Spain, his recognition of the sovereignty of the peoples and their rights to form a political unit on an equal footing, and the defense of the “most miserable”. Some aspects of the revolution are outlined below from the perspective of Afrodescendants and indigenous populations. Finally, the article examines the military defeat of Artiguismo and the realization of independence, with British mediation, which led to the formation of the Oriental State of Uruguay.

Պատերազմ և հեղափոխություն Ուրուգվայի արևելյան պետության ստեղծման ակունքներում
(1810-1830 թթ.)

Անա Ֆրեգա

Մոնտեվիդեոյի համալսարանի Հումանիտար և կրթական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դեկան,
պրոֆեսոր

Հիմնաբառեր՝ Ռիո դե Լա Պլատայի
հեղափոխություն, Խոսե Արտիգաս, Արևելյան
նահանգ, Ուրուգվայի արևելյան նահանգ,
Հայրենասիրական բանակ, սոցիալ-էթնիկ

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հակամարտություններ, աֆրիկացի հետնորդներ,
անկախություն, ինքնիշխանություն:

Հոդվածում լայնորեն ներկայացված է անկախության համար հեղափոխությունը Բսպանիայի և Պորտուգալիայի սահմանային տարածքում՝ Ուրուգվայ գետի արևելյան հատվածում: Այն կենտրոնանում է Խոսե Արտիգասի գաղափարների, Ռիո դե լա Պլատայի հեղափոխության արմատական արտահայտման, Բսպանիայից անկախանալու նրա վաղ առաջարկների, ժողովուրդների ինքնիշխանության և հավասար պայմաններով քաղաքական միավոր ստեղծելու նրանց իրավունքների ճանաչման և «ամենադժբախտներին» պաշտպանության հիման վրա: Հեղափոխության որոշ ասպեկտներ ստորն ներկայացված են աֆրիկացի և բնիկ ժողովուրդների տեսակետից: Վերջապես հոդվածում քննվում է Արտիգուիզմի ռազմական պարտությունը և Մեծ Բրիտանիայի միջնորդությամբ անկախության ձեռքբերման իրականացումը, ինչը հանգեցրեց Ուրուգվայի արևելյան պետության ձևավորմանը:

Война и революция у истоков создания Восточного государства Уругвай, 1810-1830 гг.

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Ключевые слова: Революция Рио-де-ла-Плата, Хосе Артигас, Восточная провинция, Восточное государство Уругвай, Патриотическая армия, Социально-этнические конфликты, африканские потомки, Независимость, Суверенитет.

В этой статье широко представлена революция за независимость на приграничной территории между Испанией и Португалией: восточной полосе реки Уругвай. В ней основное внимание уделяется идеям Хосе Артигаса, радикальному выражению революции в Рио-де-ла-Плата, его ранним предложениям о независимости от Испании, его признанию суверенитета народов и их прав на формирование политической единицы на равных основаниях и защите «самых несчастных». Некоторые аспекты революции изложены ниже с точки зрения выходцев из Африки и коренного населения. Наконец, в статье рассматривается военное поражение Артигуизма и реализация приобретения независимости при посредничестве Великобритании, что привело к образованию Восточного государства Уругвай.

* * *

Introduction: In recent decades, historiographical advances have shown that revolutions in Ibero-America are part of what Eric Hobsbawm (1962) titled *Age of Revolution*, not only as a derivation of European processes, but also as an expression of longstanding local conflicts in which Criollo, Amerindian and Afrodescendant populations participated. [Chust, Frasset, eds. 2009; Mallo, Telesca, eds. 2010, and

González Bernaldo de Quirós, dir. 2015]. The political ideas circulating on both sides of the Atlantic were appropriated and reinterpreted in diverse contexts, highlighting also the connections and interrelationships between the experiences of the new independent American republics and the political, social and economic processes of post-Napoleonic Europe. [Annino, Guerra, eds. 2003; Sabato, 2018; Fernández Sebastián, 2020 and 2021]

The crisis of the Iberian empires called into question the foundations of colonial rule as a whole. In 1810, novel alternatives of political organization appeared on American soil, sovereignty ceased to be a private attribute of the king and new subjects emerged - the people, the peoples, the nation - who proclaimed themselves sovereigns. Monarchy or republic, single sovereignty or a plurality of confederate sovereignties were some of the central points of the debate, tinged by the irruption of the popular classes in the political arena.

