

Essay

Hate, discrimination and progress

A Nation wears the mask

Nat Turner and Zumbi

By José Luiz Pereira da Costa

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Recently, just after the horror of the terrorist attack to the World Trade Center, in New York City, a Brazilian journalist met the cinema director Spike Lee. Facing a media man, the reporter went to interview Mr. Lee in a fancy way: she, the reporter, wanted to know if the historic antagonism in the United States between the Afro-Americans and the whites would calm down, since the focus of the white's angry may have shifted from the Negroes to the Islamic people, or to the Arabs in general. Spike Lee said something sounding like "this will not eradicate 400 years of racism. The interview, routed by the questions risen by the reporter, was to give to the Brazilian readers the impressions of Mr. Lee about the development of the facts, and how the American society will react from September 11th onwards.

Then, Spike Lee shifted the game. Suddenly, he became the interviewer and asked questions to the reporter, a Brazilian woman that I have never met, but I believe she is a mulatto. Mr. Lee asks: Is it true that Brazil is now going to Affirmative Action in favor of the Afro-Brazilians? The reporter, with no commitment, says that it seems that they are trying something like this, and adds: I hope they will not do it in the American way. Spike Lee asks: And what would be the difference? She affirms: Our ethnical reality is different: we have never had segregation . . . Mr. Lee moves on: And what is the difference? The reporter answers back to him: There are differences of social class, the heir from slavery, the ignorance all, but hate. Mr. Lee counterattacks: Is slavery something else but hate? And ignorance? The reporter asserts: Hate is shown when I call for a cab in New York City and the driver ignores me, because he guesses I am a Negro woman. This will never happen to me when in Brazil.

This was just now, in October 2001.

But long ago, sometime in the 60's, another reporter from Ebony Magazine B Era Bell Thompson, B after a long trip visiting several Brazilian states, wrote a couple of very interesting articles: *Does Amalgamation Work in Brazil?*

Miss Thompson wrote, then:

The second group of diners was leaving the tables in a busy Brazilian restaurant in the seaport town of Santos, but our food still had not arrived.

"We are being discriminated against." I said, finally. "And don't tell me it is economic!"

My companions, a white Brazilian and a dark one, said that it could not be so. To prove it, they called the harassed waiter and repeated what I had said. In voluble Portuguese he denied the charge.

"Then ask him why have we the only mixed group in the place, been sitting here for nearly an hour while everyone else is being served?"

A long discourse ensued as the waiter explained how the fuel had suddenly run out, how the food we ordered was difficult to prepare B like fish in a place that is specialized in seafood. My friends admitted that his excuses were weak, but insisted race had nothing to do with it.

"It is just one of those things", the white Brazilian consoled. "It is only as oversight," the dark Brazilian soothed.

"It is racial," I repeated.

"No, no." the now alarmed dark Brazilian protested. "Such things do not happen here. I will prove it to you." He called the waiter back to our table. There was another lengthy discussion with the now perspiring man.

"He is very upset," my companions translated" He says, 'How can I, a Portuguese, married to a colored woman, be prejudiced? The marriage of Portuguese men to colored women and the marriage of white women to colored men, is Brazil's way of solving a race problem before it begins. As the processes of amalgamation advance, the darker elements of the nation's population continue to disappear. With no Negro, there can be no Negro problem. Most Brazilians believe they have no problem now, therefore there can be no racial prejudice nor discrimination, no matter how long we waited for our fish. If incidents of discrimination do occur, they are economic, not racial; committed by foreigners, not Brazilians.

Just few weeks ago, in a major Brazilian weekly magazine, the senior editor Roberto Pompeu de Toledo depicts one of the multiple faces of racism in nowadays' Brazil. And, sharp forty years after Era Bell Thompson's articles, Toledo, even probably never knowing Miss Thompson, or never being a reader of her articles, questions the Nation: Find in Rio de Janeiro, he said, in the many middle and upper class restaurants, Negro waiters. Maybe in the four decades that lapsed until today, middle class Afro-Brazilians do not wait so much for a fish dish, the way it has happen to Era Bell Thompson, and her friends; but poor Brazilian boys, looking for a job, will wait until never to get jobs in a profession so popular, as it should be, to be a waiter.

Being Brazil and the United States so similar in some ways, naturally the differences became motive for many questions. I will use, once more,

the same article of Era Bell Thompson, when concerning this point, she wrote:

I was sent to Brazil to see if amalgamation as practiced there is working and if so, why; to compare their approved miscegenation with our attempted integration and to find out the truth about the social and economic status of Negroes over there.

For the reasons behind the results of the systems the two largest American nations have adopted to dissolve their color problem, one must look to their respective mother countries. For more than 500 years (711-1244 AD) Portugal was occupied by invaders from Africa: dark-skinned Moors led by darker-skinned Berbers. For a Portuguese woman to marry a cultured Moorish conqueror was as much of a social accomplishment then as it is an economic achievement today for a less educated white woman to marry an educated - and affluent - dark Brazilian. Thus race mixing did not have the same connotation for Iberians as it did for Anglo Saxons who have never been color blind.

Dr. Gilberto Freyre, the brilliant Brazilian sociologist, credits the Portuguese with "no absolute ideals, no unyielding prejudices and a greater social plasticity than other European colonizers." Although the first slave traders and "terrible slave drivers," he says they "best succeeded in fraternizing with so-called inferior races." Unlike the grim-faced, straight-laced Pilgrims who came to North America in search of religious freedom and a new home, the gay and adventuresome bandeirantes went to South America in search of gold and stayed to co-habitate with Indian and later, African women.

"The milieu in which Brazilian life began," writes Freyre, "was one of sexual intoxication." Not only did the wifeless laymen succumb to the temptation of naked Indian women -who mistook them for gods, but priests as well. In 1538, after the Indian had wisely proved himself unsuitable for agrarian pursuits, the Portuguese began importing African slaves.

More than one black lady, recorded a writer of the times, became rich and married her daughters off to socially important young white men. Perhaps the most famous mulatto was Chica da Silva, mistress of a 16th century governor who lavished a fortune on her in jewels and dresses; and built a pond complete with ships on it so that she could "feel like a queen."

According to Dr. Freyre, "the feet of the good Fathers must have slipped again," for so great was the number of priest and friar disciples of the popular 'Cult of the Dark Venus' that the curates of the state of Pernambuco were ordered to leave the Big Houses of slaveholders and live

in cottages staffed by females over 40. Several thousand mulatto babies later, the Church realized that 40-year-old Negro women were in their prime.

Slavery is always cruel and slavery in Brazil was no exception. As in the United States, there were widespread slave uprisings. The most famous martyr, Tiradentes, led a rebellion in 1792 and, like our Nat Turner, was caught and hanged. Runaway slaves from Alagoas escaped to a Pernambuco palm forest and set up a Negro state, which they held for over half a century. Their agriculture techniques were the forerunner of crop diversification.

