



História Unisinos

E-ISSN: 2236-1782

efleck@unisinos.br

Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos
Brasil

Graden, Dale T.

Slave resistance and the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade to Brazil in 1850

História Unisinos, vol. 14, núm. 3, septiembre-diciembre, 2010, pp. 282-293

Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos

São Leopoldo, Brasil

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=579866831005>

- How to cite
- Complete issue
- More information about this article
- Journal's homepage in redalyc.org

redalyc.org

Scientific Information System

Network of Scientific Journals from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal

Non-profit academic project, developed under the open access initiative

Slave resistance and the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade to Brazil in 1850¹

Resistência escrava e a abolição do comércio transatlântico de escravos para o Brasil em 1850

Dale T. Graden²

graden@uidaho.edu

Abstract. Debate exists over the reasons for the demise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade to Brazil in 1850. An “Enlightenment School” of historians highlights the political capacity of Brazilian statesmen. This perspective discounts slave resistance as influencing the decisions of high-ranking ministers in Rio de Janeiro. A “Subaltern School” views slave resistance as a key variable in causing a permanent halt to disembarkations. In the wake of the Revolt of the Malês in 1835 in Salvador, Bahia, the largest urban slave revolt in the history of the Americas, numerous observers called for an end to the slave trade. These individuals emphasized that continued importations boded ill for the empire. This essay posits that the arrival of thousands of African slaves to Brazil in the 1830s and 1840s caused severe social tensions. Elite and popular insecurity were particularly evident in the cities of Recife, Pernambuco, Salvador, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. Several events caused a shift in opinion among high-ranking ministers and common folk by the late 1840s. The appearance of the British Squadron in Brazilian ports and along the coast heightened resistance among slaves and freedpersons. Slave revolts, slave conspiracies, fear of Muslim religion and distrust of African freedpersons forced representatives to seek a permanent halt to the slave trade.

Key words: trans-Atlantic slave trade, slave resistance, Revolt of the Malês, African freedpersons.

Resumo. Existe um debate sobre as causas da cessação do comércio transatlântico de escravos para o Brasil em 1850. A “Escola Iluminista” de historiadores enfatiza a capacidade política dos estadistas brasileiros. Esta perspectiva minimiza a influência da resistência escrava nas decisões dos ministros de alto escalão no Rio de Janeiro. A “Escola Subalterna” vê a resistência escrava como um fator fundamental no fim permanente dos desembarques. Na sequência da Revolta dos Malês, em 1835, em Salvador, Bahia, a maior revolta urbana de escravos da história das Américas, muitos observadores pediram o fim do comércio escravista. Estes indivíduos enfatizavam que as contínuas importações representavam uma ameaça para o império. Este artigo propõe que a chegada de milhares de escravos africanos para o Brasil nas décadas de 1830 e 1840 gerou graves tensões sociais. A insegurança da elite e do povo era particularmente evidente nas cidades de Recife, Pernambuco, Salvador, Bahia e Rio de Janeiro. Diversos eventos contribuíram para a mudança de opinião entre as autoridades e as pessoas comuns no final da década

¹ All translations from Portuguese to English in Foreign Office Records 13 and 84 are those found in the documents. All other translations are those of the author.

² Professor of History at the University of Idaho.

de 1840. A presença da esquadra britânica nos portos e ao longo da costa brasileira elevou a resistência entre escravos e libertos. As revoltas de escravos, as conspirações de escravos, o medo da religião muçulmana e a desconfiança dos africanos libertos forçaram as autoridades a por um fim permanente ao tráfico de escravos.

Palavras-chave: comércio transatlântico de escravos, resistência escrava, Revolta dos Malês, libertos africanos.

A debate exists over why the transatlantic slave trade ended to Brazil in 1850. One interpretation focuses on the Brazilian government. This can be described as the “Enlightenment School.” Senators, representatives and provincial governors maintained close alliance with planters and merchants who cultivated sugar, coffee, tobacco, cotton, food crops, and raised swine and cattle. A high priority for these men was social stability. Pedro II and high-ranking ministers also paid close attention to international politics, specifically British initiatives to halt the slave trade to Brazil.³ They adroitly responded to British suppression efforts in the wake of passage of an 1845 measure in England (the Aberdeen Bill) which allowed the British Squadron to seize ships seen to be involved in the transport of slaves and try them in British Admiralty Courts (Needell, 2001; Bethell, 1970; Thomas, 1997). Through this prism, the combined actions of Brazilian statesmen and the British navy brought an end to importations of African slaves.

The Enlightenment School minimizes social pressures from below, specifically slave resistance, as a factor in forcing an end to the traffic. Fifteen years previous to the Eusébio de Queiroz Law which effectively outlawed the slave trade to Brazil, a slave rebellion broke out in the city of Salvador, Bahia that came to be known as the Revolt of the Malês (Muslims). The Enlightenment School contends that the revolt proved to be “inconsequential regarding slaveholding in Brazil generally, or in Bahia, at least after 1835” (Needell, 2006, p. 146; Mattoso, 1992, p. 542). The revolt’s minimal impact is affirmed by the fact that there was no disruption in the transport of African slaves to Brazilian shores.

Historians associated with the Enlightenment School believe that memory of that Muslim-led rebellion and the huge influx of African slaves in its wake had little to do with the political decision to halt the traffic in 1850. One writes that “none of them [what the author labels as the ‘reactionaries,’ this being a group of influential

political leaders, including president (governor) of Bahia Francisco Gonçalves Martins, minister of foreign affairs Paulino José Soares de Sousa, and minister of justice Eusébio de Queiroz] called for the [trans-Atlantic slave] trade’s repression out of fear that slavery itself posed a fatal security risk” (Needell, 2006, p. 149).

A second perspective on why the slave trade ended to Brazil focuses on resistance by slaves and freedpersons (*libertos*). This will be described as the “Subaltern School” of history. One of its proponents is the Bahian historian João José Reis, who has written that “the revolt in Bahia [of 1835] caused apprehension in the north and the south of Brazil, in cities and countryside. Its impact on the rest of the nation was immediate, causing authorities in Rio de Janeiro [at the *Corte*, meaning the ministers who led the empire] and various local authorities [in several provinces] to take actions [to ensure] public security and it reinvigorated the debate over [the continuation] of the international slave traffic [to Brazil] and over the institution of slavery”⁴ (Reis, 2003, p. 509).

This essay posits that the Malê Revolt made a deep impression on numerous Brazilians, including elite and common folk. Memory of the revolt combined with various manifestations of slave resistance in its wake played a role in shaping imperial politics and decisions from 1848 to 1851. It is a key variable that forced a halt to the trans-Atlantic slave trade to Brazil at mid-century.

The Malê Revolt, slave resistance, and the threats posed by importation of African slaves

In the early hours of Sunday, January 25, 1835, an estimated six hundred African slaves and freedmen, many in white dress worn by Muslims, ran through the streets of Salvador shooting guns. They shouted “death to the whites” and “death to the soldiers.” For three hours,

³ Jeffrey Needell (2006, p. 138-155). Brazilian historians who could be included in this school are Emilia Viotti da Costa (2000, p. 128-132) and Lília Moritz Schwarcz (1998, p. 297). Historians of the nineteenth century whose contributions align with the Enlightenment School include David Brion Davis (1975); Adam Hochschild (2005); Seymour Drescher (1987).