In a context of great politicization and vertiginous changes, some contemporaries had the feeling of being immersed in the birth of a new era, and hence the use of symbols such as the rising sun, the scale or even the tree of freedom or the Phrygian cap. (See Fig. 1 and 2) Its detractors, on the contrary, considered the revolution was a cancer, a poison, a volcano due to its effective destructive power, and a plague, a devouring fire or an impetuous torrent due to its rapid spread and violence. [Fernández Sebastián, 2021, 329-330]

Villages located on the oriental band of the Uruguay River and north of the Río de la Plata up to the Portuguese dominions of Brazil belonged to three different jurisdictions of the viceroyalty of Río de la Plata: the intendancy of Buenos Aires and the governorates of Montevideo and Misiones. In 1813, in the context of the revolution of independence, they constituted themselves into a sovereign subject: the Oriental Province. (See Fig. 3) A war scenario practically throughout the decade of 1810 and between 1825 and 1828, the territory was governed successively or simultaneously by Spaniards, people of Buenos Aires, Orientals, Lusitanians and Brazilians, forming part of Spain, the United Provinces, the System of the Free Peoples, Portugal and Brazil. In 1830, it was constituted as the Oriental State of Uruguay with a republican way of government.

This article broadly presents the revolution of independence in that territory, a border between Spain and Portugal. It focuses on the ideas of José Artigas, radical expression of the revolution in the Río de la Plata for his early proposals for independence from Spain, his recognition of the sovereignty of the peoples and their rights to form a political unit on an equal footing, and the defense of the “most miserable”. Some aspects of the revolution are outlined below from the perspective of Afrodescendants and indigenous populations. Finally, it examines the military defeat of Artiguismo and the realization of independence, with British mediation.

José Artigas and the radical path of the revolution: Uruguayan historiography is unanimous in highlighting the rural and popular character of the uprising begun in early 1811 on the oriental band of the Uruguay River, which quickly recognized the leadership of José Artigas, appointed Jefe de los Orientales (Chief of the Orientales). Artigas was born on June 19, 1764 into one of the founding families of Montevideo. Son and grandson of landowners, militia members and councilmen, José Artigas left his father's house at a very young age to engage in the trafficking of hides on the border with Brazil, under the command of a gang

of *gauchos*.¹ At the beginning of 1797, thanks to a royal pardon, he joined the new Corps of Blandengues of the Frontier of Montevideo, in charge of the persecution of smugglers, “infidel natives” and wrongdoers. His previous experience, condemned by some, was presented as a guarantee of success in his new role. At the beginning of the revolution, he was Captain of Blandengues and had strong links among gauchos, indigenous groups and landowners.

Independence, republican freedom, confederal union of peoples and a certain social egalitarianism were the flags raised by José Artigas, who, between 1814 and 1815, became recognized as Protector of the Free Peoples by Entre Ríos, Corrientes, Santa Fe, Córdoba and Misiones. The ideas of Artiguismo had multiple influences that overflowed the literate circles. The notions of contract, as well as the rights and obligations they implied, were an integral part of everyday life (economic activity, community life, religious faith). They collected references to a primordial equality of Christian root, were based on the Spanish tradition, natural law and the Enlightenment, and dialogued with classical republicanism and the revolutionary experiences of their time.

