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Quilombo and Quilombos

My journey to Palmares began with Beth Carvalho, when I heard her sing "Meu Homem", the second selection on Alma do Brasil, one of three tapes that I purchased on my first visit to Brasil over fifteen years ago. Through the fog of my imperfect Portuguese (and with the help of a brief note on the album), I understood that she was singing about Nelson Mandela and the hope that blacks and whites would someday walk together under the sun of Johannesburg, free from apartheid. I heard her sing of Namibia, Angola, and then, Palmares: "Lá nas terras de Zumbi dos Palmares / lá nas terras de Zumbi/. . . /vi brancos e pretos / me lembrei do aparteid". While I knew very well who Nelson Mandela was, and that his long-awaited release from prison earlier that year just might enable South Africa to end apartheid without a catastrophic race war, I had never heard of Zumbi or Palmares. Eventually, after many more trips to Brazil, and a lot of reading and listening to Brazilian music, I came to understand something of what these names mean in the fabric of Brazilian popular imagination. During the same time frame as the album's release, Unidos de Vila Isabel won first place in the carnaval competition with its samba-enredo "Kizomba, a Festa da Raça". Here, the dancers proclaim, "Valeu Zumbi! / o grito forte dos Palmares / que correu terras, céus e mares / Influenciando a abolição / Zumbi valeu ! / Vem a lua de Luanda / Para iluminar a rua / Nossa sede é nossa sede / de que o apartheid se destrua." Four years before this, in 1984, Carlos Diegues had released his award-winning film Quilombo, a fictionalized historical drama about Palmares, the

"republic" formed by runaway slaves in northeastern Brazil in the early 1600's, its struggle to survive in the face of constant attacks by various paramilitary groups (in the pay of landowners and political figures), and the final campaign against it, which brought about its destruction and the eventual capture and execution of its heroic leader Zumbi. As I viewed this film, Palmares became a very real, vibrant space in my own imagination, and I understood (as Beth Carvalho, the Vila Isabel samba school and many others had known all along) the meaning of Zumbi and how his memory and the living presence of Nelson Mandela are so closely related.

To understand the phenomenon of Palmares, it seemed necessary first to explore the issue of resistance to slavery in Brazil in general—to see what forms it took as well as to learn about other examples of quilombos, besides the one so magnificently (and let us face it, ideally) portrayed in the movie. I had hoped to find other examples of quilombos that I might compare with Palmares, seeking—to name one—information on the often mentioned quilombo in Minas Gerais, Ambrosio. But this search was not productive. I did, however, learn of a very different kind of quilombo, the "quilombo abolicionista", the most famous of which was established, of all places, in Rio de Janeiro's Leblon district, between the Lagoa de Rodrigo de Freitas and the Pedra Dois Irmãos. More on this subject will be said later in this essay.

In order to comprehend the notion of resistance to slavery, it is useful to remember what this monstrous institution (if that is the right word) entailed. Not only were people taken from their homes by force and transported in despicable conditions thousands of miles to a different continent, but they were obliged to live and work under the cruelest of circumstances. Jaime Pinsky, in his book A Escravidão no

Brasil, summarizes in this statement the sadistic treatment that the slaves received:

"Desprotegido, longe de sua terra de origem ou já nascido cativo, o negro ficava sujeito ás explosões de gênio de feitores e senhores, ás taras e aos sadismos, além de terem qualquer ato de protesto reprimido com violência" (p. 47). The list of instruments of torture—designed to punish the recalcitrant or rebellious slave—is long: "correntes, gargalheira, tronco, algemas, peia, máscaras anjinho, golilha, ferro para marcas, figuram em listas de castigos aplicados a escravos e que foram classificados por Artur Ramos em instrumentos de suplício e instrumentos de aviltamento" (p. 48). The most common punishment was the whip, and when this did not produce the desired result, the slave was locked up in a filthy jail. Others were simply killed, by hanging or other means, to serve as an example to those who might be tempted to resist the master's authority.