⁴ Brazilian historians of the “Subaltern School” include Professors João José Reis, Sidney Chalhoub, Robert W. Slenes and Flávio dos Santos Gomes. For perspectives on the debate described above, see Chalhoub (2007). An historian of international abolition in the nineteenth century whose perspectives align with this group includes Robin Blackburn, 1998. I would suggest that Seymour Drescher has a foot in both schools. After decades of research on a wide range of themes, Professor Drescher has embraced slave resistance as a key variable in antislavery debates of the nineteenth century. See Drescher (2009).

they fought against a larger force estimated at fifteen hundred men.⁵ This included police, cavalry, National Guard soldiers, and civilians who possessed swords, knives, clubs and pistols. The revolt failed. At least seventy rebels died, perhaps double that number were wounded, and nine persons lost their lives who fought to put down the uprising (Reis, 2003, p. 151-157).

Among the 292 rebels (176 slaves, 112 freedpersons, 4 status not known) arrested in the aftermath of the revolt, 73 percent were Nagô Africans, a term used in Bahia to denote Yoruba people from the present-day regions of the Republics of Nigeria and Benin. Given that the Nagô represented 30 percent of a total African population of 22,000 resident in Salvador in 1835, their involvement in the revolt was substantial (Reis, 2003, p. 333-334). Numerous Nagô arrived in slave ships to Bahia paying homage to Islam; other Nagô slaves and freedpersons converted. Perhaps one fifth (4,400 persons) of the African population of Salvador in 1835 were Muslim, a significant portion of these individuals being Nagô (Reis, 2003, p. 177). Hence, observers viewed the slave revolt as including a substantial Muslim presence among its leadership and followers.

Tension reigned in Salvador in the aftermath of the uprising. Writing a day after the Malê Revolt, a French consul stationed in Salvador commented that “the *agglomeration* in Bahia of negroes of the Nagô nation places at all moments this province in danger [of slave rebellion] due the perfect unanimity of language, of desires, of displeasure and hatred that joins these men together in unity, [men who are] intelligent, strong and courageous” (Reis, 2003, p. 335, author’s emphasis). One week later, rumor spread of an impending attack on Salvador by a group of “mulattos and blacks” residing in the Red River (*Rio Vermelho*) neighborhood a short distance to the north of the city. The governor of the province issued orders to prepare for another uprising. “Bahia seemed to be in a state of siege. The consternation was universal. Natives and foreigners were summoned to arm. Great were the preparations.”⁶ To protect the house of a United States citizen, the captain of the US corvette *Erie* landed United States Marines on shore. Two days later, British residents found solace with the arrival of the vessel of war HMS *North Star* into the Bay of All Saints.⁷

Bahian authorities were quick to respond. The provincial government sent to Africa at public expense

one ship with 150 “free Africans” on board. Of this group police labeled 120 African freedpersons as “suspected persons.” The other 30 were liberated Africans removed from captured slave vessels by the British Squadron and residing in Salvador.⁸ Owners deported another 380 African slaves to other provinces of Brazil. Of these, 136 were Nagô. By the end of 1835, at least 700 African freedpersons received passports to allow departure from Bahia. Officials facilitated this emigration by speeding the applications through the bureaucracy (Reis, 2003, p. 482-483, 491-492).

Tensions remained high for well over a year. In the annual speech to open the Provincial Assembly in early March 1836, Bahia’s president noted that “signs have been observed and rumors constantly spread by which the public mind, not yet recovered from the Alarms of January 1835, has been considerably disturbed.” President Francisco de Souza Paraiso affirmed that the deportations of free Africans during the previous months had caused “the apprehension of immediate insurrection to be less apparent.” He also stated that “as long as these barbarians [African slaves and African free persons], our necessary enemies, shall exist among us, they will never desist from their dark designs, notwithstanding they may always find them fruitless and abortive.” His warning mixed contempt for the “barbarians” with assurance that the enemy would never become a threat.

It is important to read closely the president’s words. Fifteen months after the Revolt of the Malês, Paraiso remained focused on public insecurity. He requested that African slaves found guilty of participation in the insurrection be expelled from Bahia. And he was deeply concerned about the continuation of slave importations.

It is therefore expedient to pay increasing attention to this subject [another slave insurrection], and to adopt every means that may contribute to our safety. Besides which, it appears to me very urgent that some measures should be adopted with respect to such African slaves as may become dangerous and suspected, especially concerning those [who participated] in the last insurrection [January 1835], and who were found guilty by the Jury, in order that they may not continue to live in the midst of us—and that their owners should be obliged to sell them, to be sent out of the province.

⁵ Parkinson to Wellington, Salvador, January 29, 1835, Foreign Office Records of Great Britain Number 13: General Correspondence from Brazil before 1906, microfilm number 121 (hereafter FO 13).

⁶ Parkinson to Wellington, Salvador, February 2, 1835 (FO 13:121).

⁷ Parkinson to Wellington, Salvador, March 3, 1835 (FO 13:121).

⁸ Extract of the President of Bahia opening the Provincial Assembly in March 1836, included in Jackson to Palmerston, Rio de Janeiro, March 1, 1836, Foreign Office Records of Great Britain Number 84: Slave Trade, microfilm number 198 (hereafter FO 84).

*The contraband of slaves continues with the same scandal, and hitherto none of the parties, or abettors, of such an abominable and pernicious trade has been punished. Impunity attends almost every sort of crime, sometimes no prosecution at all being instituted, and at others being so conducted that the criminal is not put on his trial, or should he be, he finds ready means of defense, so as to be acquitted by the jury.*⁹

As part of the government's response to the Malé Revolt, the provincial assembly suspended individual guarantees and allowed police to search homes belonging to free Africans.¹⁰ So began a systematic campaign by police and politicians against African freedpersons and Muslims that continued for at least two decades (1835 to mid-1850s). Police in Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, and Recife (and likely in other locales) confiscated all sorts of documents and materials in their quest to stamp out the perceived threat posed by what two Brazilian historians have termed "Malé contamination"¹¹ (Soares and Gomes, 2001).

A question posed is if the Malé Revolt in Salvador made such an impression, why did the traffic continue? Within days of the revolt, traffickers disembarked some one thousand enslaved Africans in the immediate vicinity of Salvador.¹² In the years that followed, disembarkations continued at a torrid pace. The numbers are staggering: traffickers landed an estimated 718,000 African slaves on Brazilian coasts from November 7, 1831 (passage of the Brazilian law which made the importation of slaves illegal and declared free any slave imported after this date) until suppression in 1851. Professor Needell writes that "the era between 1838 and 1849 was the era when, contraband or no, most captives were sold in Brazil on a per annum basis in the whole history of the Atlantic slave trade. How terrified of Africans could the slaveholders have been if they bought them with such eagerness?" (Needell, 2006, p. 148).