In 1815, after the defeat of the troops of the Directory of the United Provinces² and the capture of Montevideo, Artiguismo came to control the entire territory of the Oriental Province, and its triumphs on the coast of the Uruguay and Paraná rivers presented it as an alternative option to the unitary and centralist projects of the government based in Buenos Aires. This opened the “radical stage” of the revolution. Political control passed into the hands of those groups that placed the emphasis on a certain egalitarianism, both in terms of participation in the decision-making of the new sovereign subject (the peoples), and in the questioning of the scope of the right of property; convening, channeling or being driven by the “most miserable”, as the discourse of Artiguismo named the non-privileged groups of the hierarchical colonial society. Various measures aimed at revitalizing the economy, reorganizing finances, exercising greater control over the exercise of public function, exalting civic fervor and containing the enemies of the System were promoted. [Frega, 2007] It was about building the republic, educating the citizens in the pulpit, in the army, in school and even in entertainment, as shown by a deck of cards printed in Concepción del Uruguay in 1816. (See Fig. 1)

¹ At the time, gauchos were men skilled in horse riding and livestock management, without fixed employment, often persecuted by the authorities as vagabonds or bandits.

² From 1811, differences arose with the government of the United Provinces that was based in Buenos Aires. In 1813, a congress had met in that city to consider independence and draft a constitution. The oriental deputies were not admitted. The congress concluded its proceedings without declaring independence nor drafting a constitution. At the beginning of 1814, an executive branch of the United Provinces was created, called the Supreme Director.

Fig.
Ace
gold
card
in
del



1. Golden
and Four of
from the 40-
deck printed
Concepción
Uruguay, in
1816, by
Solano

García, a Chilean Franciscan friar who emigrated to the Río de la Plata after the defeat of the patriotic forces in Chile. These "patriotic cards" disclosed in simple language the main ideas of the Artiguismo project and sought adherence to the Protector of the Free Peoples. The Golden Ace's legend says: "Liberty and Union"; "The Oriental does not suffer tyrants"; the Four of gold legend says: "With perseverance and hard work, Artigas freed his homeland." Courtesy of National Historical Museum, Montevideo [Passos, 1943, fig. I and II]

In the General Headquarters of Purification (on the coast of the Uruguay River, in a position equidistant from the provinces that made up the System or League of the Free Peoples) one of the fundamental pieces of the social revolution was signed on September 10, 1815: the Provisional Regulation of the Oriental Province for the promotion of the campaign and security of its landowners, known as the Land Regulation. The text reflected the rich tradition of diagnoses and proposals for the control of the territory against indigenous partisans, the Portuguese or the parties of smugglers or bandits, often elaborated by those who were in direct contact with the occupiers of the lands and knew their demands.

In its 29 articles, the Land Regulation planned to settle the population in rural areas, promote the breeding of rodeo cattle and guarantee safety in the countryside. [Comisión Nacional Archivo Artigas, 1987, 93-98] One of the elements that distinguishes this regulation, which in general terms did not depart from usual measures such as the confiscation of the property of enemies, is the order arranged for the distributions of land and livestock. The principle was to be followed that "the most miserable" were "the most privileged," meaning "the free Negroes, the zambos¹ of this class, the *indios* (Amerindians) and the poor Criollos" (Article 6). The following article added that poor widows with children would also be graced, that married people would be preferred to single American, and these to any foreigner. This approach of strong egalitarian and Americanist tone, which sought to improve the condition of the most postponed sectors of society, was

¹ Zambo: Mestizo people of African descent and indigenous people.

unprecedented in the Río de la Plata, generated a strong opposition among landowners and demanded popular mobilization for its effective application, as historians Nelson de la Torre, Julio C. Rodríguez and Lucía Sala de Touron (1969) have shown.



Fig. 2. Coat of arms of the Oriental Province drawn in the troop review list of the city of Montevideo, 22 August, 1816. The coat of arms contains native elements, the rising sun and a scale that represents the right of free peoples, in equality, to form a republic together with the others of the Río de la Plata. The legend says: “With Liberty, I neither offend nor fear”. Courtesy of General Archive of the Nation, Uruguay, Octavio Assunção Collection.