Contrary to popular myths about black "passivity" in the face of such abuse, slaves rebelled in numerous ways. (The primary sources of this distortion are Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen, Gonçalves Dias and José de Alencar, according to Pinsky. pp. 53-54). The slaves ran away—whether in small numbers or larger groups, they assassinated their masters (or their agents, the feitores or administradores), they committed suicide, or they rose up in armed rebellions—such as the Balaiada, which began in 1838 in Maranhão and Piauí and lasted for three years until it was crushed by the future Duque de Caxias (p. 62). Reading further on the subject of slave revolts, I was surprised to discover the assertion by one historian, Nina Rodrigues (cited by Décio Freitas in Palmares: A Guerra dos Escravos, p. 11), that these were not cases of social protest, but rather "fenômenos de criminalidade

multitudinária ou, na melhor das hipóteses, de regressão tribal." Seeing reality through this lens, when Palmares was crushed, the greatest threat to the "futuro povo brasileiro" was eliminated. I took a deep breath and realized I needed to keep reading.

Carlos Magno Guimarães, in the introduction to his book. Uma Negação da Ordem Escravista: Quilombos em Minas Gerais no Século XVIII, attempts to classify and summarize the many explanations for why it was that slaves would feel compelled to flee their plantations (and other sites of bondage) and seek refuge in quilombos. His review of the bibliography on slavery (and quilombos) led him to identify three currents or ways of looking at the subject. They were rebelling against the cruelty of the punishments meted out by their masters, they were rebelling against the odious institution of slavery as a whole, not just the physical abuse that accompanied it, or they were reacting against the imposition of white culture, demanding their own space where they could express their African identity (p. 17). Hélio Viana, Luis Luna and José Alípio Goulart are the best representatives of the first current, and the second current is representated by (at least) four writers—Emília Viotti da Costa, José Honório Rodrigues, Clóvis Moura and Otávio Ianni. Arthur Ramos was probably the first to articulate the third point of view, and he was joined by Nelson Werneck Sodré and Edson Carneiro.

Many of the writers in the first group were operating under the assumption that slavery was not so bad in Brazil after all (here, Guimarães refers to Gilberto Freyre's "tese da suavidade da escravidão no Brasil"), and had the landowners done a better job of it, quilombos would not have appeared (p. 18). Guimarães, in his comments on this first current, cites writers who detail the enormous losses imposed on the landowners

by the flight of their slaves. Among these are the cost of hiring slave hunters to bring them back, money spent on weapons, and the loss of livestock appropriated by the departing slaves. He concludes this section of his review with the observation that to adopt landowner cruelty as the determining cause of slave flight and quilombo formation limits one's understanding of what is, in reality, a very complex situation: "Ao adotarem a crueldade como causa determinante, e para alguns ela praticamente se coloca como a única, das fugas e, por decorrência da criação de quilombos, restringiram a visao de uma totalidade extremamente complexa a apenas um de seus aspectos" (p. 19).

Within the second current, the most well-developed and insightful analysis seems to be that offered by Clóvis Moura. In order to understand the dynamic of slave society, he asserts, one must study the various forms of slave rebellion. (And it is the rebellious slave who ultimately wears down and exhausts the slave system, facilitating the transition to a society based on paid rather than captive labor.) While Guimarães does not agree with Clóvis Moura's conclusions, he credits him for having raised a very important issue, that of the level of consciousness of the individual slave. To what extent were the slaves aware of their situation within the society that surrounded them, he asks (p. 20). Clovis Moura's assertion that the slave was incapable of self-reflection (he did not possess "elementos cognitivos capazes de fazê-lo um homem autoconsciente") is rejected by Guimarães. Nor does he accept the argument that the slave was "incapaz de dominar têcnicas mais avançadas" (p. 21). Because slaves were seen as expendable, no labor saving devices, no technological innovations were introduced into their world of work. Thus, the belief that the slave was incapable of

assimilating new and more advanced techniques is an outgrowth of the "ideologia escravista" for which it was necessary to "apregoar o princípio da inferioridade do escravo face ao branco libre" (p. 21). Guimarães goes on to reject Moura's simplistic notion that the slaves' lack of technical knowledge and skills necessarily meant that they did not have the ideological elements required to develop into a class that might attain political power ("o poder do Estado"). The entire slave system just did not allow them access to advanced technology. Guimarães cites both Olávio Ianni and Fernando Henrique Cardoso in addressing the question of why the slaves did not make a collective effort to abolish the slave regime itself. They argue that the slaves' condition was such that they were not in a position to grasp the big picture, to understand the complexities of the system that held them captive. Thus, they ran away and they engaged in small scale acts of rebellion—all with the intent of becoming free from the hell in which they found themselves, but not to establish a new and better political system. They simply did not have the means to accomplish this latter goal. Guimarães concludes his discussion of the second current, stating that society, "tendo por base o escravismo, contribuiu, em todos os seus níveis, para que ao escravo fosse permitido apenas um nível de consciência determinado, para que ele pudesse ser mantido enquanto escravo. Em síntese, a consciência do escravo foi limitada por mecanismos existentes em todos os níveis e não só pelo domínio técnico a que teve acesso" (p. 22).