One response would be that planters needed workers to cultivate their crops. Given a dearth of free workers willing to labor on farms and few immigrants arriving from Europe or other locales, planters remained dependent on slaves to produce goods. Capitalists had significant investments in land and machinery. Owners of estates believed that any interruption of slave importations placed their livelihood in jeopardy.

The merchant-planter elite rejected the proposition that a slave revolt in Salvador quickly snuffed out by the police ought to derail a steady flow of African slaves. As in other instances since the rise of international capitalism in the fifteenth century, short-term economic benefits marginalized concerns about the future. Furthermore, traffickers and their allies had the means to pay diverse individuals (provincial governors, police, judges, juries, inhabitants on the coast, custom house officials, port workers, private militias, ship captains and crews, foreign consuls) to assure the continuation of slave importations.¹³

By the mid-1840s, numerous individuals recognized that British actions, which included the seizure of slave vessels by the British Navy, might cause a permanent interruption in slave importations to Brazil. This perception added to the urgency exhibited at this juncture to transport as many African slaves as possible to Brazil.

Hence, internal and external variables contributed to a seemingly insatiable demand for slaves in the fifteen years that followed 1835.

Diverse observers after the 1835 slave revolt in Salvador viewed the continued slave disembarkations with trepidation, if not terror. Within days of the uprising, newspapers in Rio de Janeiro alluded to dangers ahead. A journalist writing in the prestigious *Jornal do Comércio* emphasized that the slave trade should be viewed as "an element of discordance and of future perturbations" (*Jornal do Commercio*, no. 37, February 17, 1835, in Reis, 2003, p. 517) Less than a month later, the newspaper *Aurora Fluminense* included the dire comments made by the president of Bahia at the opening of the Bahian Provincial Assembly: "Every slave disembarked on our beaches is a fresh barrel of gunpowder thrown into a mine shaft, the explosion of which is capable of producing horrific results."¹⁴

At the end of March, British envoy Henry S. Fox wrote that "the terror that is spreading far and wide through Brazil, since the late insurrection of the blacks at Bahia, has rendered the present moment favorable for this government to improve and strengthen the anti-slave trade legislation. The eyes of most men are beginning to be opened, if not to the infamy of slave dealing, at least to the enormous danger of allowing fresh multitudes of Africans, under any condition, to be poured daily into the

⁹ Extract of the President of Bahia opening the Provincial Assembly in March 1836, included in Jackson to Palmerston, Rio de Janeiro, March 1, 1836 (FO 84: 198).

¹⁰ Francisco de Souza Martins to Frederick Robilliard, Salvador, March 28, 1835 (FO 13:121).

¹¹ Chief of Police Evaristo Fernando d'Argollo to President Tomás Xavier Garcia de Almeida, Salvador, July 26, 1839, Public Archive of the State of Bahia: Colonial and Provincial Section, maço 2949 (hereafter APEB/SACP); Chief of Police Antonio Simões da Silva to Minister of Justice Eusébio de Queiroz, Rio de Janeiro, March 26, 1849, National Archives in Rio de Janeiro, Secretary of the Police in the Corte, U 6 212 (hereafter ANRJ/Polícia).

¹² Parkinson to Wellington, Salvador, January 29, 1835 (FO 13:121).

¹³ Parkinson to Wellington, Salvador, January 29, 1835 (FO 13:121); W.G. Ouseley, Notes on the subject of the slave trade in the province and city of Bahia, September 1835. This was sent from Ouseley to Fox, Rio, October 27, 1835 (FO 84:179). See also The Yacht *Maria Até Ver*, *O Século*, October 3, 1850, translated in Porter to Hudson, Salvador, October 9, 1850 (FO 84:807).

¹⁴ *Aurora Fluminense*, March 20, 1835 (p. 3818). The Assembly convened on March 1, 1835.

country.”¹⁵ Two months later, Fox continued in this vein: “I have observed with satisfaction that in all documents and declarations proceeding from the authority of the Government, the slave trade now denounced and condemned, not only as was heretofore frequently the language, from motives of abstract benevolence and philanthropy, or out of deference to the wishes of foreign nations, but as a manifest, acknowledged cause of monstrous, practical evil, and of immediate pressing danger to the existence of the white people of Brazil.”¹⁶

In May 1835, the Provincial Assembly of Bahia sent a letter to the General Legislative Assembly of Brazil meeting in Rio de Janeiro. Signed by the president and archbishop of Bahia along with the first and second secretaries of the assembly, this communiqué called for a halt to the trans-Atlantic slave trade from Africa, and the coastal transport of African slaves previously landed in Argentina and Uruguay to Brazil. “The illicit importation of millions of barbarians, which with the most shameful scandal is still practiced in our ports, is doubtless more fatal to our morals, our security and prosperity, than the spirit of insurrection and rebellion [responsible for] the disastrous event on January 25 of the present year [1835]. The incessant recruitment of new Africans augments the number and the audacity of the slaves and freedmen who exist among us.”¹⁷ Such concerns continued to be expressed through the 1840s and early 1850s.

As in Europe, 1848 proved to be a tumultuous year in Brazil. President of Bahia João de Moura Magalhães claimed that “I am writing truthfully, providing exact information of what is happening in this province. We need prompt and energetic measures to prevent insurrections by Africans. Everyone still remembers what happened in 1835, [a revolt] that would have produced far greater destruction, if it had not been promptly annihilated.”¹⁸ British consul Henry Cowper echoed this view: “A general apprehension exists in the province of Bahia that the extension of the slave trade is hastening the day when that province will fall into the hands of blacks.”¹⁹

On February 4, police in the town of Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul (southernmost province) learned of plans for a slave uprising to occur the next day. An estimated 1,500 slaves from six estates were believed to be involved in the conspiracy. Investigations unco-

vered 200 muskets, 200 carbines, swords, pistols and ammunition stored at a farmhouse. Police arrested 300 and “severely flogged” several of the accused; ten died from the beatings.²⁰ As in the 1835 Revolt of the Malês, information provided by Africans previous to the uprising proved helpful to authorities. A British diplomat present noted that “the informers of the existence of this conspiracy are three Mina slaves who, feeling great friendship for their masters, who had always treated them kindly, confessed the whole plan to them, and thus most providentially prevented the scenes of St. Domingo in this province.”²¹

In his description of this horrific episode, British consul Lord Howden wrote:

*The Slaves implicated in this plot are exclusively natives of Mina and come from the North of the Line, to the east of Cape Coast [present day Ghana, Togo, Benin and western Nigeria] (Law, 2005). This race is the same that prepared the nearly successful insurrection of Bahia in 1835; and the slaves belonging to it are entirely and most remarkably different from all other Africans in Brazil both physically and intellectually. These Mina slaves all speak the same language, have organized societies and elected chiefs wherever they meet in any numbers, are remarkable for their habits of order, their serious and dignified deportment, their economy, their prevision, and their sullen courage; and they are corporeally the finest specimens of the human race I ever saw. It is said that the inhabitants of the province of Rio de Janeiro, afraid of the slumbering energies of such men, buy them unwillingly; and, in fact, but comparatively few of this easily distinguished race are to be seen in the Capital [city of Rio de Janeiro]. I have no doubt but that this is the People charged by Providence with the dreadful and inevitable retribution of Africa.*²²

Slaves from the Mina coast had gained a reputation of rebelliousness from north to south in Brazil. Howden’s observations suggest that officials in Rio de Janeiro had sent out of the city African slaves and freedpersons who had arrived from Salvador in the years that followed the 1835 Revolt. This measure was taken

¹⁵ Fox to Wellington, Rio de Janeiro, March 25, 1835 (FO 84:179).