Gilberto Freyre is nearly unanimity in Brazil, accepted as the major sociologist of 20th Century in our country. His work, *Casa Grande & Senzala* (published in English under the title: *The Masters and the Slaves (Casa-Grande and Senzala) a Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* is briefly reviewed by Christopher Roper, from London: Beforehand to the interdisciplinary approach, common in Europe and the United States, some twenty years after, Gilberto Freyre uses, since the launch of his book *Casa Grande & Senzala*, historic and sociologic material together with anthropologic data, in his effort, largely achieved, to push the Brazilians to rethink about his own past, and to accept the fact that blood and African culture are valuable component of their national identity.

Lerone Bennett Jr., in his *Forced Into Glory*, affirms: . . .they also ignore Black scholars like W.E.B. Du Bois, and Black soldier-scholars like George Washington Williams. Du Bois almost single-handedly reconstructed Reconstruction history, but there is not one quote from him in the ten top Lincoln books. Until my essay appeared in 1968, White Lincoln scholars didn't deign to notice major contemporary scholars like Benjamin Quarles or John Hope Franklin.

Gilberto Freyre, in writing his *Casa Grande & Senzala* in the 30's, uses as source, among others, W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Negro*.

HATE, SEGREGATION AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Behind Brazilian reporter argumentation, in interviewing Spike Lee, probably was one of the most questioning subjects, when one intends to compare the situation of Afro descendants in the United States, and in

Brazil: hate, discrimination and segregation. There is hate, when a Brazilian read a description like, in *Dusk of Dawn*, expresses Du Bois: Lynching, for instance, was still a continuing horror in the United States at the time of my entrance upon a teaching career. It reached a climax in 1892, when 235 persons were publicly murdered, and in the sixteen years of my teaching nearly two thousand persons were publicly killed by mobs, and not a single one of the murderers punished. Even in fictional literature, it is impossible not to consider the word hate, when one read the obvious rage of Richard Wright, in *Between the World and Me*:

And then they had me, stripped me, battering my teeth into my throat till I swallowed my own blood.

My voice was drowned in the roar of their voices, and my black wet body slipped and rolled in their hands as they bound me to the sapling.

And my skin clung to the bubbling hot tar, falling from me in limp patches.

And the down and quills of the white feathers sank into my raw flesh, and I moaned in my agony.

Then my blood was cooled mercifully, cooled by a baptism of gasoline.

And in a blaze of red I leaped to the sky as pain rose like water, boiling my limbs.

Panting, begging I clutched childlike, 'clutched to the hot sides of death.

Now I am dry bones and my face a stony skull staring in yellow surprise

at the sun . . .

The same way, when Paul Laurence Dunbar, sweet and bitter sings:

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,

When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore, B

When he beats his bars and he would be free;

It is not a carol of joy or glee,

But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,

But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings B

I know why the caged bird sings!

And discrimination, when some naïve exchanges of cards move persons to offend others, as it was reported in *The Souls of Black Folk* by Du Bois: cards ten cents a package and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card, refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others. Or segregation, as all *Jim Crow* legislation. All this is, probably, behind the thoughts of Brazilians, when arguing with Americans concerning the life of Afro descendants in our Countries.

Many Brazilians support the hypothesis that because of hate, discrimination and apartheid, the North American Negroes, starting by the pioneers in protest, and along the whole centuries 19th and 20th, they found means to survive by themselves. Living in segregated areas, small villages in the South or Black Belts in large urban areas -- they built a strong net of schools, churches and commerce. A Negro identity was strongly assembled, in spite of their *capitis diminutio*, concerning the civil right of a vote, and to be elected for an office. This particular position in the U.S.A., has led to the remarkable number of Black Colleges and Universities. When Brazil's first University was established, in 1920, the University of Rio de Janeiro, there were seventy Black Colleges and Universities in America. At the same period, the Brazilian Negroes, free from bondage, lost in the white society, survived in urban areas working at the commerce and public service, as janitors, porters, streetcars drivers, commerce clerk, and in the low ranks of the Armed Forces and the public service. There were some Black Areas, in cities as Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, in Bahia, but differently from the American gustoes, there were no schools, no black commerce, nor Negro churches, neither their mutual insurance systems. And in rural areas some gustoes were formed (Quilombos), crossing the whole 20th century, ignoring water treatment, sewerage system, with high level of endemic diseases and infant mortality.

Today, the second post in U.S.A Federal Administration is hold by the General Collin Powell. And Condoleezza Rice is another important figure. Clarence Thomas is already the second Afro-American at the Supreme Court. In Brazil, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso shows himself proudly in saying that I have one foot in the kitchen, meaning that

he is also Afro descendant. But besides his statement, that some people say is mere demagogy, the fact is that among his Secretaries there is no one single Negro; there is no Associate Judge at the Supreme Court, nor a single Negro Ambassador abroad. The Nation wears the mask, that grins and lies, People's Houses, the Brazilian Senate and the House of Representatives, shelter one Negro Senator woman, and more than a dozen of Black Representatives. They are elected by the general public in their states.

Returning to the Era Bell Thompson's articles, and Brazil, perhaps it will be important to understand something more about the Brazilian character, and our History, when Miss Thompson refers to Nat Turner and Zumbi.

TURNER AND ZUMBI

Prior, I would like to mention *Dusk of Down*, where Du Bois, listing some important events, refers to my country saying: Brazil became a Republic while I was at Harvard. And there is no record on *Dusk*, but it is significantly that, when Du Bois graduates at Fisk, in June 1888, on May 13th, one month before, the slavery was finally abolished in Brazil, with the stroke of a pen. And another point: Abraham Chapman, in his *Black Voices* opens the participation of William Edward Burghart Du Bois at the Anthology, saying: *It is no exaggeration to say that, in many respects, W. E. B. Du Bois is the intellectual father of modern Negro scholarship, modern Negro militancy, and self-consciousness, and modern Negro cultural development.* In Brazil, the Brazilian Academy for Literature (Academia Brasileira de Letras) bears the title House of Machado de Assis. He is the most important Brazilian writer. The mulatto Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908), to repeat Chapman, with no exaggeration, is the father of romance in Brazil, and still is the eminence but, he will never be remembered as participant of any militancy, self-consciousness, for modern Negro cultural development.

Era Bell Thompson, based in what some people told her, matches Nat Turner to Tiradentes (José Joaquim da Silva Xavier, 1748-1792), officially the martyr of Brazil's Independence. Tiradentes (meaning tooth-drawer, or empiric dentist) will be better placed if together with the Americans who fought against the British, and were betrayed by disloyal people, in the long fight that ended with the Independence of the Thirteen Colonies. Nat Turner and John Brown, in America, will be somehow similar to Zumbi, in Brazil.

Then a question now arises: what was the horizon for Nat Turner? Again Lerone Bennett Jr., in his *Wade in the Water*, writes the thought of Turner:

We are to commence a great work tonight. Our race is to be delivered from slavery, and God has appointed us as the men to do his bidding: and let us be worthy of our calling. I am told to slay all the whites we encounter, without regard to age or sex. We have no arms or ammunition, but we will find these in the houses of our oppressors, and, as we go on, others can join us. Remember that we do not go forth for the sake of blood and carnage: but it is necessary, that, in the commencement of this revolution, all the whites we meet should die, until we have an army strong enough to carry on the war upon a Christian basis. Remember that ours is not a war for robbery, or to satisfy our passions; it is a struggle for freedom. Ours must be deeds, and not words. Then let's away to the scene of action."

