

# The Praieira Revolution Manifesto to the World

*Antônio Borges da Fonseca*

*Of the numerous revolts that broke out during the imperial period—including the Cabanagem in Pará, the Farroupilha in Rio Grande do Sul, and the Sabinada in Bahia—the Praieira in Pernambuco was the last. It took place nine years after young Pedro II assumed the throne, as conservative politicians in Rio who blamed the instability of the Regency years on liberal reforms worked to reassert the primacy of the central government. Named after the rebellious liberals whose party newspaper was published on the Rua da Praia, or Beach Street, in the city of Recife, the Praieira Revolution was a liberal, federalist revolt that lasted from 1848 to 1850.*

*Conflicts between liberal and conservative political elites in Pernambuco marked the 1840s, but the spark for revolt came in 1848, when conservative senators rejected the nomination of the liberal candidate Antônio Pinto Chichorro da Gama to a seat in the National Senate. Election to this important position, a lifelong appointment, was a two-step process, in which a very narrow pool of possible voters chose three candidates for the position, and the emperor then appointed one of the three. But in this case, when the emperor chose Chichorro da Gama from the names on the list, conservatives in the Senate blocked his appointment, declaring the election in Pernambuco invalid due to irregularities. They thereby maintained conservative dominance of the Senate. For political liberals in Pernambuco, the act was unbearable. They soon began to arm themselves and to seek popular support, in part by criticizing conservatives' connections to Portuguese residents of Brazil, appealing to and stoking nationalistic resentment against the Portuguese. Thus while the uprising began within the political elite, it soon spread to different sectors of the population and tapped into anti-Portuguese sentiments, especially against Portuguese merchants and retailers. It also led to growing expressions of dissatisfaction from those who were unhappy with the lack of political autonomy granted to the provinces, the moderating power of the monarchy, and the centralization of decision making in Rio de Janeiro. As the revolution grew, the praieiros managed to take the city of Olinda but were defeated in early 1850. Many of the leaders were imprisoned and sentenced, but granted amnesty the following year.*

*Below are the principal items listed in a document produced by some of the most radical praieiros, including its author, Antônio Borges da Fonseca. This “Manifesto ao Mundo” (Manifesto to the world), inspired by the 1848 French Revolution, was issued on January 1, 1849.*

- Free and universal suffrage for the Brazilian people;
- Complete and absolute freedom to communicate one’s thoughts in the press;
- Guaranteed work for Brazilian citizens;
- Retail trade limited to Brazilian citizens;
- Complete and effective independence of the governing powers;
- An end to the [monarch’s] moderating power and of the right to bestow [titles];
- A new federal organizational structure;
- Complete reform of judiciary power so as to guarantee the individual rights of citizens;
- An end to the current system of military recruitment;
- Expulsion of the Portuguese.

*Translated by Molly Quinn*