¹⁶ Fox to Wellington, Rio de Janeiro, May 30, 1835 (FO 13:117).

¹⁷ Representation of the Provincial Assembly of Bahia to the General Legislative Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, May 11, 1835 (FO 84:175).

¹⁸ Magalhães to Minister of Justice, Salvador, February 9, 1848, National Archives of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro: Section of Executive Powers, IJ 1 710 (hereafter ANRJ/SPE). For further analysis of this period, see Graden (2006, p. 33-42).

¹⁹ Cowper to Palmerston, Recife, February 19, 1848 (FO 84:727).

²⁰ Morgan to Howden, Pelotas, February 9, 1848 (FO 84:727); Morgan to Palmerston, Rio Grande do Sul, February 15, 1848 (FO 84:727).

²¹ Morgan to Howden, Pelotas, February 9, 1848 (FO 84:727).

²² Howden to Palmerston, Rio de Janeiro, March 20, 1848 (FO 84:725).

to prevent slave resistance in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Soares and Gomes, 2001, p. 346).

In the Center-South provinces of Brazil, a major slave conspiracy coalesced on several coffee plantations in the Valley of Paraíba that extends from the province of Rio de Janeiro into São Paulo. The plan had its origins in Bantu spirituality and knowledge of the suppression of the traffic to Brazil by the British Squadron. In the “Secret Report of the Select Committee of the Provincial Assembly of Rio de Janeiro on Secret Societies of Africans in the Province of Rio de Janeiro,” the authors wrote that looking “upon the situation in the country, the very small number of white men in relation with the millions of slaves who abound in all parts [and] the insufficiency and impropriety of our criminal legislation, the special commission cannot but recognize the impossibility of at once calming the apprehension of an insurrection of the slaves.” The president of São Paulo requested that the same report be evaluated by the legislative assembly of his province.

Based on interrogations of jailed slaves and intelligence gleaned from police officials, the committee pointed to the existence of an extensive African Society with members in the city of Rio de Janeiro and in the interior of the province. The Society was divided into “circles” composed of fifty slaves, each headed by a chief known as a *Taté* who had six assistants named *Cambondos*. The word *Taté* perhaps has origins in the word *Pajé*, meaning the chief of an indigenous tribe in Brazil. More likely *Taté* is derived from the Bantu language Kimbundu spoken in the Congo and Angola regions of Africa. *Taté* is a variant of the word *Tateto*, which means father. In African Brazilian religious ceremonies known as *Candomblé*, those influenced by Angolan culture are led by a father of a saint (*pai-de-santo*) who is known as “*Tateto ti inkice*” or “*Tateto t’inkice*.” In relation to the African Society believed to exist in the province of Rio de Janeiro, *Taté* would imply leader or chief. A *Cambondo* is most likely a variant of the word “*Cambono*,” a term used to describe a participant at a *Candomblé* ceremony who provided assistance to persons under the spell of a divine force. This often entailed embracing and protecting the possessed as the *orixá* (divinity) passed through his or her body. The *Cambondos* included males known as *Filhos do Terreiro* (sons of a house of *Candomblé*) and three or four African females known as *Mocambas do Anjo*. Sons of a terreiro were men associated with a particular house where *Candomblé* ceremonies occurred. Use of the word *Mocamba* perhaps suggested that these

African females gained their strength and character from experience in escaped slave communities (*mocambos*). Or it might have its origins in the word *mucamba*, a term used by owners in the nineteenth century to denote a female domestic slave. The investigating committee of the Provincial Assembly of Rio de Janeiro viewed the *Mocambas do Anjo* (angel-like female Africans) as particularly dangerous, as they were domestic slaves who resided in close proximity to their owners.

The plan included the poisoning of “masters of whatever sex or age” along with the assassination of “administrators and other free people employed on the estates including those slaves who wished to remain faithful to their masters.”²³ Tensions reached such a pitch that slave owners and their families fearful of rebellious slaves abandoned their estates in the interior of São Paulo and fled to towns. Historian Robert W. Slenes opines that the public insecurity and tensions fomented by the “foreigners from Africa” had as much to do with forcing an end to the trans-Atlantic slave trade to Brazil as British initiatives (Slenes, 2000, p. 218–219; Gomes, 1995, p. 262).

In a communiqué penned in August, British diplomat James Hudson attempted to put a positive spin on the situation. Hudson concluded that the unceasing importations of African slaves to Brazilian shores had caused a shift in opinion among high-ranking officials in Brazil. “A very satisfactory change appears to be taking place in the mind of the Brazilian government and public, upon the subject of the importation of slaves, due to the effect, I think, of Lord Aberdeen’s bill [1845], [which enabled] the captures to be made under it; *to the terror which the late enormous importation of slaves has created in this government, and in the thinking part of the community; and in the isolated position in which Brazil now stands on this continent and in Europe, where she has lost the hold on both France and Austria.*”²⁴

In spite of a steady stream of warnings, traffickers continued to disembark thousands of African slaves in the cities of Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, Santos (province of São Paulo) and on remote beaches and islands nearby. Indeed, the largest number of enslaved Africans to disembark in Brazil or any other region of the Americas in the history of the transatlantic trade occurred in 1848. The peak for two years was 1848–1849, and the peak triennium was 1847–1849 (Drescher, 2009, p. 291).

The Municipal Corporation (Council) of Salvador articulated their trepidation concerning the arrival of so many Africans in mid-1850.

²³ F.S. Dias da Motta and José Alves Carneiro Montezuma, Rio de Janeiro, July 8, 1848: Secret Report of the Select Committee of the Provincial Assembly of Rio de Janeiro on Secret Societies of Africans in the Province of Rio de Janeiro, July 8, 1848 [Assembly House in Secret Session, July 8, 1848]. This document is translated in Hudson to Palmerston, Rio de Janeiro, February 20, 1850 (FO 84:802).

²⁴ Hudson to Palmerston, Rio de Janeiro, August 5, 1848 (FO 84:726). Author’s emphasis.

The traffic in slaves is nowadays tolerated in this second city of Brazil in a most reprehensible manner. There is not one person here who, looking at the vessels lying at anchor in the port, cannot distinguish those destined to proceed on that piracy; there is not one person here who does not know the Houses, called stations, in which raw (boças) Africans [meaning newly-arrived] are kept for sale, within the limits of this municipality, even in this city. There is not any one person who cannot name those who have taken part in this barbarous and illicit traffic. The Law of 7th November 1831 is therefore disrespected and scorned, and the traffic is carried on with greater ease inasmuch as it is principally in the hands of strangers, who have come to Brazil to make their fortunes, and to take possession of our national commerce.