If Southampton County would be conquered by Nat Turner's small group of slaves, how long would this victory last?

If John Brown, says Henry David Thoreau, had conquered Harper's Ferry arsenal, he would have started a large scale revolt of slaves, aiming the establishment of an autonomous state in Appalachia, one step to conquer the whole South. But, he was hanged, and his dream ended.

And what about the Zumbi?

Zumbi, a born free Negro, is today a Brazilian National Hero (as Martin Luther King is for the U.S.A.), in the same level of Tiradentes. He saw, in spite of a long war with many independent battles, the end of a Negro Nation, inside the most important Colony of Portuguese Empire, then.

I worked as Special Chief Advisor for the Governor of my state, Mr. Alceu Collares, the first Negro elected for this position, when a group of American President of Historically Negro Universities visited Mr. Collares, at the Government Palace, in the city of Porto Alegre. I wrote then a brief story of Zumbi dos Palmares, which follows:

1

Anytime in the eve of seventeenth century, one could see, like a movie of Recife, in the harbor, few ships docked, with folded sails, standing for the cargo. The blowing wind had a smell, sweet but nauseous. The sugar and sugar cane smell was stronger than the sea odor, but they blended in an odd flavor.

Recife was the export port for the sugar; the main source of income to Brazil's starting economy. The whole Northeast lived from daily plant, crop and sugar cane transformation. Even the ones not directly connected to this, as cattle breeders and general merchants depended indirectly on the richness out of sugar production. When sugar export was fine, the sugar masters had plenty of money to buy everything.

As Europe had purchased all sugar manufactured in Brazil, the farms produce more sugar, expanding the plantations, covering the long coast of Northeast with a wide green carpet of sugar cane.

Ships queue up on their turn to receive the precious consignment of sugar. Some people moved around the harbor at ease: they were White, well dressed and discussed updated matters. C slaves: to purchase more or not. A White man, moving in the harbor, talking to friends, would study his chances of buying a sugar mill, property of a Portuguese eager to return home. The price was too high. Still in the port, there was a warehouse with piles and piles of sugar, and some machines imported from Portugal. Yet, there was a warehouse, where a cargo to Recife called the attention: lying in the floor, still in shock due to the shameful journey, inside the Navio Negroiro, women and men were left.

They came from Africa's West Coast, bought by slaves' traders, from chiefs, and tribal kings. The payment for those human beings was only tobacco and gin. Then, the remainders who stood up the fantastic journey, would be sold to the sugar mills owners. They would work on their industries; their houses; their farms.

2

"Was Zumbi dead?" The question, from mouth to mouth, as the wind was blowing in the woods, was made in every small village inside Pernambuco state. Across the sugar cane plantations, towards the ranches, the question had reached faraway places where Negroes, living in small groups, were planting their own crops, taking care of their cows, pigs, chickens, and other animals. The farmers, owners of large scale sugar cane plantations, nevertheless, were just awaiting for the confirmation: Zumbi's death would mean the end of a savage fight, and the end of The Negro Kingdom.

Negroes, like many Indians and some whites, nevertheless, had not accepted the news concerning King Zumbi's death. He was not a human being, but a God, the God of the War. Zumbi was immortal, they used to say.

Some, however, were saying that he was defeated; and the whispers were so strong that Negroes started to think it was true. Inside Senzalas , in the whole Northeast of Brazil, throughout the nights, the wizards called their deities, and prayed the rite song for resurrection. If Zumbi was actually dead, then their pray would give him his life back. In opposition, if he was not dead, but in danger, it could help him to save himself. Night after night the sad moan came out from many Northeast Senzalas.

The slaves believed in their magic powers. If they could use it plus the courage and the high powers of Zumbi, they would defeat the colonial army weapons'. So, night after night the slaves kept on praying for Palmares kingdom survival, with the final victory of Zumbi, that would mean freedom for all Brazilian slaves.

Otherwise, inside the Senzalas around Olinda , the tune was another. They had lost any hope. They were singing just funeral songs. Anyone could see, lying in the sun or in the rain, in the same place, the Pelourinho , used to beat the Negroes, the dead head of Zumbi, the King of Palmares. His head was there, lying like a macabre trophy.

3

By the seventeenth century, slavery was a quite normal behavior. To hold war prisoners as slaves was a routine then, even in some European Countries. For the large sugar cane plantations, which required so many peasants, the use of slave labor seemed to be the only available solution. The first settlers sent to Brazil tried to use Indians as slaves. Nevertheless, they failed completely: "the Indian produced too little, and died early after becoming a captive," some historiographers say. " The African so humble, so mild and submissive accepted the hard job without protest," other historiographers assert.

However, the history and sociology say this is untrue. The cultural anthropology, C says professor Arthur Ramos, C shows us "that the Negro adequacy to rural works is a consequence of matching regimens. The Indian has behaved as a splendid slave before the state of settlement in the farms. In the transition from the nomadism to the rural system, the Indian failed unabridged. In antagonism, the Negro has qualified perfectly to the farm work, mainly because of his higher cultural stage, far superior to the Indian."

Another lesson can be learned out of ancient slave participation on Brazil's History: The Negro had never been the docile type, all submission, unable to react. True indeed the Pai Manso , and permanent unpretentious

behavior was never the rule. The Negro, even being far better worker than the Indian, because of his cultural background, was never a good slave. Because of that he reacted violently against the slavery regime. Almost four hundred years of slavery show clearly the several revolts they made, not only in Brazil but also in many countries in the Americas. From the individual escape, to the gigantic insurrections, they always tried. In those movements a sense of fight was present, the wish of showing personal dignity, the contest for a common cause.

This search for dignity, contesting in favor of all the Negro brothers, in an organized warfare, is the story of Zumbi.

4

The sugar cane farmers used to visit Pernambuco frequently, when new consignment of slaves began to arrive at Recife port. They used to stop over, searching for the slave market opportunities, often presented in auction. Before that, they used to examine the slaves: when male, by touching mussels and their teeth; when women, looking the general shape. The eventual buyer used to survey children, as well, in spite of that, they would often be sold, at least, with one of their parents.

In this consignment C almost ready for the auction, one could identify, in a corner of the warehouse, a woman tied by a chain in her ankle. Her gesture revealed she was not a common one. The way she used to sit; the way other Negroes treated her, all confirmed that the rumors spread by the cargo owner were truth: among the slaves there was a Princess.

C "Who wants to buy the Aqualtune Princess?" Boomed the auctioneer.

Standing near the Princess was an old woman, about thirty years old. Probably she was brought by the slaves' drivers, by mistake, or, eventually, in a special arrangement with the chiefs or kings in West Coast. She had her reason to be annoyed: the woman was not from the same area Aqualtune was, but she knew about her, and she respected the people from the Princess' kingdom.

The old woman claimed several times for a certain Zumbi C the devil; master of the war, the one to set free all slaves!

Nevertheless, in the early years of the seventeenth century, the profess of an old woman or any other black men would mean nothing.