Guimarães devotes only a few lines to the third current, stating that Edson Carneiro is its best representative. That he should have seen quilombos as a counter culture phenomenon, an assertion of African values and customs in the face of a white-

European dominated order, is understandable, considering that his research seems to have focused on Palmares, which was made up primarily of people of Bantu origin (p. 22).

While Guimarães' main focus is on the quilombos that were established in Minas Gerais in the 1700's, what he says about sources is probably applicable to the study of colonial-period quilombos in general. (Abolitionist quilombos are quite a different matter.) When one considers that the quilombo residents most likely did not have access to printing presses, and, in fact, that very few of them were even literate (considering the nature of their existence within the society that they had escaped from), the only reasonable conclusion is that most of what we know about quilombos comes from the masters' point of view, not that of their victims. I would like to believe that an oral tradition could have survived the destruction of Palmares and other quilombos, but this seems improbable. At least there are direct descendants of another quilombo society—one in what is now Surinam, 2,500 kilometers to the north of Palamares—available to be interviewed by ethnologists and other investigators such as Richard Price. (See his article "Palmares como poderia ter sido", in Liberdade por um fio, pp. 52-59). For his study, Guimarães examined several kinds of documents. First, there were the "patentes de homens-do-mato". He avoids the more common term, "capitães-do-mato" because this masks the complex hierarchy that existed in the slave-hunting profession, at the bottom of which was the "soldado-do-mato", and at the top, "capitão-mor-do-mato" (p. 23). These patents give the name of the bearer, the date that the concession was granted, and the geographical area in which the individual was authorized to carry out his activities. Additionally, Guimarães examined official

correspondence—letters from the Crown to the governers, letters from the governors to the Crown, and letters exchanged between the various authorities of the capitania. The first were letters giving orders, demanding news, or telling the governors to appear at hearings on various matters. In the second type of correspondence, the governors reported on what they had done regarding slave escape incidents and quilombos, or they had asked for advice as to what they should be doing concerning these problems. (Carlos Diegues, in his movie Quilombo, made frequent use of official correspondence as a narrative device.) In the third group of letters, one sees authorities discussing means to be adopted to repress quilombos in their area. Other documents that Guimarães used for his research were "regimentos" and "bandos". The purpose of the first was to regulate the homem-do-mato profession. The second were orders signed by governors (sometimes just passing along orders from the Crown) addressing specific situations related to the escaped slave question. So, judging from this list, the likelihood of our gaining an objective view of the slaves' lives, whether as they were fleeing or once they had reached the relative safety of the quilombo, is nil. Richard Price states the problem of sources and documentation very well here: "É importante enfatizar que a maior parte de nosso conhecimento sobre Palmares se origina de escritos . . . de militares ou de autoridades, todos empenhados em destruir o grande quilombo. Assim, esses escritos são bons em descrever fortificações militares, armas palmarinas e coisas afins. Nunca devemos esquecer que quase tudo que sabemos sobre Palmares deriva das palavras escritas por seus inimigos mortais" (p. 53).

Palmares, at its height, consisted of eleven or twelve population centers, often referred to as mocambos, scattered in a remote highland region of the Capitania de Pernambuco, extending from the Rio São Francisco in the south to the sertão of Cabo Santo Agostinho in the north. Estimating from the map published by Décio Freitas in Palmares: A Guerra dos Escravos, the distance of these centers from the coast was between sixty and ninety kilometers (p. 9). In the map provided by Pedro Paulo Abreu de Funai, in Liberdade por um Fio, Macaco, the most well-known of these centers, is fifty kilometers from the coast (p. 35). The Portuguese population, in addition to Olinda, was concentrated in Porto Calvo, Alagoas do Sul and Penedo. While this distance does not seem like much by today's standards, this area—because of its harsh, impenetrable nature—was generally unknown to the Europeans. There was an abundance of plant life, primarily hostile—thorny bushes, tall trees (including palmeiras), and tangled vines. Hidden in this forest landscape were large numbers of dangerous animals and insects—including jaguars, jackals, snakes, and mosquitoes. Additionally, the climate was unpleasant, with long periods of severe cold and extended droughts. Even the native people had stayed away from this area (Freitas, p. 16). But the rebelling slaves could not be choosey. They could either hang around on the fringes of the plantation and face recapture and punishment, or they could escape into the forest and make the most of what they found there. (As dramatized in Quilombo, many would have preferred to return to Africa, but lacking transport, they did not have this option.)