*No one who seriously reflects upon the future interests of Brazil, in whose veins the blood of free men flows, or whose understanding is acquainted with the sacred tenets of the Christian religion, can be indifferent to this heap of combustibles, which is accumulating against Brazilian society, subjecting us to continual alarm and barbarous insurrections; nor can the Municipal Chamber of Bahia, therefore, view them with indifference.*²⁵

Adding to fears during these years was the historical memory of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) (Dubois, 2004; Fick, 1990; Geggus, 2001; Landers, 2010, p. 55-94). Several documents from 1835 through 1850 express concern that if the importations were to continue, “another Haiti” could occur in Brazil. In March 1835, a letter sent from the provincial assembly of the province of Rio de Janeiro to imperial ministers stated that “These apprehensions, sire, are not groundless. Everyone knows that the doctrines of Hayti are here preached with impunity, that the slaves are allured with the bait of Liberty and urged on by excited spirits, National as well as Foreign, within and without the Empire, to break out into commotions of which those of Bahia are furnishing the most fatal example.”²⁶

In speeches on the floor of the imperial Senate in Rio de Janeiro during 1843, Senator Antônio Pedro da Costa Ferreira from the province of Maranhão alluded to Haiti’s past. A lawyer and planter, he reprehended colleagues disinterested in halting the slave trade. Ferreira noted that Africans had been transported to St. Domingue after the indigenous people had been exterminated. With the Haitian Revolution,

“the victimizers [owners] became the victims [...] Don’t you still see the smoke of [rising from] the sacrificed victims in Haiti? Do you consider it possible to conceive of security in Brazil with that [huge] population [of slaves]?”²⁷ The senator continued: “I have fear with regards to future dangers, and I seek to avoid [prevent; *evitar*] them. Far from accepting the erroneous idea that the agricultural sector in Brazil will be destroyed by a lack of African slaves, we must show that a country worked by slaves is never happy. Such a system only brings bad outcomes [*só acarreta males sobre si*].”²⁸

In mid-1850, a journalist writing in Recife echoed similar sentiments. During the previous decade, traffickers had landed several thousand African slaves in the port of Recife or nearby locales. “Let our government hang legally half a dozen of these slave dealers, shame and opprobrium of humanity, let it not permit one more slave to be introduced into our territory, let it make all sacrifices to develop a colonization of free hands, offer to them all the guarantees as is done in the United States, and let it be certain that only in this manner can it avoid that earlier or later we must have in Brazil a new Santo Domingo [another Haitian Revolution].”²⁹

Insecurity at mid-century

How do we measure the extent of the threat posed to national security caused by the slave importations from 1835 through late 1850? To what extent did fear or terror caused by slave resistance contribute to the decisions of imperial ministers in 1850 to force a permanent halt to the slave traffic to Brazil? Sure answers to these questions are hard to come by. What is clear is that numerous articulate observers remembered well the 1835 slave revolt in Salvador, expressed concern about slave rebellion and resistance, and considered the importations of African slaves after 1835 a significant threat to the stability of port cities, rural areas and even the empire itself. Documents found in Brazilian archives provide insights in this regard. Three examples are noted.

The first is a slave revolt that occurred in the province of Espírito Santo. In the afternoon of March 19, 1849, a group of thirty or more armed slaves joined together in insurrection in the district of Queimado, situated some 12 miles (3 to 4 *leguas*) outside the capital city of Victoria. A region where hundreds of slaves labored on coffee and sugar estates, the revolt was led by three male slaves each

²⁵ Representação sobre o tráfico, from the Municipal Corporation of the city of Salvador to the General Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, published in *Correio Mercantil* (Rio de Janeiro), August 3, 1850 (FO 84:806).

²⁶ Message from the Provincial Assembly of Rio de Janeiro to the Imperial Government, Palace of the Legislative Assembly, March 17, 1835 (FO 84:174). See also Fox to Wellington, Rio de Janeiro, April 13, 1835 (FO 13:117); Parkinson to Wellington, Salvador, January 26, 1835 (FO 13:121).

²⁷ Session of March 27, 1843, Annals of the Senate of Brazil (hereafter cited as ASIB), p. 411-13; Session of June 10, 1843 (ASIB, p. 413).

²⁸ Session of March 27, 1843 (ASIB, p. 413).

²⁹ *Commercial* (Recife), May 31, 1850 (FO 84:809).

owned by a different planter. The number of slaves who joined in the rebellion quickly increased to 300. Shouting that “We demand our Freedom” and “We demand Letters of Manumission” [*carta de manumissão*, an official document that defined one’s status as a free person], they also seized arms and ammunition at various estates. The event caused “terror” among the inhabitants around the region and in Victoria. The president of Espírito Santo warned that without an adequate police presence, similar upheavals could easily spread to other provinces in the empire.³⁰

In response, officials sent out twenty men to put down the revolt, this patrol known as the Permanent Company of Hunters (*Companhia Fixa de Caçadores*). Confronted by superior force and a lack of arms, the majority of the escaped slaves fled into nearby forests. Within two days the revolt was finished.³¹ By the end of the month, thirty of the insurrectionists had been arrested and put in prison to await their fate. Numerous others returned to the properties from which they had fled. In describing this event, the chief of police expressed little surprise at what had occurred. He wrote that “it is generally known that the slaves of our province are in a state of unhappiness [*desmoralização*, suggesting that the slaves are resisting the coercion and controls imposed by owners].”³²

In her description of the “Insurrection at Queimado,” Brazilian historian Vilma Paraíso Ferreira de Almada emphasizes that the outbreak was but one example in a long history of slave resistance in the province. During the 1820s and 1830s, slaves showed themselves to be closely attuned to all news related to their condition (for example the law of November 7, 1831). Quoting Trinidadian historian Eric Williams, Almada agrees that “Not nearly as stupid as his master thought him and later historians have pictured him, the slave was alert to surroundings and keenly interested in discussions about his fate” (Almada, 1984, p. 168; Williams, 1980, p. 202).

Slaves residing in the capital city of Victoria and the interior of the province of Espírito Santo maintained close contact with an Atlantic World that provided them information and inspiration (Schama, 2006, p. 66; Landers, 2010, p. 5). British actions at sea and the statements of planters and officials (discussions at the dinner table, newspaper articles, political discourse, etc.) related to suppression of the slave trade influenced the slaves at Queimado. Officials reacted quickly

to ensure the insurrection did not spread. In the words of Professor Almada, “the fear that always existed among the owners shifted into panic [from the late 1840s], given that the slaves, inspired by [this] abolitionist conjuncture, principally those in the plantation regions, refused to remain submissive and became increasingly fearless” (Almada, 1984, p. 172–173).

A review of several hundred documents from the period 1835 to 1851 provides numerous descriptions of slave revolts and organized slave resistance, including “tenacious” fighting by escaped slaves hiding in forests. These episodes occurred in the provinces of Maranhão, Pará, Alagoas, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro (and likely others).³³ Such events fueled tensions at mid-century.