A sugar cane farmer, then, bought Aqualtune. A small group went along with her. The farmer acquired some ten slaves, all from the same area, places known, nowadays, as Kpandu, Ho, Akosombo, Aflao, and Lome. Altogether they were Ewes. Born in the forest emerging from the banks of Volta River, the group, after the capture, was transported to Elmina Castle, not too far from Volta Region, where they were born. It was the place of their childhood, adolescence, and finally site of their untimely death. At least concerning the ones left behind: their family and their friends. Somehow, it was the place where they had left their own souls. Aqualtune was an Ewe Princess.

5

A sugar cane mill comprised several buildings, almost all of them for sugar production. They had a millstone; a refining house; the furnaces; the copper vessels' house, and few warehouses to shelter the sugar, before they sent it to the port.

Casa-Grande was close to the industrial complex. It was a very solid building with only one level: the farmer's house. Following the Portuguese spirit, and the social stage, those houses used to be large, with a garden, many rooms, but, as Gilberto Freyre states in his book "Casa-Grande & Senzala": "The pompous radish eaters (the Portuguese) used to walk on the streets followed by, sometimes, four slaves: one to carry the hat; another to hold the raincoat; a third one to brush their suit, and a fourth slave to comb their hair." All this ostentatiousness would represent an ascetic behavior at home. This external performance used to be supported by food shortage, and an extremely poor furniture layout inside the Casa-Grande." Among the facilities there was a Chapel. Sometimes, depending on the wealthy of the farm owner, a resident priest could be found there.

The compound had, yet, a Senzala, described as a group of huts, each one with only one door, and no windows, but small holes. The Senzalas were often built semi-underground.

6

The newcomers were immediately sent to the Senzala. Aqualtune, from the moment she got in disgrace, and the slave's driver bought her, started to see so many monstrous things that another one maybe would not hurt her more than she already was. Mistake: again, she got shocked in the darkness of the Senzala, as she was for so many days, almost a full life, in the murky hold of the slave ship.

Brought often from the West Coast and from Angola, many Senzala's residents were able to talk to each other in Yoruba, Fanti, Ashanti, Ewe and few other languages. So, when the night had come, Aqualtune and the others started learning lessons from the people arriving from the daily work in the farms. Stories of suffering and hard work started to be told. Melancholic songs, from Africa, started to be sung.

Slaves whispered names of home Gods, in endured exercises, all composing the sounds farms' owners disliked. Depending on the farmers' mood, the songs and the prays wouldn't go on, but would be stopped violently by the hand of the foreman. However, even when not annoying the owner, the function has never lasted too much. The slaves had to lay in the floor their fatigued bodies, to be ready for another journey early the next day.

Then Aqualtune slept no more as a Princess. She thought she had lost forever, in Africa, her noble status. Thinking so, she put her head in a pillow's simulacrum and quietly tears started to roll in her face. Nevertheless it was a mistake, she simply couldn't know that again she would be a Princess.

Early in the morning, the slaves used to organize a very insubstantial meal and start moving to the plantation, where they would work for the whole day, until the sunset. They would have few breaks for their trivial repast. Those who were lucky, instead of marching to the fields, would stay doing homework or, even, working in the mills.

The slave could not practice any mistake: doing so, the most common punishment was the palmer and the rush.

Three options were commonly left to the slaves: a great portion just accepted the fate and worked hard in the fields for about seven up to ten years, and then, without health and without energy, just die. Others forced a condition of sympathy to the farmers to get a job inside the house, in the mills or, eventually, working as job bosses. Those remaining would work, but dreaming about the day they would escape to the forest.

Some years before Princess Aqualtune had been brought, a group of about thirty or forty fugitive slaves from mills of Pernambuco, arrived to Sierra da Barriga, a place far from the coastline.

They had made a fantastic journey, with nothing more than scarce tools like small ax, scythe, and machetes, stolen from their masters. Then they had opened a way across the thick forest, climbing a mountain where the forest was, to reach the paramount where, finally, they started settling.

The soil was fertile, the vegetation opulent and generous. Together, showing a pleasant skyline, thousand of palm trees could be seen. It gave to the place the actual name: Palmares.

Despite all the security system, used by job bosses, it was possible to escape. Whenever it took place, the farmers used to organize immediately large groups of foremen and hunters, named Entradas . When the hunt expedition was successful, they used to bring the caught slaves home, for painful punishments. Rush sessions, immobilization on tree woods, or humiliating carry of a yoke for oxen, used to be the most common revenge.

All the violence, all the security systems weren't strong enough to stop the growing escape of slaves. In the early days of seventeenth century, slaves frequently run out to the forest, generating a very difficult task to the slaves' hunters.

They started, then, to cluster themselves in small men's groups. Those groups became known as Quilombos , and they spread all over the Northeast, and Southern states as Espirito Santo and Rio de Janeiro. However, Palmares made the history.

At Palmares, the arriving men used to survive eating mainly fruits so common in the area, as oranges, watermelons, pineapples, mangoes, bananas, guavas, jacks, coconuts, and roots. They got meat out of hunting animals in the forest. Fish came from many streams, and they used the same method to fish, as they did in Africa. Somehow they had experienced a process of historical retrocession, since at home, in Africa, some of them had been farmers, craftsmen, businessmen, and herdsmen.

Palmares, then, was nothing more than a small refuge, deep in the jungle, containing few huts.

Time moved on, and more slaves arrived at Palmares, and almost all were men. The wave of Negroes to the bushes of Palmares got simultaneously another direction: the slaves already settled organized expeditions to capture women in the nearby farms.

Professor Decio Freitas, in "Palmares, the Slaves War" says: "The first Palmares settlers were too little to represent a feasible economic and social community. First of all, there were no women. It made men frequently march over the plantation down the hill to conquer their 'Sabinas'. Not only Black women, but Indians, Mulattoes, as well as White. The need to kidnap women from different races was due to the scarcity of Black women in the farms and mills, since the farmers always had

preferred to buy male than female. Historic papers say about poor free White women who escaped spontaneously to live with Quilombolas*, at Palmares. This is not an exception in history, since in the United States, during the eighteenth century it was common the escape of White women, mainly Irish, Scottish, and British reduced to 'indentured servants', with blacks and mulattoes."

A small village started rising. Men began to prepare the land for the seeds, and the fences identified a rudimentary regime of property. That was the time when, instead of eating only frugal fruits from the trees, roots, vegetables, and grains became the result of early crops. Inside the houses the elements of a family could be seen: women, children, stoves and pans with cassava, maize, meat. Rudimentary beds and, depending of the man or the woman, some frugalities like a piece of mirror or sometimes flowers' vessels. Outside the house, surrounded by the fence, chickens, pigs, oven, to produce bread, and the small plantations.

The new settlers, no more slaves, trying to avoid difficulties with the White men, would prefer that few people knew they were living as free people. But they could do nothing about: the news spread out like the wind: there were Negroes living as free people somewhere. In the nights, people inside the Senzalas heard stories about the free Negroes, about their community. Many stories' listeners took the decision of breaking with the status quo and trying to escape to Sierra da Barriga, to join the free community.