Afrodescendants and Amerindians in the Revolution: The war mobilized, forcibly or voluntarily, a heterogeneous set of social groups. Although violence was present in colonial society, the novelty lay in the political connotation it assumed. In a society of racialized hierarchies and great inequalities, expressions such as “freedom or death”, “long live the homeland” or “sovereignty of the peoples”, among others, were interpreted in a very different way by the armed forces. What were the expectations of such varied groups? What could the independence of Spain, Portugal or Brazil mean for them? How important could be the formation of a State, united or separated from the other territories of the former viceroyalty of Río de la Plata?

On the other hand, war could also be an instance of political learning, where mobilized men occupied positions of strength and acquired organization for collective action, a fact that was viewed with suspicion by the dominant minorities, who feared a “shortening” of social distances and the loss of their possessions.

The measures taken on slavery in the Artiguista Oriental Province were guided by contradictory rights and demands: the promises of guarantees to the private property of the patriots, the proclamations in favor of freedom in all its imaginable extension and the need to strengthen the armies in the face of the prolongation of the war and the expansion of the frontlines. The levy of *morenos* and *pardos* - enslaved or freed - was one of the first measures taken in 1815. In order to enlarge the artillery corps that was being formed, mayors were commissioned to refer people of African descent who had no occupation or freedom charter. In addition to the proper military functions, they would be responsible for hauling armaments,

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digging ditches, building sheds and other heavy work, receiving a lower remuneration than the soldiers of other regiments. [Frega, 2008, 161-162]

Free Afrodescendants, as it was seen, led the row of the beneficiaries of sorts of land and livestock, but there is no documentation that guarantees that this was effectively fulfilled. As for the enslaved persons, the measures taken by the revolutionary leadership in Buenos Aires, such as the promise of freedom to fugitives from the enemy camp and the “freedom of wombs”, remained valid. However, compliance often required claims in court with uncertain results. It was the case, for example, of Gregoria Fruanes, who presented herself in her condition as *parda* and native to Montevideo, in 1815, to the authorities of Montevideo. She protested against her master, Don Juan Méndez Caldeyra, since in the sale price he had included her two-year-old son, who according to her, had been born free “in the happy time of a Liberal and Freedom System, so analogous to the general cry of America and of nature itself.” [AGN-EGH, 112, doc. 55, fols 1-2]¹ Gregoria's argument alluded to the contradiction between the statements and actions of her master. She denounced his ingratitude after “seven years of service of having nourished and raised his sons” and accused her master because “he only cares about his interests and neglects with his actions the Patriotism and honesty he announces with his lips.” Juan Méndez Caldeyra had accompanied the moderate wing of the revolution from different positions: supplier of the troops, lobbyist during the Buenos Aires government of the city, in charge of collecting donations for the uniforms of the Regimiento de Dragones de la Libertad (Freedom Dragons Regiment) and Captain of Compañía Cívica de Cazadores (Civic Company Hunters) in 1815. The file ended without resolution, after the Cabildo resolved to submit it to the master for review.

From the perspective of enslaved people, joining the patriotic ranks could be a transitional stage. The experience of colonial times, where an open and multi-ethnic rural space fed the idea of *marronage*, was not far away.² Just as they fled their masters' houses, they could defect from the regiments and shorten the time left to gain their freedom. This is the case, for example, of Antonio Rodríguez, who while imprisoned in the Citadel of Montevideo presented himself to the Cabildo in April 1816 requesting his freedom. He offered to enlist “in the artillery militia,” where “as a free *moreno*” he would be “useful as much as he could to the Homeland.” [AGN-EGH, 113, doc. 35, fols 1-1v.] According to his testimony, he had served in Regiment Number 10 after the troops of the Directorate of the United Provinces took Montevideo Square and, after “some time”, he had deserted to be employed in rural tasks. His former master, Don Fernando Rodríguez, had sent him to prison when he refused to continue giving him “all or part of what he worked for.” Among the arguments to regain his freedom, Antonio Rodríguez emphasized: “the Homeland made me free and in use of my rights,” adding that his master, on the contrary, was “a European and enemy of the country in which he lives.” The proceedings were interrupted when the government ordered that the master should be heard and that the Procurator Trustee should assume the defense of the enslaved man.