A second example of insecurity by the end of the 1840s focuses on African freedpersons residing in the city of Salvador. These were former slaves who had gained their freedom, often by saving money from their labor and purchasing a manumission card. Based on investigations carried out in the first months of 1847, police published a list of 2,508 African freedpersons residing in the ten parishes of the city. Of these, 993 were male and 1,515 female.³⁴ Using an estimate for the total population of the city of 54,330, freedpersons made up 4.6% of the inhabitants of Salvador, and slaves another 25% (or 13,600 persons, a conservative estimate)³⁵ (Nascimento, 1986, p. 65).

African freedpersons are commonly depicted as having little interest in disrupting the status quo. Professor Needell believes that “despite the fact of a common white oppression, [in Brazil] Africans and Afro-Brazilians did not rise up [together] along Haitian lines. Those whose skills and knowledge were, potentially, the most apt for leadership in a rebellion, were, in reality, the least likely to challenge the established racialized hierarchy” (Needell, 2006, p. 143). The above document which noted the home parish and employment of each freedperson in Salvador would appear to confirm such an interpretation. The police official responsible for summing up the findings pointed out that freedpersons resident in the city owned at least 600 slaves, implying that possession of such property made them an unlikely threat to the slave regime.

However, a closer reading of the documents sheds helpful light on the social tensions at mid-century. African freedpersons had played a key role in the Revolt of the Malés in 1835. In the months and years that followed,

³⁰ Antonio Joaquim de Siqueira to Minister of Interior Visconde de Monte Alegre, Victoria, March 20, 1849 (ANRJ/SPE, IJ 9 362).

³¹ Siqueira to Alegre, Victoria, March 24, 1849 (ANRJ/SPE, IJ 9 362).

³² Chief of Police José Ignácio Accioli de Vasconcellos to President Siqueira, Victoria, March 23, 1849 (ANRJ/SPE, IJ 9 362).

³³ President of Maranhão (illegible) to Minister of Interior Manoel Antonio Galvão, Maranhão, December 30, 1839 (ANRJ/SPE IJ 9 133); President of Pará Manoel Paranhos da Silva Vellozo to Minister of Justice, Pará, January 28, 1846, (ANRJ/SPE, IJ 1 202); President of Alagoas Bernardo de Sousa Franco to Galvão, Alagoas, November 19, 1844 (ANRJ/SPE, IJ 1 357); President Joaquim Vasconcelos to Minister of Justice, Bahia, December 14, 1841 (ANRJ/SPE, IJ 1 399); Comandante das Armas José Joaquim Coelho to President Francisco Martins, Salvador, October 23, 1848 (ANRJ/SPE, IG 1 119); Francisco Pereira de Vasconcellos to Minister of Justice Eusebio de Queiroz, Rio de Janeiro, December 16, 1851 (ANRJ/Polícia, IJ 6 215); Police Delegate Roberto Jorge Haddock to Chief of Police Antonio Simoens da Silva, Rio de Janeiro, June 13 and June 15, 1849 (ANRJ/Polícia, IJ 6 212).

³⁴ Mappa demonstrativo do numero de Africanos libertos n’esta cidade com declaração do negocio em que se empregão. Salvador, March 20, 1847 (ANRJ/SPE, IJ 1 403).

³⁵ The 1855 census notes a total population in Salvador of 56,000, with 68.9% free (38,584), 27.5% slave (15,400) and 3.5% freedpersons (2,016), as noted on p. 97.

they suffered systematic reprisals. Several hundred were deported, others departed from Bahia on their own will, and several were thrown into prison on the flimsiest of evidence. By early 1847, fear had mounted dramatically in both city and countryside (Graden, 1996).

Apprehension is readily evident in a letter penned by the president of Bahia Antonio Inácio de Azevedo soon after the police had concluded their work. "I consider the estimate of 2,508 African freedpersons to be low, given that such records are not always exact. Nevertheless, that number [the substantial presence], along with the [high] number of slaves present, justify the fears that now and then surface, and [make understandable] the actions I have taken to bring troops here [to Salvador] capable of putting down any sort of an insurrection which might occur."³⁶ A survey by police of African freedpersons resident in Salvador should be evaluated in light of the historical moment. The elite of Bahia had not forgotten the involvement of African freedpersons in the Revolt of the Malês, and they remained deeply distrustful of free Africans in their midst.

Tensions provoked by the presence of free Africans (freedpersons and liberated Africans) in Salvador did not quickly diminish. On May 8, 1853, rumor spread of an impending slave insurrection. Through the night soldiers on horseback patrolled the streets and the infantry was placed on full alert. British consul James Hudson wrote that

it is reported that arms and ammunition were found secreted in the houses of some liberated Africans of the Nagó or Minas nation, as well as flags and masquerading dresses such as were displayed by them in the last great insurrection in the year 1835.

The jails are full of free Africans and the domiciliary visits of the police are deplorable. I however believe the apprehension entertained by the provincial government is much greater than the facts seem to justify, and that the opportunity is taken to oblige the liberated blacks to return to Africa without their possessing the means of doing so, but which the government by law and by every principle of justice are bound to do at their own expense. This will only show your Lordship how great the curse is to which all are subjected by the insecurity of life resulting from the awful state of slavery of so many thousands of our fellow creatures in this large slave holding province, where, at stated periods, an insurrection is generally expected.³⁷

Although Hudson downplayed the extent of the threat, obviously Bahian police and officials viewed the situation with trepidation. Using force to break into houses, they carried out searches and arrested suspicious Africans. In the weeks that followed, the president of Bahia invoked a law passed in May 1835 in response to the "very peculiar circumstances of this province with regards to the terrible danger of insurrection." Provincial law number nine stipulated that foreign ships departing from Salvador destined for Africa or nearby accept Africans deported by the provincial authorities as passengers (Graden, 2006, p. 42-43). Knowing that Bahian authorities would look to vessels from their nations as potential conduits, the Dutch and British consuls both penned protests.

A third demonstration of insecurity at mid-century occurred in the city of Recife. In late September 1847 a British consul wrote that "persecution of a black religious sect has progressed so considerably [since late 1846] that the populace burnt the house of the Apostle and would have destroyed him also if he had not escaped."³⁸ Given the presence of Muslims who met regularly in private homes in Recife and the use of the word Apostle, this violence most likely was directed at Islamic ceremonies and participants.

Six years later, in early September 1853, police arrested several Africans accused of organizing "a new religious sect" under the leadership of a Muslim African freedman named João Rufino (Gomes *et al.*, 2004). Materials confiscated from their homes included a Koran and "many sheets of paper written in Hebraic [Hebrew, but in fact the words were in Arabic]." News of the arrests provoked alarm that Muslims were planning a slave revolt. The chief of police in Recife sent one of the Arabic documents to Rio de Janeiro for translation. Preserved at the National Archives of Brazil, the letter proved to be a statement of marriage vows, and appears to have had nothing to do with rebellion.³⁹ This episode suggests that police and the upper class of Recife remembered well the events of Salvador in 1835. To prevent the outbreak of another slave insurrection, officials sought to prevent the spread to Recife of Islamic subversion (Soares and Gomes, 2001, p. 346; Graden, 2006, p. 29).