From 1630 on, new events came to improve the growing Palmares. Pernambuco state was fighting against the Dutch. The Dutch, very efficiently, had disembarked in the capital of Pernambuco, Olinda city then. The Portuguese, consequently, were much more concerned about the whole colony of Brazil, than slaves, property of farmers.

The war made the productive system, as sugar cane plantation and sugar production, almost collapse. The security system to avoid slaves escapes became weaker. Because of that, more slaves found the way to the Palmares community.

Palmares, in early stages of its formation was a confuse place. It was the materialization, somehow, of Babel's tower, with many people speaking different African dialects. Among them, as well, many locally born people speaking Portuguese and bearing, already, Brazilian and Portuguese habits. With them, as well, many Indians could be found, speaking their own

dialects. Finally, there was White people in Palmares, many, for sure, justice's escapees.

Furthermore, so many huts were built that Palmares instead of being a village became gradually a group of villages, one far from the other, but all of them connected somehow. This was because of their need of being together, to defend themselves from any attempt from the Entradas.

All this human complex generated spontaneously an administrative system, with a rudimentary Government. The responsible, one Chief, used to be, simultaneously, the Governor, the Justice, and the Mayor.

All based upon what they're used to at home, in Africa. Therefore people known as nobles or part of noble families at home became the Chiefs, Kings, Queens, Princesses and so on.

8

Life has surprises, and Aqualtune was to receive a good one. She could never imagine, from the moment she crossed the Atlantic Ocean, inside the murky hole of the Navio Negreiro, to become again a noble woman, an African Queen, inside Brazil.

The Princess Aqualtune got married in the best African style, became a beloved Queen, raising her children, two males and some females.

Meanwhile, in 1644, Palmares faced the first serious test. At that time, the Dutch dominated all the state of Pernambuco, having decided to know more about Palmares. They checked many stories heard about the free Negroes village.

After few strategic studies, they decided to send an armed Dutch expedition, under the command of Rodolfo Baro, to destroy the Quilombo. The Quilombolas were always in alert for the eventuality of a Portuguese assault. So, when the Dutch corps started showing up in the forest, the Quilombo defense system was in alert. They prepared traps using the trees and the soil. When the Dutch were inside the prepared area, trees started to fall down, and, suddenly, they started to receive charges of arrows and spears on their rear-guard, in their flanks. The Quilombolas defeated Baro. Many of his soldiers laid dead and he had no option left, but a withdrawal. His defeat was not more humiliating then it was because of the rudimental weapons used by the Quilombolas.

There was, few months later, a second attempt from the Dutch. They had prepared more carefully a new incursion, at this time under the

command of João Blaer, a highly qualified Dutch soldier. When Blaer reached what he thought to be the heart of Palmares, he faced what we may call, nowadays, a Guerrilla. The Dutch soldier started the attack then. The Quilombolas draw back, and waited. If the Dutch moved forward again, then they would come from all sides, and quickly attack, to disappear again through the thick forest.

For three months Blaer did no more than avoiding to fall down in a mortal ambush. The Quilombolas, on their turn, kept showing that they were not planning to give up their liberty without fight. The three-month war was important to show that Palmares was much bigger than the stories told in Pernambuco.

During the fights, the Dutch rode inside some parts of the Quilombo. They set fire to large portions of maize plantations, with no practical results, since as much as they moved inside burning it out, more maize plantations they saw. The Dutch understood that any attempt to keep on burning the plantations was just waste of time.

Finally, wounded mortally by the Whites' natural enemy, the malaria mosquito, Blaer returned to Recife city. He had only one minor victory, destroying just one small Quilombo. With the two failures, the Dutch had decided to leave Palmares in peace.

Many Africans from Yourubaland acclaimed the victory as a Xangô triumph. A victory of the God who punishes with fever human beings who attempt to affront him. The Dutch had provoked Xangô marching against his people, peacefully living in the forest.

In the course of the days that followed the defeat of the Dutch, Quilombolas and farmers told many stories. Almost all, cited one name: Zumbi. The Negroes celebrated their African rites. The people of Palmares had found peace and met their dignity, the same old prior dignity that the shameful captivity and slavery had smothered.

9

After Dutch's defeat, chronicles concerning Palmares were all connected to Aqualtune and her family. Two of her children C Ganga Zumba and Gana Zona C became kings of the two most important Mocambos. The lack of trustful records concerning that period leads to conclusions more than to facts. The stories are more truthful when they refer the fact that Aqualtune had daughters and one among them gave her a grandson, and this grandson was named after God of War C Zumbi.

Zumbi, the grandson of Aqualtune, Ewe Princess, was to write an important page in the History of Brazil. He was to be, hundred of years later, one of Brazilians Nationality fathers, a Nation's Hero as Tiradentes .

Zumbi was to be born while Palmares faced the earliest war, against the Dutch. He came on time of the first victory slaves had at Palmares' history. There was time to prepare the fights against the Dutch, as there was time to pray to the Gods for a powerful, wealthy and wise grandson for Aqualtune.

Zumbi was born free, exactly as those who, hundreds of years later, would choose him as their symbol.

And free Zumbi had a normal life, running among the trees of the forest; hunting small bush animals; fishing in the various streams and rivers nearby his Mocambo ; in lands of Palmares, inside the region that nowadays is the state of Alagoas. He grew along with his brother Andalaquituche, moving around almost the whole Palmares. He knew the nearer Mocambos very well. This was part of his future war activities.

Zumbi had very little experience with slavery. Living in Palmares he was like an African, inside Brazil. However, in spirit he was strongly connected with his brothers in captivity. Constantly, he heard sad and disgraceful histories about slavery.

He heard, as well, stories from Africa. Aqualtune, his grandmother C as any common granny C told him many tales about the Ewe people. About a soft and pacific people, called The Fantis. She told him stories from the people named Ga, believers of many important deities, which used to fight against their enemies using the feet, as if they were dancing. Those Ga people had moved to the Coast, moving like ants, and doing a noise like Nkra, Nkra. It seems that it was the origin for the name Accra. Zumbi heard stories, as well, about the people named The Ashantis. They used to live in the thick forest, and they were very rich, powerful in war, and craft(skilled)in gold.

Then, after what she thought was the end of her days, she was again living exactly as if in Africa, as an old mother and grandmother, running a kingdom of free people.

Among a dozen of grandsons, Aqualtune hold special love for one: Zumbi, a free young boy like her brothers and friends in the good long days before the war in Yorubaland. The war ended in defeat for the Kingdom of her step parents, and with her expatriation, among many others, to the Americas.

In the year of 1654, the Dutch were finally expelled from the whole Northeast of Brazil and, as a consequence, Portugal moved freely again. Then, it was time for the reconstruction, to organize again the economy annihilated by war.