Not much is known about the early phase of Palmares. According to local tradition, the initial group, the "nucleo primitivo da futura república de

Palmares," was no larger than forty individuals (Freitas, p. 16-17). They led a very basic existence, depending on hunting, fishing and gathering for their food. Freitas observes that this was a historical regression for them, considering that in Africa they had been "agricultores, pastores, artesãos, comerciantes e artistas" (p. 44). Over time, however, the population grew and the palmarinos were able to develop agriculture and create a complex economy. Hoes, axes, knives and other iron tools essential to farming had been familiar implements in their daily lives in Angola, and over time, they were able to acquire tools from the Europeans—mostly through raids or barter. There is even some indication that they were making tools of their own: "no largo de toda povoação, ao lado do templo e da casa do conselho, situava-se a forja" (p. 45). Among the crops that they planted were corn, beans, manioc, sugar cane, potatoes and a variety of vegetables. The palmarinos maintained extensive fruit orchards as well. Both planting and harvesting were community affairs, the latter culminating with a week of festivities. The abundant palm trees in the region were utilized not only in the making of mats, baskets and roofs for their houses, but the fruit with its husk (converted into a pulp that could be eaten with farinha or made into butter or other food items) were important sources of nourishment. Additionally, the people of Palmares used palm oil for illumination, and they made wine from this tree as well (p. 46). Another food collected from the forest was "banana pacova." Other protein sources besides fish and game were the chickens and pigs that they raised. It is assumed that the land belonged to the community rather than to private individuals. Collective ownership had been a tradition in Africa, so this was probably continued in Brazil. Also, communities would change location periodically, either when the soil

became depleted or when security required it. Thus, a system of private ownership would have been untenable. (We can remember the reprimand given to the would-be-thief of a bowl of corn in the fictional version of Palmares. Ganga Zumba tells the man that what the land provides is for everyone to be shared equally, not to be hoarded by one individual.)

Many of these population centers, or mocambos, had elaborate systems of defense. They were surrounded by palisades made of wooden spikes, often built in two or three layers. In times of major siege from the landowners' mercenaries, the palmerinos would prepare pits in the ground, lining them with spikes and covering them with vegetation to hide them from view (Again, Quilombo is useful to our understanding of this strategic aspect of Palmares life.) Some of the more important centers—Macaco and Subupira, for example—were protected by stone walls (Freitas, p. 46).

It is difficult to have more than just a general idea of the political and social organization of Palmares. Freitas states that it is clear that each community had a leader who was chosen "pelos méritos da força, inteligência e destreza". And this leader had to consult the assembly—comprised of all the adult residents—before taking any major action (p. 47). The language spoken in the various Palmares communities was an amalgam of Portuguese, African languges and, to some extent, indigenous languages, but it is difficult to speak with much authority on this subject, considering the lack of reliable documentation. Concerning their religion, it seems to have been a syncretism of African and Christian beliefs. On all the Palmares chapel altars images of African divinities could be found alongside those of Jesus, Nossa

Senhora da Conceição, and São Bras (p. 48). Throughout the colonial period the entire white establishment—from captains of slave ships to plantation owners—had exploited language and religious differences among their captives in order to foment discord and impede any collaboration that might lead to an organized resistance; thus, the syncretism that prevailed in Palmares is understandable. As Freitas states, "cabe pois, admitir que os palmarinos tenham apelado para o sincretismo religioso e lingüístico como meio de conciliar irredutiveis antagonismos religiosos e lingüísticos" (p. 51).