What did fears of slave insurrection, the round-up of African slaves and freedpersons, and the confiscation of materials in September 1853 have to do with the decision to put an end to the trans-Atlantic slave trade in early 1850? Everything. Events often play out as the result of past history; milieu and experience often shape outcome.

³⁶ President of Bahia Antonio Inácio de Azevedo to Minister of Justice Joaquim Fernando Torres, Salvador, April 6, 1847 (ANRJ/SPE, II 1 403).

³⁷ Morgan to Clarendon, Salvador, May 13, 1853 (FO 84:912).

³⁸ Cowper to Palmerston, Recife, September 30, 1847 (FO 84: 679).

³⁹ Alexandre Joaquim (illegible) to Minister of Justice, Recife, Pernambuco, October 5, 1853 (ANRJ/Polícia, II 6 216).

The arrests of Africans in Salvador and Recife occurred because of continued distrust of “free Africans” (*Africanos livres*). This designation included African freedpersons and liberated Africans. Fear was further heightened because some free Africans practiced Islam. Even though the number of practicing Muslim African slaves and freedmen residing in Brazil had diminished significantly by mid-century, the number of Nagô who arrived from West Africa remained high. Indeed, João Reis describes the Nagô as having “a spectacular presence at mid-century” among the slave population of Salvador (Reis, 2003, p. 334). In the minds of the Salvador and Recife police, a Nagô African could likely be a Muslim. All of these factors created anxieties which officials throughout the empire hoped might be diminished by slowing down if not halting the number of African slaves entering Brazil.

Statements by observers, articles written by journalists, the communiqués of provincial officials and the studies of several historians suggest that fears of slave uprisings and unceasing slave resistance combined with massive slave disembarkations influenced imperial officials to put a stop to the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1850.

The debates of 1850

The Enlightenment School affirms that ministers in the cabinet of the imperial government decided to end slave importations in January 1850 based on political considerations. In successfully putting down several federalist revolts and consolidating centralized rule under the monarchy, they had gained the confidence of the merchant-planter elite. Astute observers of the world around them, the ministers viewed themselves as having been effective leaders during the previous two decades. Sensitive to British pressures, they recognized that continued slave importations did not bode well for the empire in terms of international opinion or for maintaining their positions of authority. This depiction discounts insecurity caused by slave resistance as a motive for their actions (Needell, 2006, p. 139-149).

The above portrayal has several flaws. Not only did these ministers have lots of experience in politics, but they had dealt for many years with African and creole slaves. They understood that various strategies had to be employed on a daily basis to maintain control over slaves. This included both coercion and negotiation (Reis and Silva, 1989). They knew well the arrival of thousands of Africans had caused the Haitian Revolution and the Jamaica Revolt of 1831. The latter event played a central

role in forcing the English Crown to emancipate 800,000 slaves in the British Caribbean three years later (Fick, 1990; Turner, 1984; Craton, 1982). Given the existence of a triangular slave trade between Bahia, West Africa and Cuba, they were closely attuned to a cycle of slave revolts that broke out in Matanzas, Cuba, in 1843 and the repression that followed (Paquette, 1988; Landes, 2010, p. 204-230). As thousands of angry and rebellious Africans arrived into cities and towns and countryside of Brazil during the 1830s and 1840s, these high-ranking officials recognized that their wisest response at least for the short term was to halt importations.

Why would the ministers who attended the closed meeting of the Imperial Council of State that convened in January 1850 not have commented on the insecurities caused by thousands of Africans in their midst? One reason might be traced to their racial biases. These men had little respect for Africa or Africans. In fact, they detested the Africans in their midst. They did not believe that Africans and their descendents had mental capacities equal to whites or even persons of mixed race. They scorned the idea that Africans could organize and undermine a slave regime that had flourished for three centuries. They did not want Brazil to become “another Africa” (Azevedo, 1987).

Furthermore, members of the Council of State did not wish to show their concerns about social instability to the free underclass. The ministers represented an elite that desired to maintain its wealth and status far into the future. Similar to the obfuscations of modern day politicians, a suggestion that their political decisions were a response to subaltern pressures was a sign of weakness. British aggressions at sea and along the coast gave added impetus to the cabinet to appear strong and capable.

In the months following passage of the Eusébio de Queiroz Law, several influential observers did comment on the pressures that contributed to political decisions taken in 1850. Minister of Foreign Affairs Paulino José Soares de Sousa stated in May 1851:

*50,000, 60,000, or 100,000 Africans had been imported each year to Brazil. Would we not be advised by all moral considerations, by civilization, in our desire to ensure our own security and that of our children, to put an end to the importation of Africans?*⁴⁰

Arch-conservative senator Honório Hermeto Carneiro Leão asked of his colleagues in the Senate the same month:

⁴⁰ Session of May 24, 1851 (ASIB, p. 320).

Was not the level of importations of Africans [through 1850] excessive, was it not too much, would it not have brought future dangers to the country [Brazil]? It is in our interest [to support the 1831 Brazilian law ending the slave trade], because the importation of Africans has been excessive, because the provinces from Bahia to the south found themselves overburdened with slaves; their number did not appear to be in proportion to the number of free persons. It was, then, in our interest, and to assure our future security, to take precautions in this respect, thereby halting the traffic, that, while it continued, increased our [internal, domestic] dangers. I think, Mr. President, that the time has come for the government to end this dangerous situation by putting a limit on the trade in slaves; and besides we have accepted this obligation.⁴¹

Twelve months later, in July 1852, no less a figure than Eusébio de Queiroz, the minister after whom the Brazilian law ending the slave trade was named, left no doubt that massive importations of the 1840s had been a key variable in shaping his perspectives:

if [public] opinion [...] had brought about this revolution in the country, it was necessary for an occasion to present itself that would allow such a change to make itself known. Some events or, rather, signs of a grave nature, that revealed themselves one after the other in Campos [in the north of the province of Rio de Janeiro], [the province of] Espírito Santo and some other places, such as the important counties of Valença and Vassouras [interior of the province of Rio de Janeiro], produced a terror that I shall call salutary, because it provided the opportunity for that opinion, contrary to the traffic, to develop further and make itself felt.

All who found themselves in Rio de Janeiro at that time and who occupied themselves with this question recognized that it was the same planters who until then had preached the necessity of the traffic who now were the first to contend that the moment for its suppression had arrived.⁴²

A final reflection

The differences between the Enlightenment School and the Subaltern School might be characterized as a clash of interpretations. The former offers insights into the

worldview and positions of influential politicians. Their actions played a role in the demise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade to Brazil. It is political and institutional history *par excellence*. The historians associated with the Subaltern School suggest that multiple factors caused the end of the slave trade to Brazil. One was the suppression efforts of the British Squadron (Bethell, 1970; Thomas, 1997; Graden, 2006, p. 4-9). Another included resistance by African slaves, freedpersons and liberated Africans.