It was not a Portuguese strategy to start a new war, then, against Palmares. Another economic point was considered by the Portuguese when assembling their tactic: Jamaica had started to dispute with Brazil the international market for sugar. Northeast was, because of that, in a deteriorating stage. The next coming years would prove this fact: the plantations stopped growing; in fact, they started decreasing. Less men's labor was required then. There was a real armistice between Portuguese and the outlaw community of Palmares. Nearby burgs of Serinhaém, Penedo, Porto Calvo and Alagoas developed a strong commerce with Palmares. The Quilombolas, on their turn, exported cereals, vegetables, bush animals, fishes and pottery. They used to import, in this commercial exchange, tools, agricultural implements, guns and gun powder.

10

The wide Quilombo of Palmares was then a narrow strip of land wide 180 miles along the coast between Santo Agostinho Cape, in Pernambuco state, and northern part of São Francisco River, belonging to present Alagoas state.

The area, hilly and with thick forest used to comprise the Garanhuns plateau, Dois Irmãos and Bananal mountain ridges, today part of Viçosa County, in Alagoas state. The Quilombo was in the area surrounded by Cafuchi, Juçara, Pesqueira and Comonati mountain ridges, far beyond Serra da Barriga, the place where the first slaves settled, escaping from sugar cane mills.

The place was remarkably sheltering: all fruits one may need were there, free, in the trees. The palm trees were ready to give the roof to the huts; material for the manufacture of hats, baskets, sleeping nets, fans and brooms. Using the body of a tree named Pininga they were able to rise their huts, sometimes large houses for chiefs and kings. From some tree bark they were able to produce rustic dresses. Palm tree was their eden tree, since almost everything they could get out of it, including oil and butter. Even spirits for their deities and for themselves were produced, as well.

Palmares was then in its apogee. Even blacksmiths could be found there. All the inherent aspects of a typical African community were there. Palmares' residents, at that point, felt themselves much more African than Brazilians. Probably only the Portuguese language, used among them since

it was impossible to learn hundreds of dialects, was the sign to define that the place was not Africa anymore, but Brazil.

They kept praying to their Gods; eating their native food; speaking at home and among the similar family or tribal brothers the same dialect or language. They kept teaching the children as if they were African children. The family structure was preserved as it was at the far home.

The fast growing commerce between the free people of Palmares and the White settlers, in the region, was not enough to make the Mocambo's leader blind. They could see it was just temporary. The farmers, year after year, saw their slaves disappear, escaping to Palmares. The existence of Palmares by itself was a permanent encouragement to the escapees. Palmares' position had consolidated, making waves of slaves' search for their liberty over there. Simultaneously, it increased the capacity of Palmares' men to challenge the farmers. More and more, Quilombolas organized rides to capture slaves, even inside the Senzalas. Palmares, which in its beginning was only a shelter for runaway slaves, became the center of resistance for the whole Slavery System in Brazil.

Any slave arrived in Palmares became, immediately, a free citizen, under the rules of the place and the orders of chiefs and kings. Although, in an uncommon excrescence, the slaves captured in the farms kept their status in Palmares. Palmares used to have its own slaves, again in a confirmation of Africa's style, brought along with the slaves. The Negroes caught inside the Senzalas were brought as slaves.

Those who had escaped from their masters, Palmares accepted immediately as its free citizen. Nevertheless, the slave condition inside the Quilombo was not permanent. It was to supply eventual need, when there was shortage of men's labor at Palmares.

The opposition from the farmers was never strong, during the Dutch period. After the Dutch's expel from Brazil, actually, farmers started organizing themselves and destroyed, at least, small Mocambos. The Government of Pernambuco was not prepared to organize any troops to face Palmares' outlaws yet.

Bartolomeu Bezerra, a Portuguese, rode over Palmares by the first time in 1602 and 1608. The farmers had never approved Palmares. Then, in 1668, sixty years later, the farmers from Alagoas and Porto Calvo closed a Treaty, named "*União Perpétua*" (Union Forever).

The agreement terms stated they should organize a powerful army to ride over the Mocambos and capture as much runaway slaves as they could. They defined, then, some rules, a budget and prices, like: they would use

all food the troops could seize. Escapee slaves, if belonging to a member of the Union, would be returned to their owners, by means of a fee payment of 12,000 Reis. This fee would decrease to 6,000 Reis, if the slave gave up spontaneously. Captured slaves, belonging to other farmers, would be sold at high price, except boys under the age of twelve years old. The runaway Negroes, wanted by murder in raids over the farms, should be hanged, with no mercy.

In the year of 1669, another city called Serinhaém joined the Union, in a worthless decision. There was no money to keep the troops doing raids over the Quilombos. Even the Governor's decision, by decree, saying recaptured slaves from Palmares ought to be sold (ought NOT to be sold???) to other parts of Brazil, but Pernambuco, was fruitless. The aim of this decree was to affect Palmares' fame of being the major point of resistance for the Slavery System. Nevertheless, slaves kept on running away to Palmares.

11

The early years of the seventieth decade, showed the apogee of Palmares, with a population of about fifty thousand inhabitants, living in various Mocambos. Two of these Mocambos had famous Chiefs: Zumbi and Andalaquituche, Zumbi's brother. Both men, now with their own families, with wives and children, great grandsons of Queen Aqualtune, an old and respectful woman.

Palmares was then a kind of Federation. The chiefs and kings of Mocambos used to meet formally, to hold discussions concerning important points of their routine. Customarily, as well, they discussed points related to an always present probability: the war!

A new Governor, Fernão Sousa Coutinho, raised to the office in Pernambuco in 1671. His mission, following orders from Portugal, was to give an end to Palmares adventure.

In Palmares, Ganga Zumba, son of Aqualtune, and uncle of Zumbi, was the Governor, or the King, of the largest Mocambo: Cerca do Macaco. Zumbi, on the other hand, was a strong young man, under the command of his uncle. He had his own ideas. He had his own men in arms, permanently preparing his troops for war. However, he respected and obeyed uncle Ganga Zumba's orders.

The new Governor had authorized a first ride over Palmares, under the command of Captain André da Rocha, and Lieutenant Antônio Jacomé Bezerra. After an incursion in which there were no casualties, Jacomé captured two hundred people.

That was not a large victory, but it was very important to the farmers and the Government. In so many years, it was the first time they could achieve something against Palmares. A promotion has made young Jacomé move early from Lieutenant to Colonel.

Jacomé took his time to organize himself and his soldiers. One year later, with his army well trained and carrying ammunition for six months, he rode again over Palmares. Again, he destroyed several Mocambos and burned various plantations.

But then, something different happened. A large group of Quilombolas, in a fulminating counter-attack, surrounded a large portion of Jacomé's files and, in a vibrant fight, annihilated all the rows. The Colonel faced the hordes of a new warrior: Zumbi was the name he heard most from his soldiers. Jacomé tried to reorganize the troops; yet, there were so many casualties and desertions that he had no other way besides returning defeated to Recife.

The Quilombolas had their own loses. By the first time, they had organized a retaliation. A large column marched over the nearby town of Porto Calvo, burning miles of sugar cane plantations, as the White used to do at Palmares maize plantations.

Cristovão Lins, Mayor of Porto Calvo, organized troops and rode over Palmares. Irately, he destroyed one Mocambo with seven hundred huts. Then, there was a war involving the Government of Portugal, via his administrators in Brazil, and the outlaw Federation of Palmares, under the command of King Ganga Zumba.