Regarding the indigenous populations, the links with the revolutionary process were different, among other elements, due to the place they occupied in colonial society and their greater or lesser subjection

¹ The undated petition is signed “at the petitioner's request” by José María Storache.

² Marronage: Strategy of resistance of enslaved people in which individuals or small groups escaped from their masters to establish independent communities.

to the Hispanic-Criollo authorities. In the case of those groups that had formed *pueblos de indios* (indigenous villages) or the former Guaraní Jesuit missions, Artiguismo recognized their territorial and political rights as free peoples, and their participation in the conformation of provincial governments. In the case of the missionary peoples, he sought to reconstitute the old "Provincia Guaranítica", while some of them were under the dependence of Paraguay and others, of Brazil. Perhaps due to the influence of Franciscan friars such as José Monterroso, secretary of Artigas, or José Acevedo, it can be seen that the position and consideration of the Guaraní-missionaries in the System of the Free Peoples combined an idealized reading of the past of those peoples, a paternalistic position in the face of the "good savage", the virtues of the citizen and the warrior capacity. As Colonel Ramón de Cáceres recounts in his memoirs, Monterroso was convinced that missionary peoples, "although they are the most ignorant, are those who have true love for the system, who have gone to Corrientes, to Entre Ríos, and will go wherever the need to save the Homeland calls them." [Cáceres, 1959, 274-275] Similar notions can be seen in the communications with the provinces of Santa Fe and Corrientes that asked for help before possible advances of indigenous groups of the Chaco. In January 1816, Artigas replied to the Governor of Corrientes that, instead of repression, he would provide the necessary support to the Abipón chieftain Juan Benavides to move with his people to the Oriental Province: "The natives, although savage, do not ignore the good and although it takes work, in the end they would bless the hand that leads them to the bosom of happiness changing religion and customs." In a new communication, days later, he reinforced his position: "it is not feasible when we uphold our rights to exclude them from the one that most justly corresponds to them." [Comisión Nacional Archivo Artigas, 1997, 133-134 and 152-153]

With those Amerindian groups that remained outside colonial society, such as Charrúas and Minuanos, from the beginning of the revolution Artigas sought a war alliance. Unlike the Guaraní of the missions, they did not join the system of hierarchies and commands of Artiguismo forces, but established their own camps. The fear that their presence and way of fighting caused among their opponents, their skills in a war of resources (theft of horses and cattle), and even simply because they increased the number of warriors, made them useful allies not only against Spaniards and Luso-Brazilians, but also in the struggles among factions within the patriot side.

The military defeat of Artiguismo: Although at the beginning of the revolution the Jefe de los Orientales received support from a part of the Hispano-Criollo elites, this responded to his military capacity to displace the European Spaniards from their positions of political and economic power, as well as to concretize the idea of a Province that incorporated territories that were previously under the jurisdiction of the intendency of Buenos Aires and the government of Misiones into the government of Montevideo. After 1815, however, their support was gradually withdrawn; among other reasons, for understanding that his measures in favor of the "most miserable" and the prolongation of the war transformed the province into the "Theater of Anarchy" and Artigas into a "chief of bandits".

This was witnessed by foreign observers, such as those presented below. Commodore William Bowles, commander of the British fleet on Río de la Plata, reported to the admiralty in November 1816 that "the general feeling amongst the people of property and any consideration, not only on this side of the Plata but on the opposite one, is against Artigas, whose popularity, although considerable, is entirely confined to the lower orders of the community". According to Bowles, that popularity "arises from those very causes