In the period before the Dutch invasion (1630), Palmares consisted of three or four centers (p. 46) with a total population of perhaps three thousand (p. 51). While reliable figures are not easy to find, it is known that the number of inhabitants of the Palmares region grew significantly during the Dutch period (which ended in 1654). One source estimates the population at 30,000 (p. 72). The precise reasons for this growth are outside the purview of this study. Thus, it is sufficient to say that the chaos of the war was a major factor as was the nature of the regime that replaced Portuguese authority during these twenty-odd years. Their masters occupied with fighting the Dutch invaders, the slaves took advantage of the situation and fled: "Como regra, simplesmente se aproveitaram da escassa vigilância exercida pelos amos ocupados com a Guerra ou a própria sobrevivência para fugir en direção ao reduto livre que sabiam existir nas serras do sul pernambucano" (p. 57). By 1637, there were almost no slaves left in Pernambuco. Consequently, the Dutch regime (whose policies seem to have been shaped in large measure by the corporate interests of the Companhia das Indias Orientais—reminiscent of Halliburton's influence on U.S. policy today) was

faced with resolving the labor shortage problem. One option was to bring in 3,000 impoverished Dutch ("batavos") peasants, whose desperate economic situation was an explosive problem demanding a solution. The other one was to import large numbers of slaves. Nassau, the Dutch leader, chose what seemed to him to be the more lucrative option. (The idea of developing an economy of small farmers was implemented subsequently, in 1652, in South Africa.) Acquiring a large number of slaves who could adapt easily to plantation work ("ladinos" was the term used) was not a problem with a quick and simple solution, however. It was resolved in 1641, when the Companhia sent twenty ships, nine hundred sailors, two thousand soldiers and two hundred indios to Angola to capture the slave warehouse or feitoria from the Portuguese. (Freitas, p. 61). Soon afterwards, the Companhia was able to import an average of 5,000 slaves annually, which led to enormous profits in the slave trade itself, as well as in the sugar industry.

But the situation was not so good for the slaves. Not only did the Dutch continue to use the brutal torture methods devised by the Portuguese, but they implemented some monstrous ones of their own, "como a crucifixão e morte lenta, a suspensão em ganchos com feridas expostas ao sol calcinante, a mutilação de narizes, a amputação de mãos, a fratura de ossos a marteladas" (p. 62). Thus, the incentive to escape to Palmares was greater than ever. Not only were blacks fleeing the coastal plantations, but small growers, having fallen on hard times (a consequence of the greed-driven Companhia dominated economy) left everything behind and headed for Palmares (p. 67). Later on, soldiers from various expeditions would desert, finding irresistible the temptation to live "a vida livre e farta dos Palmares" (p. 73). There

were indigenous people who went to Palmares as well. Freitas cites the diversity of the population as evidence of the "conteudo essentialmente social do movimento palmarino" (p. 72). In his interpretation, "Palmares se constitiu em um asilo aberto a todos os perseguidos e deserdados da sociedade colonial" (p. 72).

Even after Dutch rule in northeastern Brazil had been consolidated and Portuguese resistance had been contained, all was not peaceful on the Pernambucan landscape—especially in the southern region. Raiding parties from Palmares descended on plantations and villages, freeing slaves and capturing weapons and other supplies. According to Freitas, some landowners were even driven away and forced to flee to Alagoas do Sul. Groups of blacks unaffiliated with Palmares also attacked rural properties in the area (p. 63). In order to regain control, the Nassau government distributed weapons to the landowners, the established garrisons in strategic locations, and they sent military expeditions out to try to destroy Palmares. The most famous of these was commanded by João Blaer in 1645 (whose diary has been an important source for historians studying and writing about the period, most recently Robert Nelson Anderson, in "The Quilombo of Palmares: A New Overview of a Maroon State in Seventeenth-Century Brazil", Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 545-566). Other than burning the houses and fields of one abandoned mocambo that they found, after twenty days of walking in almost constant rain, Blaer's men accomplished nothing. To add to their humiliation, a number of them fell into one of the defensive trenches that ran along the palisades—a "fosso crivado de estrepes" (Freitas, p. 66). (This was probably similar to the incident portrayed in Quilombo, when Domingos Jorge Velho's paulistas were making their assault on Macaco.)