Again, a new Governor assumed the state of Pernambuco. His name was Pedro de Almeida. The year was 1674. He arrived with strict orders to attack Palmares. To achieve it, he organized a troop of Indians, mestizos, and Negroes, who made part of the troops of Henrique Dias, himself a Negro, hero of the Dutch's expulsion from Brazil.

The Quilombo faced Dias, as they did before with others, and it was strong enough to stand. Palmares was a reality then, as in the previous seventy years, or even more.

Throughout that period they had always expected for the war. They were able to stock gun powder and weapons, mainly after the defeat of the Dutch.

Low profile of Dias, and Palmares' troops reaction, were not enough to intimidate the new Governor. He ordered Master-Sergeant Manuel Lopes to ride again over Palmares. This incursion had revealed the

wide extension of Palmares. A record from that period says: " A total of two thousand houses, all fortified, was the castle where the Negroes have resisted to our troops. They had resisted up to when we have put fire on it. Then, they started to runaway."

The troops of Master Sergeant Lopes developed a new stratagem: instead of persecuting the defeat, they transformed the place in a camp. Another finding that surprised the invaders was the ruins of a Chapel, with Christian statues. That was an early finding, concerning the syncretism that has amalgamated, in Brazil, African and Catholic belief

Some few months later, Manuel Lopes got to know that Quilombolas had reorganized themselves twenty miles ahead. His troops marched again and faced a bloody battle. Zumbi was among Quilombo defenders and showed himself as a courageous leader. He fought using guns and spears, and the invaders nearly killed him, when two bullets hit his chest. The name Zumbi and his courage became a myth among the Quilombolas and the governmental soldiers.

Master Sergeant Lopes' Camp was, then, facing an unforeseen problem: food ran out, and there was no way to get it. The enemy forces had surrounded his troops. He could do nothing but ask for support from the Governor. It came via Fernão Carrilho, a distinguished soldier. Carrilho became famous in previous fights against Quilombolas in another state, Sergipe. Carrilho did the same, as well, against Indians at Sierra de Pecara□a.

Immediately after becoming the new commander, Carrilho adjusted a working policy with the rulers of interested villages. They should arrange two hundred archers and one hundred guns, what would cost 700,000 Reis. They should also arrange 100,000 Reis, monthly, as troop provision. In return, he would sell for 12,000 Reis any Negro captured, except the ones under the age of three.

The farmers couldn't give all Carrilho was requiring; however, he rode over one Mocambo in special: the Kingdom of old Aqualtune. Ganga Zumba and a large portion of his people ran out. There was a second ride, against the Mocambo of Gana Zona, brother of Ganga Zumba. Then Carrilho, surprisingly, was about to fight against nothing. The settlers, before the troops' arrival, destroyed the whole Mocambo. Nothing more than ashes remained for the invaders.

Carrilho did the same as Master Sergeant Manoel Lopes had done before: he transformed the place in a Camp, and requested support from Recife. Meanwhile, in a distinct stratagem, he started doing quick rides over the Mocambos, returning immediately after it to his Camp. He was being successful using this tactic.

It was a big award for him when he rode over Mocambo Amaro, and in an extremely bloody battle slaughtered hundreds of Negroes, including Tocolo, son of Ganga Zumba. Among other prisoners was Gana Zona, brother of Ganga Zumba, the King, as well as Zambi and Acaiene, both sons of Ganga Zumba. Happy with his victories, Carrilho blowed his own trumpet in Recife: to destroy completely Palmares was then a job for thirty or twenty soldiers. Porto Calvo town acclaimed Carrilho. Then he announced the foundation of Bom Jesus and Cruz Camp, deep in the heart of Palmares.¹²

Much more than Palmares' whole destruction, the clear objective of Pedro de Almeida, Governor of Pernambuco, was to achieve the Negroes entire submission. Mainly considering the fact that so many defeats have matured an unconditional surrender. The Governor based his strategy in a fatherlike treatment to the Quilombolas. He was, actually, thinking of transforming Palmares in a new Portuguese settlement. The Mocambos would be transformed in a Colonial Village.

They had conveyed to Ganga Zumba, the Negro Brazilian King, the Governor's views. So, he was weighing carefully the Governor's proposal. Zumbi thought about many years of war. He considered his brother and son arrested. King Zumba pondered crescent difficulty to arrange gun powder and arms. Despite it, the end of the war could mean a peaceful life, with an increase in food production. And, above all, he would get full reconnaissance to his people, as legally free citizens.

The old King took his decision. In 1678, he sent to Recife three of his sons, and another eleven assistant. All escorted by a messenger, sent by the Governor. When they returned home, Ganga Zumba's son brought a Treaty of Peace. Palmares rose to the condition of Villa, and Ganga Zumba received the Portuguese title of Mestre-de-Campo (Field Master).

In Olinda there was even a Mass as thanks given to the war end. In Palmares, great part of Quilombolas applauded the wise gesture of King Ganga Zumba.

Zumbi, however, was against the decision of his uncle. He believed it was not only important to set Palmares free. The remaining Negroes still

slaves would lay unprotected. Histories about slavery he heard during his life have caused him to think that way.

Great part of Palmares was ready to follow the new status, conquered by Ganga Zumba. Another group, formed mainly by young people, started preparing themselves for the war again.

Young people's reaction to the Treaty reached the Governor. To avoid new battles, he set free Gana Zona, brother of Ganga Zumba, and sent him for discussions with Palmares' ruler. Meanwhile, from many peaceful Mocambos, youth runaway to join Zumbi's troops.

Ganga Zumba was still the leader and he was strong enough to sustain reconciliation. Yet, the youth, even the ones living inside the Royal Mocambo, plotted to dethrone the King. As it could have happened in Africa, they did it in Brazil: they poisoned the King's food. Then, Ganga Zumba, the first generation of Afro-Brazilians to be born free at Brazil's slavery time, was killed by his own people.

Zumbi, his nephew C son of a sister of Ganga Zumba and grandson of Aqualtune, the Ewe Princess, the Palmares Queen C became the new leader. He would be a tough and sanguinary leader.

13

Zumbi, then the King, led Palmares to her bloody age, involving it in frequent battles. His followers loved him, the general people in Palmares feared him. The farmers in the surrounding villas simply hated him, and wanted to see him dead. Loved, feared, and heated, Zumbi ruled indisputable over Palmares. Even some White, in Recife, used to say that "his courage and energy is shameful for us and inspiring for his followers." Records from Portugal Colony Council refers: "Zumbi is a rush beating over Recife's people." The truth was that Zumbi had no more where to buy gun powder and arms. To get it he had to seize from the enemy, during the battles.

There came again a new Master-Captain. Gonçalo Moreira was his name. Efficiently, he marched over Palmares and, in a quick fight, arrested two hundred Negroes. This kind of victory, nonetheless, was not sufficient to destroy Palmares, nor to arrest Zumbi. Changes in the Government, as new Governor and new Master Captain occurred.