The actions of British cruisers had a profound impact upon Africans in Brazil. Africans extricated from the holds of captured slave vessels hoped that their liberation would result in real freedom. Hundreds of these individuals settled in Salvador and Rio de Janeiro. Some liberated Africans protested strictures placed on them from the first day they landed. African slaves and freedpersons laboring in towns and villages along the coast understood well that the actions of the British Squadron challenged powerful individuals and merchant houses that profited from a long established international trading system. Several aided in suppression efforts, for example providing information and translation skills to British commanders and crews (Graden, 2011).

Many questions remain. A topic of great interest relates to the port of Salvador. The Africans who plied the harbor of Salvador in small boats had organized in the late 1840s. They appreciated that effective collaboration brought tangible benefits, such as monetary income. They observed closely the movement of vessels through the port and along the coast. They witnessed the machinations of traffickers and the activities of the British Squadron. Africans communicated among themselves, with inhabitants of the city, with the interior of the province, with other ports and with the wider Atlantic World. Some remembered the Revolt of the Malês, or had learned of it from stories shared. One astute observer described the Bay of All Saints where Africans (slave and freed) ferried goods and persons as “that terrible nucleus of [slave] insurrections”.⁴³ These Africans did not sit idly by as the political winds shifted in favor of a halt to the despicable trade in human chattel. Some hoped that the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade might bring soon after the demise of the institution of slavery. They reached out to potential allies, including creole slaves residing in Salvador. Such endeavors merit the closest of scrutiny.

References

ALMADA, V.P.F. 1984. *Escravidão e transição: O Espírito Santo (1850-1888)*. Rio de Janeiro, Edições Graal, 221 p.

⁴¹ Session of May 27, 1851 (ASIB, p. 387-388).

⁴² Eusébio de Queiroz Coutinho Mattoso Camara, speech to Chamber of Deputies on July 16, 1852 (in Malheiro, 1944, vol. 2, p. 273).

⁴³ A indústria de saveiros, *O Argos Cachoeirano*, October 1, 1850, p. 1.

- AZEVEDO, C.M.M. 1987. *Onda negra, medo branco: O negro no imaginário das elites – século XIX*. Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 267 p.
- BETHELL, L. 1970. *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question, 1807–1869*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 425 p.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511759734>
- BLACKBURN, R. 1998. *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776–1848*. London, Verso, 560 p.
- CHALHOUB, S. 2007. Os conservadores no Brasil Império, *Afro-Ásia*, 35:317–326.
- CRATON, M. 1982. *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 389 p.
- DA COSTA, E.V. 2000. *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 320 p.
- DAVIS, D.B. 1975. *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 576 p.
- DRESCHER, S. 1987. *Capitalism and Antislavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective*. New York, Oxford University Press, 300 p.
- DRESCHER, S. 2009. *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 471 p.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511770555>
- DUBOIS, L. 2004. *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 357 p.
- FICK, C. 1990. *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution From Below*. Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 355 p.
- GEGGUS, D.P. 2001. *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*. Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 261 p.
- GOMES, F.S. 1995. *Histórias de quilombolas: Mocambos e comunidades de senzalas no Rio de Janeiro – século XIX*. Rio de Janeiro, Arquivo Nacional, 431 p.
- GOMES, F.S.; REIS, J.J.; CARVALHO, M.J.M. 2004. África e Brasil entre margens: Aventuras e desventuras do africano Rufino José Maria, c. 1822–1853. *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, 26(2):257–302.
- GRADEN, D.T. 1996. Uma lei até de segurança pública: Resistência escrava, tensões sociais e o fim do tráfico internacional de escravos para o Brasil (1835–1856). *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, 30:113–149.
- GRADEN, D.T. 2006. *From Slavery to Freedom in Brazil: Bahia, 1835–1900*. Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 297 p.
- GRADEN, D.T. 2011. Interpreters, Translators and the Spoken Word in the Nineteenth-Century Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade to Cuba and Brazil. *Ethnohistory*, 58(3). [Forthcoming essay].
- HOCHSCHILD, A. 2005. *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 468 p.
- LANDERS, J.G. 2010. *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 340 p.
- LAW, R. 2005. Ethnicities of Enslaved Africans in the Diaspora: On the Meanings of 'Mina' (Again). *History of Africa*, 32:247–267.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/hia.2005.0014>
- MALHEIRO, A.M.P. 1944. *A escravidão no Brasil: Ensaio histórico, jurídico, social*. 2nd ed., São Paulo, Edições Cultura, vol. 2, 404 p.
- MATTOSO, K.M.Q. 1992. *Bahia, século XIX: Uma província no império*. Rio de Janeiro, Editora Nova Fronteira, 747 p.
- NASCIMENTO, A.A.V. 1986. *Dez freguesias da cidade do Salvador*. Salvador, Fundação Cultural do Estado da Bahia, 204 p.
- NEEDEL, J.D. 2001. The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade in 1850: Historiography, Slave Agency and Statesmanship. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 33(4):681–711.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X01006204>
- NEEDEL, J.D. 2006. *The Party of Order: The Conservatives, the State, and Slavery in the Brazilian Monarchy, 1831–1871*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 460 p.
- PAQUETTE, R.L. 1988. *Sugar is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba*. Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 346 p.
- REIS, J.J.; SILVA, E. 1989. *Negociação e conflito: A resistência negra no Brasil escravista*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 151 p.
- REIS, J.J. 2003. *Rebelião escrava no Brasil: A história do Levante dos Malês em 1835*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 664 p.
- SCHAMA, S. 2006. *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution*. New York, HarperCollins, 478 p.
- SCHWARZ, L.M. 1998. *As barbas do imperador: D. Pedro II, um monarca nos trópicos*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 623 p.
- SLENES, R.W. 2000. “Malungu, negoma vêm!”: África coberta e descoberta no Brasil. In: N. AGUILAR (ed.), *Mostra do Redescobrimto: Negro de Corpo e Alma – Black in Body and Soul*. São Paulo, Fundação Bial de São Paulo, p. 212–220.
- SOARES, C.E.L.; GOMES, F.S. 2001. Com o pé sobre um vulcão: Africanos Minas, identidades e a repressão antiafricana no Rio de Janeiro (1830–1840). *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, 23(2):335–378.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0101-546X2001000200004>
- THOMAS, H. 1997. *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440–1870*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 908 p.
- TURNER, M. 1984. *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787–1834*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 223 p.
- WILLIAMS, E. 1980. *Capitalism and Slavery*. New York, Putnam, 285 p.

Primary sources

- Annals of the Senate of Brazil (ASIB).
 Foreign Office Records of Great Britain (FO).
 National Archives in Rio de Janeiro, Secretary of the Police in the Corte (ANRJ/Polícia).
 National Archives of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro: Section of Executive Powers (ANRJ/SPE).
 Public Archive of the State of Bahia: Colonial and Provincial Section (APEB/SACP).

Submetido em: 22/08/2010

Aceito em: 25/08/2010

Dale T. Graden
 University of Idaho
 Department of History
 PO Box 443175
 83844, Moscow, Idaho, USA