While Palmares was never entirely free from outside threats, there was a twenty-two year period of relative calm that followed the end of the Dutch regime. Benjamin Peret, in O Quilombo de Palmares: Crónica da "República dos Escravos", characterizes this as Palmares' "edade de ouro", stating the following: "Deve-se pois ver o apogeu do quilombo dos Palmares entre a segunda expedição holandesa (1645) e o primeiro ataque português certo (1667)" (p. 47). The population grew rapidly as additional communities were established—many new residents being ex-slaves who took advantage of the chaos that accompanied the return to Portuguese rule (1654). According to Freitas, the palmerinos went through an extended period of withdrawal, making only limited contacts with the outside world, and these primarily to trade for supplies with the coastal communities. Perhaps they were hoping, in this way, to appease the "senhores de escravos" (p. 89). But then, for reasons that are difficult to tease out, they felt it necessary to abandon their passivity and adopt a more aggressive posture toward the Portuguese population, making several raids between 1667 and 1670 for the purpose of acquiring weapons and munitions, freeing slaves from the fazendas and engenhos, and to "justiçar amos e feitores, e também, simplesmente, levar o terror ao inimigo" (p. 89). (Again, we need to remember that we have only the masters' view of things, no palmarino testimony having survived.)

It is interesting to note that during this same period, the Pernambuco economy was experiencing an extreme crisis. Sugar production was down and slave purchases were declining. (The slave business had been booming when the Dutch were in charge, boosted by the Companhia agents' practice of giving the blacks sea water to drink as they were sold, thus causing them to die soon after they were delivered to the

buyers; this way they could make additional sales [Freitas, p. 62].) Also, corruption was rampant in the colonial government. Alarmed by the severe falling-off of profits, the crown ordered various investigations, but these came up with nothing (Freitas, p. 92). Within this same time frame, the entire coastal region—all the way to Rio—experienced a terrible smallpox epidemic. Two thousand people died in Recife alone. While many believed this had been caused by the comet of the previous year (1664), filthy sanitary conditions were more likely to blame. The plague was followed by a terrible famine, which hit the poorest sectors of society the hardest. The general sense of desperation prompted many residents of the coastal communities to flee to Palmares, not just slaves, but free people as well (Freitas, p. 93).

As the intensity of the palmerino raids increased, so did the determination of the Portuguese authorities to exterminate Palmares. A number of expeditions were launched, the most serious of which was led by Fernão Carrilho, in 1676. He attacked Aqualtune, the home village of Ganga Zumba's mother (he was now the supreme leader of Palmares), and the following year he attacked Amaro, capturing its leader, Acaiuba, along with several of Ganga Zumba's family members. Ganga Zumba himself was injured but managed to escape. Exhausted by years of war (the Fernão Carrilho expedition was only one of many attacks on Palmares), Ganga Zumba found a peace offer from the governor to be very attractive and decided to accept it, against the advice of several of his chieftains. The treaty stipulated that he would move his people from Palmares to the Vale do Cucaú. Those born in Palmares would be granted their freedom. They would be given land for farming, and their right to trade with the local residents would be guaranteed (Freitas, p. 120). It was implied

that those blacks who had not been born in Palmares would be returned to captivity. Ganga Zumba's decision provoked a major split among the palmarinos. Several of the mocambo leaders refused to bring their people to Cucaú, and in Cucaú an opposition faction revolted against Ganga Zumba's leadership. By 1680, Ganga Zumba was dead (probably assassinated by his own people), the Cucaú experiment was over, and Zumbi was now supreme ruler of Palmares.

Zumbi is a legendary figure in Brazilian history. Yet very few facts are known about his life. Freitas provides a few details, which can be summarized here. Zumbi was born in 1655 in one of the Palmares mocambos, he was captured as a baby during the first post-Dutch expedition against Palmares, and he was given as a present to father Antônio Melo, a priest in the Porto Calvo district. Father Melo baptized the baby with the name Francisco, and he taught him how to read. By the time Francisco was ten, he knew enough Latin to assist the priest at mass (and he may well have learned some legal Latin). When he was fifteen, he ran away to Palmares, and later as the quilombo leader, he came back to visit Father Melo on three separate occasions, bringing him gifts (Freitas, p. 125).

Concerning the nature of Zumbi's regime, by the time he became supreme leader of Palmares, historical circumstances were such that he had to rule much as a military dictator, keeping himself constantly informed of the activities of his enemies, being ever vigilant and prepared to defend his people if attacked (Peret, pp. 48-49). It is even possible that he had to resort to the use of slaves to maintain the quilombo's agricultural enterprise. In earlier, more peaceful periods, the women had cared for the crops, but now, with so many raids from the Portuguese mercenaries, a different

solution was necessary. (In the film version, the Zumbi character saw at one point an opportunity to attack Recife, possibly eliminating it forever as a threat to his people, but he turned back, saying he feared this would lead to their becoming slaveholders just like the Portuguese, and he wanted none of it. But this was in the movie.)