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which make him most dreaded by the higher, namely his not only permitting but encouraging every excess and disorder amongst his followers”. [Graham, Humphreys, eds., 1962, 170-174] The French naturalist Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, who toured the oriental territory between late 1820 and early 1821, recorded expressions of a hacienda owner for whom “often, a negro, a mulatto, an Indian made himself an officer and he went with his band to steal from the landowners.” [Saint-Hilaire, 2005, 79] As well as words of a woman in the opposite sense. A beneficiary of the land distribution, she was being evicted by people of the former owner and said: “Is it fair that *Maturrangos*¹ have all the land and that poor people like us have nowhere to settle in peace? At the time of the war, we obtained permission to settle here.” [Saint-Hilaire, 2005, 172] Luso-Brazilian troops commanded by Carlos Federico Lecor, a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, invaded the Oriental Province in mid-1816. In January of the following year, they obtained the capitulation of Montevideo and the support of the Hispanic-Criollo elites residing there. The loss of the port of Montevideo was a serious blow for the League, which was joined by the blockade of the Uruguay River by the Lusitanian fleet and the military expeditions of the Directorate against Santa Fe. The System of the Free Peoples was now fighting on two fronts: against the Directorate of the United Provinces and against Portugal. The prolongation of the war, and with it, the contributions in men, horses and food, together with the insecurity caused by the passage of troops or bands of deserters, as well as the social content of the Artiguismo project that tended to favor the “most miserable”, redefined positions in the League of the Free Peoples. At the beginning of 1820, the Lusitanian forces managed to impose themselves on the whole territory. A few months later, the alliance with Santa Fe and Entre Ríos was broken and the troops of the Entre Ríos defeated Artigas, forcing him to exile in Paraguay where he remained until his death in 1850.

The defeat and capitulation of the Oriental army also meant that the indigenous peoples sought agreements with the new Luso-Brazilian authorities. In the early days of March 1820, Chief Rondeau of the Minuanos tribe showed up at the Portuguese camp of Real Braganza, placing himself under the protection of the King of Portugal and pledging to serve His Majesty and not to offend any of his vassals, whether they were “Portuguese or emigrants from another nation.” [Cited in Frega, 2008, 172]

The final stage of independence: The Portuguese authorities and their local supporters decided in 1821 to incorporate the Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and Algarve through the creation of the Cisplatina Province. In parallel, the liberal revolution of Porto in Portugal [August 24, 1820] demanded the summons to the Courts and requested the immediate return of King Juan VI, who had been in Brazil since 1808, where he had arrived after escaping from the Napoleonic invasion.

In March 1821, Juan VI appointed his son Pedro as Prince Regent of Brazil, and the following month he left for Lisbon. On September 30, 1821, the Courts approved a decree that subordinated Pedro to the metropolis, a decision that caused rejection in some provinces of the Brazilian territory. Finally, in January 1822, the prince decided to remain in Brazil, beginning the process of definitive rupture with the Portuguese crown, which led him to be proclaimed emperor on October 12, 1822. In the Cisplatina Province there was a division of the Luso-Brazilian forces, between those loyal to Juan VI and supporters of incorporation into the Empire of Brazil. Finally, the posture that swore fidelity to the new monarch triumphed and the province

¹ A derogatory way of referring to Spaniards.

became part of the Empire of Brazil. Among the expectations of the Oriental elites who accompanied first the incorporation to Portugal and then to the Empire of Brazil were the restoration of “order” in the rural environment, the commercial development through the port of Montevideo and the formation of a stable government, even under a foreign monarchy.

In early 1825, when the province was part of the Empire of Brazil, the British consul in Montevideo Thomas S. Hood synthesized the vision of the political and economic elites by informing the Foreign Secretary George Canning that Artigas' “system” was the “total independence of all other countries, a destruction or division of rank and property, and equality upon the basis of making all equally poor.” [N.A.-F.O. 51/1, fols 156-179, Montevideo, 31 January, 1825] “The better class of Patriots, inhabitants of towns,” Hood continued, “incline to join the federation of Buenos Aires.” However, he ventured that for fear of a new guerrilla war, “the great part of this class is passive, and in a short time by conciliatory and soothing government they will become assimilated with the Brazilians.”