A new decade started, the eightieth years. Authorities wished to find Zumbi, and even forgive him, if he agreed to give up the fight. Warnings

started appearing in billboards, respectfully addressing to the Negro leader as "Captain Zumbi," asking Zumbi to stop fighting.

No answer was given by Zumbi who, month after month, year after year, fought enemies in his Camp, or marched against the farms. A system of compensation stands: Negroes captured by governmental troops, out of successful rides, would be returned to their farms as slaves again. On the other hand, when Zumbi's men successfully drove over the farms, slaves were set free, enlarging resources of Palmares, or Zumbi's corps, as well.

The eightieth years were in the second half: it was 1686, and Portugal placed a new Governor in Pernambuco, Souto Maior. Fernão Carrilho was again in charge of riding over Palmares.

The Quilombolas got to know about it in time to prepare themselves. The fights then were more favorable to the Negroes than to the Whites, forcing the Governor to contract another leader. Domingos Jorge Velho was the new one in charge, and he promised to destroy the whole Palmares. To do so, as others had tried before, he would receive one fifth of the revenue out of slaves sold, land for himself and forgiveness for his men. The discussions concerning the agreement with Velho lasted for some years and only in 1691 they had signed it.

More than one thousand men under the command of Velho invaded Quilombo do Macaco, Zumbi's headquarters. Domingos Jorge Velho's men were not expecting a real war, but a simple hunt of Zumbi. Marching straight to Macaco, they thought Negroes would runaway. However, in opposition, what they found was a terrible resistance. Despite the number of soldiers, Velho's troops had to withdraw. That was a glorification for Zumbi. His people soon started to see him no more as a man, but as a God C the God of War, as he was named when he was born.

Informed about the defeat, the Governor sent more troops, now under the command of Master-Captain Bernardo Vieira Melo. Zumbi, aware about the new attempt, sent his men to dig a ditch six hundred meter large, protected by palisades and contenders. Twice the troops of Velho and Melo, now together, attempted defeat Zumbi.

The King himself, as the leader of his troops, repealed the enemies. The fight was awful. The Quilombolas used all kinds of weapons that they could manufacture. Even boiled water the women threw over horrified soldiers. Zumbi's men in a superior position marched over the Government troops, but wisely Zumbi decided to leave them when they decided to withdraw, since the night was falling. He decided the children and old people to return to their huts to fabricate spears and arrows. There was no

time to sleep. Zumbi kept on moving energetically. He proclaimed his men to fight until die, to die as free people.

The other day came and the fight was not much different from the previous one: Government troops using guns tried to pull down the barricades. Zumbi's men fought using even their own hands. Some of them used hooks to catch soldiers and, pulling them inside the fence, killed them using their own bare hands. It was an uneven fight, since soldiers were well armed. Negroes had almost nothing to combat. Nevertheless, Palmares resisted.

Palmares rested tense, but quiet, by the night of January 23rd, 1694. The Commanders of Governmental troops, took the firm decision that Palmares would never fall down, unless they could use heavy guns from artillery. Velho expected to get what he needed.

Three sides of Mocambo do Macaco, remainder of Palmares resistance, lay siege. A fourth side lay to deep abyss. So, Velho thought about breaking Palmares resistance by keeping them with no water and scarce food, until the cannons' arrival.

Inside the Quilombo, Zumbi and his people had a wellspring from which they got water. There was food too. To compensate general lack of weapons, they've packed gutters with sharp spears. Velho, on his turn, was preparing himself a long fence, reaching the abyss' border, involving then almost all the Quilombo. With that strategy, Velho wanted to fight nearer against Zumbi.

Early on January 23rd, the attack took place in the three fronts. The troops couldn't reach even to half way to Palmares's fence. A strong counter-attack pushed back the government troops.

Then, on February 3rd, six cannons, pushed by a troop of two hundred soldiers, arrived to Serra da Barriga. Then, they faced a problem: how to use it, since their gunshot was too short, and the fences and ditches made it impossible to get nearer.

Velho built a long fence, likewise the one Palmares had. They did it very quickly and efficiently. It was a great and unpleasant surprise for Zumbi. It is said that Zumbi ordered the execution of the sentinel in charge of that fence.

The war field was ready. However, one question remains until today: why did Zumbi accept that kind of war, instead the one he and his people had been doing for so many years? The Guerrilla was ideal. They had no conventional ammunition. They did not have heavy arms. Yet they were

against an abyss. Like Spartacus, a slave too, he also had just one alternative. History says that Spartacus, being pushed against an abyss, sent his men with long ropes to descend the abyss and return again, at that time in the rear-guard of the enemy. Zumbi could not do the same.

In the dawn of February 6th, 1694, cannon shots opened wide holes at Mocambo's fence. Through those holes, soldiers started to invade Zumbi's Camp. Zumbi and his people had only one way to go: the abyss. Blood flowed like a river. Negroes and Whites died brutally.

Two gun shots hit Zumbi, and everybody around saw when the bullets hit him. However, he kept on fighting. His men kept on fighting too, being pushed against the deep chasm. Many of them fell, or were pushed inside the abyss. It was a real massacre with old people, women and children, apart the men, being destroyed by the soldiers.

Zumbi and his men were fighting for nothing else besides freedom. It is understandable why they fought with no arms, against well-equipped soldiers, dying dozen after dozen.

The following day, when the sun rose again, there was almost nothing unless dilacerated bodies on the ground. The soldiers of Velho and Melo immediately started to search for Zumbi's body. They found nothing. They thought that either Zumbi had felt down inside the abyss or that he was able to pass across their lines during the previous night.

The war reached to an end, after three years of intense fights and one battle of twenty-two days. The soldiers put down more Mocambos, hopping to find Zumbi.

One year had gone, and armed groups still used to invade towns like Penedo, to obtain powder gun and arms. One of those groups, under the command of a mulatto named Antonio Soares, was captured by the soldiers. They knew Soares was an important man below Zumbi's orders and took him to Recife, beneath strong guard. Delivered to Andre Soares de Mendonça, he was tortured, and it was disclosed the place where Zumbi was hiding himself.

They took Soares along, and he was able to access Zumbi, then an escapee King. Soares was received naturally. Suddenly and unexpectedly, he pulled out a knife and hit Zumbi with it. All the soldiers were near the hut and, despite the fact of being so many, and even being mortally hurt, Zumbi fought bravely until they finally killed him.

The date was November 20th . The year, 1695. Palmares, the multi kingdom inside Brazil C ruled at its apogee by a Queen, former Ewe Princess C was supposed to celebrate nearly one hundred years of existence. Instead of any celebrating day, this was the day when Andre Furtado de Mendonça beheaded Zumbi!

That was the night when Senzalas started to whisper stories about Zumbi C God of War. For nearly three hundred years only inside Senzalas, and Afro-Brazilian shrines, Zumbi was remembered. White Brazilians set Zumbi aside the History of Brazil.

Emerging Negroes and his descendants, in the national society, nevertheless brought Zumbi back, inserted at the Nation's Heroes Gallery, as one of Brazil's most important fighter for human rights.

Zumbi was never a slave. The importance of being free: he was lucky to enjoy this very special feeling, and it was what he dreamed for his people. Yet, he died for it.

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