The year 1692 saw the beginning of the end for Palmares. The biggest expeditionary force ever assembled in the history of the colony set out from São Paulo under the leadership of Domingos Jorge Velho to attack Macaco, the quilombo's fortified capital. The first assault was repelled, but late in 1693 a new expeditionary force gathered in Porto Calvo in preparation for another attack. Finally, after a twenty-two day siege, they managed to break through the fortress's defenses and destroy Zumbi's army. Many of his soldiers, refusing to be taken prisoner, jumped from the parapet to their deaths. Believing that Palmares could not die as long as its leader remained alive, Zumbi and a small band of aids managed to escape. After several months of pursuit, Domingos Jorge Velho's men finally captured Zumbi and killed him, then taking his body to Porto Calvo as proof of their victory. Zumbi's head was cut off and put on public display in Recife—to convince the world that the slave rebellion was over, and that slavery and the Portuguese colonial rule were intact, never to be seriously threatened again.

While Palmares was defeated and any visible slave resistance in Pernambuco and Alagoas was ultimately stamped out, we know this was not the end of the story. Another two hundred years would have to pass, however, before this monstrous

institution could be extirpated and removed from the Brazilian landscape. Benjamin Peret's observations on the rather limited mindset of the seventeenth-century quilombolas are instructive. At no time did the slaves make an open appeal for the elimination of slavery itself. Circumstances had driven the blacks to create (and defend) the quilombo, and this had been born out of a "salve-se-quem puder individual e não de uma accão refletida e combinada" (p. 55). Peret cites the mutual and latent hostility that had prevailed from the beginning of Palmares, making peaceful coexistence impossible: "A hostilidade mútua e latente que, desde os primordios do quilombo, reinava entre os brancos e os seus antigos escravos tornava pois difícil, senão impossível, qualquer convivência, de modo que, desde o seu nascimento, os Palmares estavam ameaçados" (p. 54). Additionally, as mentioned above, the palmarinos—in order to survive the permanent state of siege that began in the years immediately preceding the Cucaú disaster—had themselves become exploiters of slave labor. If only they had proclaimed themselves to be liberators of all slaves. But they did not, for they could not, because—as Peret states—"o seu nível geral de consciência tal não permitia" (p. 55). Nevertheless, Palmares served, as did the utopian dream of Fourier, to keep hope alive for a better solution for the future. One need not despair; the big leap would come, in time, when conditions were right: "Talvez seja necessário que o homem cometa erros, antes de descobrir, no fundo de cada um, o elemento de verdade passível de germinar e cujo reconhecimento condicione o êxito do salto que se impõe" (p. 56).

It took an entire abolitionist movement to end slavery—blacks and whites working together all over Brazil. Openly, in the sun, in the streets, rather like the

images invoked in Beth Carvalho's song. During the late nineteenth century, there were a number of abolitionist quilombos established in Rio and São Paulo. Eduardo Silva gives an excellent overview of these in his recent book, As Camélias do Leblon e a abolição da escravatura, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003. One of these quilombos was headed by a Portuguese business man, José de Seixas Magalhães. He had a small factory on Gonçalves Dias Street in Rio's central district, where he made suitcases and other items for the traveler. He had the earliest steam-driven equipment, and his products won prizes at major international trade fairs. And on the side, he had a farm, where he raised flowers—with the help of escaped slaves, to whom he gave shelter. This was known as the Quilombo Leblon, two million seven hundred thousand square meters of land that he had purchased in 1878, "um dos lugares mais apraziveis deste centro populoso, começando na praia e acabando na vertente, com uma casa campestre ao alto" (p. 104). This became an icon in the abolitionist movement, symbolizing the support of all the quilombos "ao movimento político que propunha abolição imediata e sem indenização de espécie alguma aos propietários" (p. 15). It served as an open challenge to the slave-owning system. On March 13, 1887, Seixas celebrated his birthday there with an all-night party, and quilombolas and abolitionists played their guitars and yelled, "Vivam os escravos fugidos", marching through the streets, down to what is today, the Praça Santos Dumont. One year and two months later, in a celebration at the door of the Câmara dos Diputados, Seixas would be placing in Princeess Isabel's hands a bouquet of flowers, "camélias brancas do quilombo Leblon" (pp. 42-43). Slavery was finally over.

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