The landing in April 1825 of a group of soldiers from Buenos Aires, an episode later known as the *Cruzada Libertadora* (Liberating Crusade), started a revolutionary movement that installed a provisional government of the Oriental Province. The provincial authorities convened an Honorable Chamber of Representatives of the Oriental Province of Río de la Plata, made up of fourteen deputies elected by the different peoples, which decreed on August 25, 1825 the independence of the King of Portugal, the Emperor of Brazil “and of any other in the universe”, and simultaneously, the union of the Oriental Province of Río de la Plata to the “others of this name in the territory of South America.” [Actas, 1975, 52-56] The recognition of the new Oriental government by the United Provinces unleashed the war with Brazil.

Although the military commands were occupied by chiefs who had served under Artigas, as José Pedro Barrán points out in a suggestive article entitled *La independencia y el miedo a la revolución social en 1825* (Independence and the fear of social revolution in 1825), they sought to mark a distance with the previous stage and with the Chief of the Orientales.[Barrán, 1986, 71] In addition, there is the absence of other figures (José Monterroso, for example) whose actions in the previous decade had contributed to providing tactical decisions and popular radicalism with ideological foundation and political expression, integrated into a revolutionary project.

The prolongation of the war, the pressure from Great Britain to end the conflict and the negotiations between envoys from Buenos Aires and Brazil ended with the decision to create an independent state in 1828. (See Fig. 3) The Preliminary Peace Convention was signed in Rio de Janeiro, between representatives of the Republic of the United Provinces and the Emperor of Brazil, under British mediation. The exchange of ratifications took place in Montevideo on October 4, 1828. The agreement was based on the independence of the Province, the free navigation of the Plata River and its affluents by ships of the United Provinces and the Empire of Brazil, and the withdrawal of the imperial tropes, though they undertook the duty of providing assistance to the legal government in case of civil war, up to five years after the Constitution was sworn in. Most of the Hispano-Criollo elites that had supported belonging to the Empire of Brazil remained in the territory and participated in the organization of the new State. After two decades of revolution and war, the power groups of the new Oriental State of Uruguay reached a meeting point in a constitutional text, sworn in July 1830 that established a republic that was liberal, centralized, with a kind of censitary suffrage, which favored the people of property. [Constitución de la República Oriental del Uruguay, c. 1872]



Fig. 3. Map of the Republic of Uruguay (Banda Oriental) and the Rio Grande do Sul (or São Pedro) Province, including the course of Uruguay River and Río de la Plata, 1835, drawn by V. Levassour under the direction of Mr. Arsène Isabelle. The map shows the "de facto" boundaries with the Empire of Brazil in the 1830s. Courtesy of National Library of France. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8493094#>

Final words: The discourse of the radical revolution, by emphasizing the defense of the sovereignty of the peoples and proclaiming a certain social equalization, had made explicit the existing conditions of injustice. The defeat of Artiguismo marked a setback in the positions reached by the “most miserable”. Even with limitations – the distributions of land and livestock did not fully comply with the established priorities, there were no proposals of abolition of slavery, the attitude towards indigenous groups was paternalistic – the revolutionary experience had outlined a way to claim rights.

After 1830, socio-ethnic conflicts continued. The establishment of order, so desired by the ruling elites, had to deal with them. The disputes over the appropriation of land and livestock - the Land Regulation was not recognized by the governments that succeeded José Artigas - continued in the courts and were also part of the calls for armed uprisings led by the warlords, former revolutionary leaders, who disputed power. The constitution sworn in 1830 included “freedom of wombs” and the prohibition of the trafficking of enslaved persons; but the laws abolishing slavery had to wait for the following decade, continuing discriminatory practices with the already free Afrodescendant population. A racist cultural background conceived indigenous populations as hindrances of a past that opposed progress and civilization. Neither the Guaraní of the missions who tried to maintain the rights of their peoples nor the Charrúas and Minuanos who intended to continue in their *tolderías* (indigenous camps) had a place in the new State, which imposed their incorporation as rural workers, servants or soldiers.

The process of construction and affirmation of the Oriental State of Uruguay lasted until the late nineteenth century, and involved clashes and complex balances and agreements between the different political groups, in a region that was again involved in foreign invasions and civil war.

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